

Ensign



**Three Gardens and
the First Easter, p. 40**

**Helping Young Women
Find Their Place in Relief
Society, pp. 14, 16**

**Caring for the Needy,
pp. 32, 36**

**Eight Blessings of the
Sabbath Day, p. 48**



*"God has delivered
me from prison,
and from bonds,
and from death;
yea, and I do put my
trust in him, and he
will still deliver me."*

Alma 36:27

Contents March 2016

Volume 46 • Number 3



MESSAGES

FIRST PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

4 “Learn of Me”
President Thomas S. Monson

VISITING TEACHING MESSAGE

7 Created in the Image of God

ON THE COVER

Front: *Take Your Rest*, by Walter Rane.
Inside front cover:
Photograph © iStock/
Thinkstock. Inside
back cover: Painting
© YakimSerg/iStock/
Thinkstock.



YOUNG ADULT FEATURES

12 **Feeling the Spirit of Institute**
Jennifer Bohorquez Gomez
I finally found a place where I wasn't alone in holding up my standards.

14 **More Alike Than Different**
Bonnie L. Oscarson and Linda K. Burton
Whether you're in Young Women or in Relief Society, you're still sisters in the gospel who can cherish, learn from, and watch over one another.

16 **Progression into Relief Society**
What can you do as a Young Women or Relief Society leader to make progressing into Relief Society easier for young women?

20 **What Shall I Do?**
John Hilton III
This simple question found repeatedly in the scriptures can help us determine God's will for us.

23 **Poem: Filling the Lamp**
Rosemary Noble Palmer
We all fill our lamps one drop at a time.

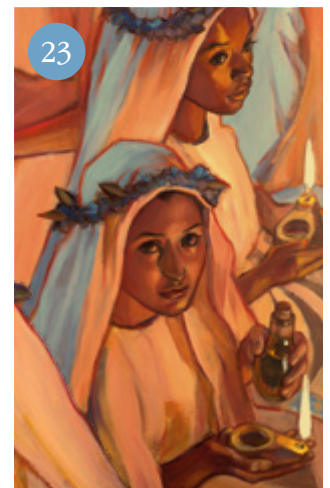
FEATURES

24 **Finding Your Life**
Elder D. Todd Christofferson
Finding our lives by losing them for the Savior's sake means making our discipleship open and public.

32 **Caring for the Needy in Our Families**
Caring for family members can help us learn the meaning of Christlike service.

36 **When One Needs Care, Two Need Help**
Nancy Madsen-Wilkerson
When an aging loved one needs care, both the loved one and the caregiver need understanding and support.

40 **The Three Gardens of God**
Elder Bruce R. McConkie
An Apostle invites us to gain a sure knowledge of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.





48

46 Making the Sabbath a Delight
 Paula J. Lewis
Consider these activity suggestions to help you make the Sabbath a delight.

48 Blessings of the Sabbath Day
 Marissa A. Widdison
Members share some of the blessings they've seen from keeping the Sabbath day holy.

52 Gaining Gospel Insights through Motherhood
 Katy McGee
A few experiences with my children have helped me better understand my relationship with Heavenly Father.

54 Friends Made the Difference
 Lisa L. Williams and Rafael B. Hoyos
Two accounts of how individuals found the gospel of Jesus Christ through their friends.

58 Creating a Joyful Marriage—Together
Learn how these couples relied on gospel principles to bring true joy to their marriages.

61 Poem: Hands across the Altar
 Lorraine Jeffery
Views on promises made and promises kept.

62 Building Our Marriage
 Christopher Deaver
The Lord offers us a way to overcome marital challenges and build a marriage that lasts.

64 The Light of the Perfect Day
 Elder Larry R. Lawrence
Five ways we make light grow brighter and brighter within us.

70 Spiritual Rehabilitation
 Ron Simmons
A physical therapist explores the parallels between physical and spiritual rehabilitation.

74 Finding New Life in Christ
Celebrate the Savior's victory over sin and death.



76

DEPARTMENTS

3 Family Home Evening Ideas

8 October 2015 Conference Notebook

**10 Serving in the Church:
 How Could I Not Stay to the End?**
 Lee Middleton

**11 Reflections:
 I Can Make the Pain Go Away**
 Kate A. Hansen

**69 Music:
 A Sinless Man**
 David B. Larsen and Janice Kapp Perry

76 Latter-day Saint Voices

**80 Until We Meet Again:
 Resurrection—the Beginning of Immortality**
 Elder Dallin H. Oaks



70

A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
March 2016 Volume 46 • Number 3

The First Presidency: Thomas S. Monson, Henry B. Eyring, Dieter F. Uchtdorf

The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Robert D. Hales, Jeffrey R. Holland, David A. Bednar, Quentin L. Cook, D. Todd Christofferson, Neil L. Andersen, Ronald A. Rasband, Gary E. Stevenson, Dale G. Renlund

Editor: Joseph W. Sitati

Assistant Editors: James B. Martino, Carol F. McConkie

Advisers: Brian K. Ashton, Randall K. Bennett, Craig A. Cardon, Cheryl A. Esplin, Christoffel Golden, Douglas D. Holmes, Larry R. Lawrence, Carole M. Stephens

Managing Director: Jeffrey S. Orr

Director of Operations: Vincent A. Vaughn

Director of Church Magazines:

Allan R. Loyborg

Business Manager: Garff Cannon

Managing Editor: R. Val Johnson

Assistant Managing Editor:

LaRene Porter Gaunt

Publications Assistant: Faith S. Watson

Writing and Editing: Ryan Carr, David Dickson, David A. Edwards, Matthew Flitton, Lori Fuller, Garrett H. Garff, Jill Hacking, Charlotte Larcabal, Michael R. Morris, Richard M. Romney, Mindy Anne Selu, Paul VanDenBerghe

Editorial Interns: Natalie Cherie Campbell, Sam Lund

Managing Art Director: J. Scott Knudsen

Art Director: Tadd R. Peterson

Design: C. Kimball Bott, Colleen Hinckley, Eric P. Johnsen, Susan Lofgren, Scott Mooy

Design Intern: Kayleigh Jolley

Intellectual Property Coordinator:

Collette Nebeker Aune

Production Manager: Jane Ann Peters

Production: Connie Bowthorpe Bridge, Julie Burdett, Katie Duncan, Bryan W. Gygi, Denise Kirby, Ginny J. Nilson, Gayle Tate Rafferty

Prepress: Joshua Dennis

Printing Director: Craig K. Sedgwick

Distribution Director: Stephen R.

Christiansen

© 2016 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved. The *Ensign* (ISSN 0884-1136)

is published monthly by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 50 E. North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA.

Periodicals Postage Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah.

Copyright information: Text and visual material in the *Ensign* may be copied for incidental, noncommercial church or home use. Visual material may not be copied if restrictions are indicated in the credit line with the artwork. Copyright questions should be addressed to Intellectual Property Office, 50 E. North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0018; email: cor-intellectualproperty@ldschurch.org.

POSTMASTER: Send all UAA to CFS (see DMM 507.1.5.2).

NONPOSTAL AND

MILITARY FACILITIES: Send address changes to Distribution Services, Church Magazines, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.

Canada Post Information: Publication Agreement #40017431.

Family Home Evening Ideas

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



“Finding Your Life,” page 24: Begin by singing together “I’ll Go Where You Want

Me to Go” (*Hymns*, no. 270). Then consider reading the account of Jesus asking His disciples to take up their crosses and follow Him (see Matthew 16:24–26). Discuss what it means to lose one’s life for Christ’s sake, high-lighting insights from the article. Elder Christofferson states that “the greatest illustration of saving one’s life by losing it is this: ‘O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done’ (Matthew 26:42).” What can we learn from Jesus Christ’s example? Invite family members to consider what they can do in

the coming week to lose their lives in the Savior’s service.

PREPARING FOR GENERAL CONFERENCE

When my son Jasper was six, he gave a family home evening lesson in which he talked about the upcoming general conference and why it was important that we watch it. Next he showed individual pictures of the Twelve Apostles and the members of the First Presidency with their names covered up. He then challenged the rest of us to see if we could remember each of their names. As the lesson ended, it gave me an opportunity to testify that I knew that these leaders were called of God and that there is something very special about each of them.

Deborah Day Kennett, Alberta, Canada

“The Light of the Perfect Day,”

page 64: Begin the lesson by turning off the lights in the room. As you turn on a small flashlight, explain that this light represents the Light of Christ in all of Heavenly Father’s children. Turn on the room lights, and teach that the brighter light represents the gift of the Holy Ghost. You may wish to discuss Elder Lawrence’s statement that “our spirits grow brighter when we feed them light.” Share the five ways of obtaining light suggested in the article (see the summary list on page 66), and set goals for obtaining more light in the next week.

SUBSCRIBE TO OR RENEW THE ENSIGN

Online: Visit store.lds.org.
By phone: In the United States and Canada, call 1-800-537-5971.
By mail: Send U.S. \$10 check or money order to Distribution Services, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.

TO CHANGE ADDRESS

Send both old and new address information to Distribution Services, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA. Please allow 60 days for changes to take effect.

LIKE THE ENSIGN ON FACEBOOK

 Get *Ensign* articles and other faith-inspiring content (such as videos, digital posters, and family home evening ideas) delivered right to your Facebook news feed by liking our page. Visit [facebook.com/ensign-magazine](https://www.facebook.com/ensign-magazine).



By President
Thomas S.
Monson

“LEARN OF ME”

In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we are all teachers and we are all learners. To all comes this gentle invitation from our Lord: “Learn of me . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”¹

I invite all Latter-day Saints to ponder their efforts to teach and to learn and to look to the Savior as our Guide in doing so. We know that this “teacher come from God”² was more than a mere teacher. He who taught us to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, all our souls, all our strength, and all our minds, and to love our neighbor as ourselves, is the Master Teacher and the Exemplar of the perfect life.

He it was who declared: “Come, follow me.”³ “I have set an example for you.”⁴

Except Ye Be Converted

Jesus taught a simple yet profound truth as recorded in Matthew. After He and His disciples had descended from the Mount of Transfiguration, they paused at Galilee and then went to Capernaum. There the disciples came unto Jesus, asking:

“Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

“And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

“And said, Verily I say unto you, *Except ye be converted*, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”⁵

In the Church, the goal of gospel teaching is not to pour information into the minds of God’s children, whether at home, in the classroom, or in the mission field. It is not to

show how much the parent, teacher, or missionary knows. Nor is it merely to increase knowledge about the Savior and His Church.

The basic goal of teaching is to help the sons and daughters of Heavenly Father return to His presence and enjoy eternal life with Him. To do this, gospel teaching must encourage them along the path of daily discipleship and sacred covenants. The aim is to inspire individuals to think about, feel about, and then do something about living gospel principles. The objective is to develop faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and to become *converted* to His gospel.

Teaching which blesses and converts and saves is teaching which emulates the Savior’s example. Teachers who emulate the Savior’s example love and serve those they teach. They inspire their listeners with eternal lessons of divine truth. They live lives worth emulating.

Love and Serve

The Savior’s entire ministry exemplified love of neighbor. Indeed, His love and service were often His lesson. In like manner, the teachers I remember best are the teachers who knew, loved, and cared about their students. They sought the lost sheep. They taught life lessons which I shall always remember.

One such teacher was Lucy Gertsch. She knew each of her students. She unfailingly called on those who missed a Sunday or who just didn’t come. We knew she cared about us. None of us has ever forgotten her or the lessons she taught.



Offer Hope and Truth

The Apostle Peter counseled, “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.”⁷

Perhaps the greatest hope a teacher can offer is the hope found in the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

“And what is it that ye shall hope for?” Mormon asked. “Behold I say unto you that ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal, and this because of your faith in him.”⁸

Teachers, lift up your voices and testify to the true nature of the Godhead. Declare your witness concerning the Book of Mormon. Convey the glorious and beautiful truths contained in the plan of salvation. Use Church-approved materials, especially the scriptures, to teach the truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ in their purity and simplicity. Remember the Savior’s injunction to “search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”⁹

Many years later, when Lucy was nearing the end of her life, I visited with her. We reminisced concerning those days so long before when she had been our teacher. We spoke of each member of our class and discussed what each one was now doing. Her love and caring spanned a lifetime.

I love the Lord’s injunction found in the Doctrine and Covenants:

“I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom.

“Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you.”⁶

Lucy Gertsch taught diligently because she loved untiringly.

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

President Monson invites us to “ponder [our] efforts to teach and to learn and to look to the Savior as our Guide in doing so.” You might consider searching the scriptures with those you visit to find insights into the ways that Jesus Christ taught and learned.

You could start with some of the scriptures President Monson referenced, such as Matthew 11:29, John 5:30, and Mark 4:2. You could discuss how what you have learned about Christ can help you “become partakers of His divine power.”

Help God's children understand what is genuine and important in this life. Help them develop the strength to choose paths that will keep them safely on the way to eternal life.

Teach truth, and the Holy Ghost will attend your efforts.

“Learn of Me”

Because Jesus Christ was perfectly obedient and submissive to His Father, He “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”¹⁰ Do we have the determination to do likewise? Just as Jesus “received grace for grace,”¹¹ we must patiently and persistently seek light and knowledge from God in our efforts to learn the gospel.

Listening is an essential element of learning. When preparing to be taught, we prayerfully seek inspiration and confirmation from the Holy Ghost. We ponder, we pray, we

apply gospel lessons, and we seek the Father's will for us.¹²

Jesus “taught . . . many things by parables,”¹³ which require ears to hear, eyes to see, and hearts to understand. As we live worthily, we can better hear the whisperings of the Holy Ghost, which can “teach [us] all things, and bring all things to [our] remembrance.”¹⁴

When we respond to the Lord's gentle invitation, “Learn of me,” we become partakers of His divine power. Let us, therefore, go forward in the spirit of obedience, following our Exemplar by teaching as He would have us teach and learning as He would have us learn. ■

NOTES

1. Matthew 11:29.
2. John 3:2.
3. Luke 18:22.
4. 3 Nephi 18:16.
5. Matthew 18:1–3; emphasis added.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 88:77–78.
7. 1 Peter 3:15.
8. Moroni 7:41.
9. John 5:39.
10. Luke 2:52.
11. Doctrine and Covenants 93:12.
12. See John 5:30.
13. Mark 4:2.
14. John 14:26.

CHILDREN

Learning about Jesus

The Holy Ghost gives us peaceful feelings to help us know that Jesus is real and loves us. Write or draw something that you have learned about Jesus.



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

Created in the Image of God

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . .

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Genesis 1:26–27).

God is our Heavenly Father, and He created us in His image. Of this truth, President Thomas S. Monson said: “God our Father has ears with which to hear our prayers. He has eyes with which to see our actions. He has a mouth with which to speak to us. He has a heart with which to feel compassion and love. He is real. He is living. We are his children made in his image. We look like him and he looks like us.”¹

“Latter-day Saints see all people as children of God in a full and complete sense; they consider every person divine in origin, nature, and potential.”² Each is “a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents.”³

“[The Prophet] Joseph Smith also learned that God desires that His children receive the same kind of exalted



existence of which He partakes.”⁴ As God said, “For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

Additional Scriptures

Genesis 1:26–27; 1 Corinthians 3:17; Doctrine and Covenants 130:1

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “I Know That My Redeemer Lives,” in Conference Report, Apr. 1966, 63.
2. Gospel Topics, “Becoming Like God,” topics.lds.org; see also Moses 7:31–37.
3. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
4. Gospel Topics, “Becoming Like God,” topics.lds.org; see also *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 221.

Consider This

How does knowing that each person is created in God’s image help us in our association with others?

Faith, Family, Relief



From the Scriptures

The brother of Jared in the Book of Mormon sought for a way to light the eight barges designed to carry the Jaredites across the waters to the promised land. He “did molten out of a rock sixteen small stones” and prayed that God would “touch these stones” with His finger “that they may shine forth in darkness.” And God “stretched forth his hand and touched the stones one by one.” The veil was taken from the eyes of the brother of Jared, and “he saw the finger of the Lord; and it was as the finger of a man. . . .

“And the Lord said unto him: Believest thou the words which I shall speak?

“And he answered: Yea, Lord.”

And “the Lord showed himself unto [the brother of Jared]” and said, “Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image? Yea, even all men were created in the beginning after mine own image.” (See Ether 3:1–17.)

OCTOBER 2015 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 2015 general conference, you can use these pages (and Conference Notebooks in future issues) to help you study and apply the recent teachings of the living prophets and apostles and other Church leaders.

DOCTRINAL HIGHLIGHT



Our Savior's Atonement

“Our Savior's Atonement does more than assure us of immortality by a universal resurrection and give us the opportunity to be cleansed from sin by repentance and baptism. His Atonement also provides the opportunity to call upon Him who has experienced all of our mortal infirmities to give us the strength to bear the burdens of mortality. He knows of our

anguish, and He is there for us. Like the good Samaritan, when He finds us wounded at the wayside, He will bind up our wounds and care for us (see Luke 10:34). The healing and strengthening power of Jesus Christ and His Atonement is for all of us who will ask.”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Strengthened by the Atonement of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 64.

PROPHETIC PROMISE



We Can Choose to Believe

“I testify that even in the toughest of times, the Savior will say to you as He said to an anxious father on a crowded street in Galilee, ‘Be not afraid, only believe.’

“We can choose to believe.

“For in belief, we discover the dawn of light.

“We will discover truth.

“We will find peace.

“Because of our belief, we will never hunger, never thirst. The gifts of God's grace will enable us to be true to our faith and will fill our soul like ‘a well of water springing up into everlasting life’ [John 4:14]. We will experience true and lasting joy.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Be Not Afraid, Only Believe,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 79.

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

CREATE A FAMILY MOTTO

Based on their “knowledge of the Lord’s mercy and power,” Sister Neill F. Marriott’s family chose “It will all work out” as their family motto. In your own family, you could discuss how the Savior strengthens you, and then create your own family motto. (See Neill F. Marriott, “Yielding Our Hearts to God,” 30.)



ANSWERS FOR WOMEN

Each conference, prophets and apostles give inspired answers to questions Church members may have. Use your November 2015 issue or visit conference.lds.org to find answers to these questions:

- Why are covenant-keeping latter-day women vital to the Church? —See Russell M. Nelson, “A Plea to My Sisters,” 95.
- Why is motherhood such a sacred and ennobling responsibility? —See Jeffrey R. Holland, “Behold Thy Mother,” 47.
- What is your purpose as a woman in the work of salvation? —See Carol F. McConkie, “Here to Serve a Righteous Cause,” 12.
- Why is it important that we know we have a divine nature and destiny? —See Rosemary M. Wixom, “Discovering the Divinity Within,” 6.



YOU ARE NOT A LOST CAUSE

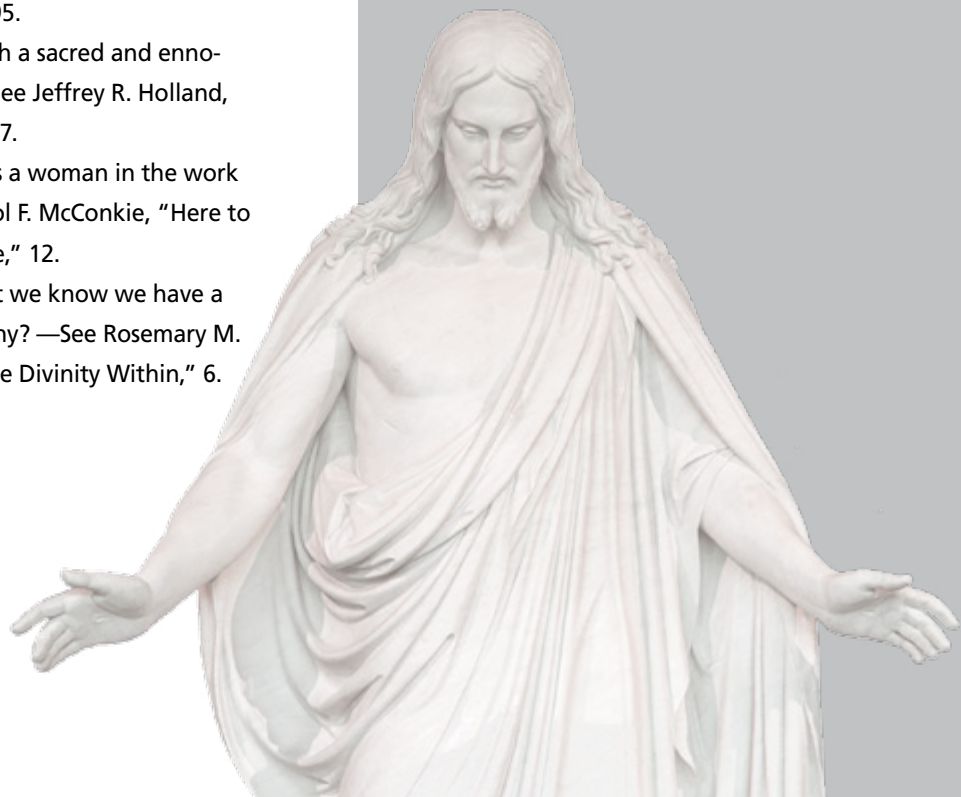
“It matters not what sins we have committed or how deep we have sunk into that proverbial pit. . . .

“ . . . What does matter is that Christ is pleading our case before the Father. . . . That is what really matters and what should give all of us renewed hope and a determination to try one more time, because He has not forgotten us.

“I testify that the Savior will never turn away from us when we humbly seek Him in order to repent; will never consider us to be a lost cause; will never say, ‘Oh no, not you again’; will never reject us because of a failure to understand how hard it is to avoid sin. He understands it all perfectly. . . .

“Repentance . . . has the power to lift burdens and replace them with hope.”

Elder Allen D. Haynie of the Seventy, “Remembering in Whom We Have Trusted,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 122–23.



HOW COULD I NOT STAY TO THE END?

By Lee Middleton

Washing dishes was a job I had determined never to do again—until I was called to do it in the temple cafeteria.

When I was a teenager, I took a job washing dishes at a restaurant. It was the second worst job of my life. I hated it so much that the manager, compassionately I'm sure, offered me the job of washing pots and pans instead. That was the worst job of my life.

I promised myself that I would never take either job again.

Years later I was asked to serve in the temple—not as proxy but in the kitchen. I learned that the job might involve washing dishes, pots, and pans. I wanted to serve, so I accepted the call.

As it turned out, I was assigned to serve food to temple patrons instead of washing dishes. I had a wonderful time.

Recently I was again called to serve in the temple. I enthusiastically accepted, hoping to serve in the kitchen again but ready to serve wherever I was needed. When I reported for service, I was asked to wash dishes, pots, and pans. I was in the Lord's house wanting to serve, so I didn't say no.

The work was sometimes hectic, but I discovered that no matter what I was called to do in the temple, I found joy in serving. I did my assigned chores with dedication and care, making certain each item was clean and ready for use. One day when I was halfway through my shift, a security guard making his rounds thanked me for serving.

The temple cafeteria where I serve closes at 7:30 p.m., and we are generally done cleaning by 8:00 p.m.

But the person in the washing area must stay longer to send everything through the hot dishwasher to be sanitized. When the same security guard returned for his final check, he thanked me “for staying to the very end.”

“How could I not stay all the way to the end?” I replied.

This conversation remained with me as I sent the final trays through the steaming dishwasher. As I reflected on my task, a thought entered my mind: “How could I not serve the Lord in this small way? He suffered in Gethsemane and hung on a cross for me. What sacrifice on my part is too great in return?”

I felt the Spirit confirm that indeed my Savior had given His life for me.

Washing dishes was a job I had determined never to do again, but I am grateful to have the opportunity to serve in the temple. And I am grateful that I can serve in ways that show my Savior that no sacrifice is too much for me to make and no chance to serve is beneath my effort. ■

The author lives in Oregon, USA.



I CAN MAKE THE PAIN GO AWAY

By Kate A. Hansen

I had been seeking the Lord's help. So why was I still struggling?

At the beginning of my junior year of college, my mother and father filed for divorce. Even though the decision came after two years of separation, the effects were searing. I felt physical pain and often couldn't sleep. Even more heartbreaking was to see my siblings—the youngest was only six years old—try to cope with this life-shattering event.

My own way to cope was to work harder. In addition to a full load of college courses, I took on a part-time internship and two part-time jobs. I also began to play with the city's symphony. I often spent 15 to 18 hours a day on school and work. No matter how busy I kept myself, nothing I did helped.

I did try to invite the Spirit into my life. I had always been active in the Church, and I knew I should draw closer to God during trials. I kept up daily scripture study and prayer, which brought some peace. But still, none of my burdens lifted.

About six weeks into the semester, my roommate asked our home teachers for a priesthood blessing. While I sat on the couch and listened, the Spirit prompted me to ask for a

blessing too. As soon as their hands were on my head, I felt the Spirit enter my heart. I hardly heard a word they spoke, but I received a clear message. It was as if Heavenly Father whispered, "Why aren't you letting me help you?"

After weeks of controlling my emotions, I sobbed. I saw that I had been making only a token effort to seek the Lord's help. I had been convinced that I had to be strong and do everything myself and do it all perfectly. I had forgotten that I had a Savior who understood, through His suffering, my

pain, my anger, my weakness. Now I saw that when everything in my world was crashing to pieces, I had only one secure place to stand—upon the rock of my Redeemer.

Each morning after receiving the blessing, I pleaded for the Lord's help. I asked Him to enable me to complete my assignments. I asked Him to allow me to feel joy and peace again. I asked Him to lift the heaviness from my heart. Slowly, my life changed; slowly my burdens lifted.

A verse in the Book of Mormon explains how the Lord helps those struggling with sin: "Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart *and* a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered" (2 Nephi 2:7; emphasis added). I believe He helps those struggling with other burdens the same way. I had a broken heart, but it wasn't until I had a contrite spirit that I was able to feel the peace the Savior offers.

Although that time in my life was difficult, it allowed me to know that Jesus Christ was not just *the* Savior. He is *my* Savior. He bore *my* griefs and carried *my* sorrows, and with His stripes *I* am healed (see Isaiah 53:4–5). ■

The author lives in Idaho, USA.



FEELING THE SPIRIT OF INSTITUTE

The sometimes negative environment of the university weighed on me. As I felt the atmosphere in institute, I knew I was not alone.

By Jennifer Bohorquez Gomez

When I started college, I loved being part of the educational environment and seeing the enthusiasm of my peers. Thanks to my Father in Heaven, the Perpetual Education Fund, and the support of my family, my dream was unfolding.

During the first weeks of classes, I realized the hard work that awaited me during the next five years: homework,

quizzes, tests, and projects. I started to love my career choice and my college, but I also realized that until then I had lived in a bubble. I saw clearly that I was different from the other college students. They listened to music with obscene lyrics, and their conversations tended to be about being immoral, using illegal drugs, and drinking alcohol on the weekends.

My classmates invited me many times to participate with them in their weekend activities. After I explained my standards and my religion, many respected my views and stopped insisting that I join them, but many more ridiculed my beliefs. I tried to be indifferent to these comments, but I wondered, “Can I live with this all the time?” I prayed constantly to receive strength and not feel alone. But I did not feel that these prayers were answered. Then I realized the things going on around me in the university were not going to change.

Though I was in the university, I continued to attend Young Women, so

I learned about institute one Sunday in sacrament meeting. I decided to go to institute the following Wednesday to ask a question I had about the Perpetual Education Fund.

After a long, hectic day at the university, I headed over to institute. I got on public transportation, sat down, and started reading the next chapter for homework. I sighed deeply, wanting a break, and looked up, only to see something inappropriate taking place near me. At my stop I got off and walked to institute, thinking a lot about the homework I needed to turn in the following day.

Though I lived gospel standards, the environment of the university weighed on me as I entered the institute building. I walked in and saw young adult college students dressed modestly and heard them speaking respectfully to each other. Which courses would they take this semester? The Doctrine and Covenants? The Book of Mormon? Missionary preparation?

I approached the clerk, received the answer to the question I had come to ask, and turned to leave. Near the exit I turned around, feeling the atmosphere of institute. I went out the door, and tears flooded my eyes as I felt great joy. I took public transportation back to my house, crying and smiling. An indelible thought came to me: I was not alone.



In that moment I received the answer to my prayers. I felt the Spirit, thought about my experience, and thanked my Heavenly Father for the joy of believing in the gospel.

When I got home, I hugged my mom and told her about my wonderful experience feeling the love of God. He had never left me and had always been with me, as He is with each of us when we need Him the most. I attended institute throughout my time in college and met many people who remain my good friends. But Jesus Christ is our best source of love and support, and He never leaves us alone. ■

The author lives in Colombia.



THE POWER OF INSTITUTE

“I know the power that comes from associations in the seminary and institute programs. It has enriched my life, and I know it will do the same for you. It will put

a shield of protection around you to keep you free from the temptations and trials of the world. There is a great blessing in having a knowledge of the gospel. And I know of no better place for the young people of the Church to gain a special knowledge of sacred things than in the institute.”

Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Receive Truth,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 61–62.

More Alike Than Different

As young women progress into Relief Society and those sisters welcome them, both groups will quickly discover they have much in common.

During a joint Young Women and Relief Society activity, an 18-year-old Laurel and an 81-year-old woman were asked to discuss their first dates. “Both were pleasantly surprised to learn the similarities between two experiences that were decades apart.”¹ They discovered that they had more in common than they thought they did.

Progressing from Young Women into Relief Society can often seem intimidating and, at times, even scary. As a young woman, you may find yourself asking, “Do I have anything in common with these older women? Is there a place for me in Relief Society?”²

The answer to those questions is a resounding yes! Like the two women in the story above, you may find you have more in common with each other than you thought. And yes, there is a place for you in Relief Society. But, like all progressions in life from one stage to another, we need to work together to be successful.



YOUNG WOMEN



By Bonnie L. Oscarson
Young Women General President

I promise you young women that as you make the effort to get to know the sisters in your ward, they will bless your life and you will

be a blessing to them. Jump in with both feet and let it be known that you are ready to be an active member of one of the oldest and largest women's organizations in the world. You are an essential part of the work of salvation in the latter days, and as a covenant-keeping daughter of your Heavenly Father, you are ready to do your part in building the kingdom of God on the earth. Prepare yourself to experience something wonderful.

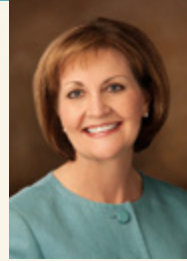
What Can 18-Year-Old Laurels Do?

As you look around the Relief Society room full of sisters of all ages, ask the question, "What can I learn from these remarkable women?" As you open your mind and your heart, you will be surprised at the friendships you will form with sisters who are older than you but who have much to share in the way of experience and wisdom.

What Can Young Women Leaders Do?

Your attitudes about being an active member of Relief Society can have a big influence on how the young women in your classes feel about it. You can share personal experiences that show how you have been blessed or how the lives of others have been blessed through participation in Relief Society. You should encourage and assist the 18-year-old Laurels to make the progression joyfully into Relief Society.

RELIEF SOCIETY



By Linda K. Burton
Relief Society General President

How can you as Relief Society sisters help mentor "new sisters" to succeed in our essential part of the work of salvation? You can help

them understand that they are a vital part of the sacred work in God's kingdom. Sharing the book or online link to *Daughters in My Kingdom* can help describe our sacred work in Relief Society.

You can link arms and open your heart to young women as we prepare together for the blessing of eternal life. You can expand your circles to include young women. By so doing, you will be fulfilling Lucy Mack Smith's desire to her first Relief Society sisters: "We must cherish one another, watch over one another, comfort one another and gain instruction, that we may all sit down in heaven together."³

What Can Relief Society Leaders and Sisters Do?

Recognize that young women bring with them talents, gifts, and an eagerness to share. Make sure that as young women enter Relief Society, they have a friend to sit with. Give them opportunities to add their enthusiastic spark to Relief Society. Realize that you not only have a powerful influence on these younger sisters, but that they can be loving examples to you. If you teach Relief Society lessons, make sure to include the situations of all age-groups you are teaching—not just mothers. Young women can even be given opportunities to teach Relief Society. You can try pairing younger sisters and older sisters in visiting teaching and service opportunities. You can be a blessing and help eliminate age barriers. ■

NOTES

1. See Carole L. Clark, "Knit Together in Love," *Ensign*, Oct. 1993, 25.
2. See Bonnie L. Oscarson, "Help Young Women Embrace Move to Relief Society," *Church News*, Aug. 20, 2014.
3. Lucy Mack Smith, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 25.

Progression

INTO RELIEF SOCIETY



Last year Sister Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women general president, and Sister Linda K. Burton, Relief Society general president, posted requests on their Church Facebook pages. They asked young women and Relief Society sisters, as well as parents, leaders, and teachers involved with helping young women, to share their experiences about progressing from Young Women into Relief Society. The two presidents received comments from around the world.

Many young women expressed excitement about being surrounded by strong women, while others held back.

Following are some of the comments about making the progression from Young Women into Relief Society easier. They are arranged into two groups: (1) What can we do in Young Women? and (2) what can we do in Relief Society?



In Young Women:

1. ATTEND RELIEF SOCIETY OPENING EXERCISES.

Many Relief Society leaders invited the young women to opening exercises once a month and the Laurels to a lesson occasionally.

Jill, a Relief Society leader, shared what her ward does. She wrote: “We challenge young women to sit next to a Relief Society sister before the meeting and ask her about her life. It helps young women see that Relief Society sisters aren’t that different from them.”

2. GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER IN SOCIAL SETTINGS.

“I distinctly remember helping do the dishes at a funeral luncheon,” wrote Rachel, a young woman. “I got to talk and laugh with the other sisters who were in the kitchen, and I felt like part of the group. They expressed their confidence in me. That was a huge moment for me.”

Bekah, a Relief Society sister, took the initiative to get to know the young women. She wrote: “I use social media to befriend the youth and get to know

the things they love. As a result, we became friends.”

3. LEARN FROM WOMEN WHO LOVE RELIEF SOCIETY.

“I grew up in a town outside Stockholm, Sweden. My mother was single,” wrote Britt-Marie. “I was almost 13 the year my mother and I were baptized. When Mom attended Relief Society night meetings, she brought me along so I wouldn’t be at home alone. When I finally turned 18, I knew and loved every sister.”

Paula wrote, “As a convert at 14, I made an effort to serve the widows, single mothers, and less-active sisters. Soon they were inviting me into their homes for family activities. As a result, on my first Sunday in Relief Society, I felt I had a roomful of mothers.”

“My mother, grandmother, and aunts shared their testimonies through their examples,” wrote Lindsey. “They included me in service projects. I couldn’t wait to officially join Relief Society. The transition wasn’t abrupt. Relief Society is where I felt I was always going.”

4. SET THE EXAMPLE.

“I was super excited to go to Relief Society,” said Emily. “I think it was in part due to the fact that I always felt close to my Young Women leaders. They treated me with a lot of respect. I didn’t have any hesitations joining the Relief Society sisters because I assumed it would be the same way with them, and it was.”

“I wish my Young Women leaders had talked to me more about Relief Society and the love and sisterhood found there,” wrote Marisa.

“The leaders have a big impact on the way young women see Relief Society as a whole,” wrote Tessa. “I think it is important for Young Women leaders to encourage young women toward Relief Society and for Relief Society sisters to be welcoming.”

“I wish my Young Women leaders hadn’t made Relief Society sound like a boring place,” wrote Amanda. “As a result, that is how I felt going into it.”

In Relief Society:

5. MAKE THE TRANSITION MORE THAN A ONE-TIME EVENT.

While many Relief Society presidents do something special to acknowledge a young woman on her first day in Relief Society, comments showed that leaders also realized that the progression into Relief Society is ongoing.

Raquel, a Relief Society leader in Brazil, shared what her presidency did: “(1) We gave each young woman a welcome kit on her first Sunday. This was always a happy moment. (2) As a presidency we did some training with them so they knew they could come to us. (3) We suggested that young women not be

called to Primary or Young Women immediately.”

6. MAKE LESSONS APPLICABLE TO ALL SISTERS.

“I had grown up engaging in deep gospel conversations with my mother,” wrote Christy, “and I found that Relief Society was often closer to those kinds of conversations.”

Jillian wrote: “I had yearned for spiritual insight and appreciated getting it.”

“I struggled to relate to the lessons and with sisters who seemed so much older than me,” wrote Marisa.

“I was excited to hear perspectives of women who could share with me a vision of our mortal purpose that I hadn’t seen yet,” wrote Emily.

7. SIT BY A FRIEND ON SUNDAY.

“I didn’t have a family member to sit with,” wrote Lacey, a young woman. “Having sisters just say ‘Hi’ to me or sit with me made a huge difference.”

Kelly, a Relief Society sister, stated it simply. She wrote: “If someone doesn’t feel welcome, it’s hard to continue attending.”



Sadly, Nikki was one sister who felt uncomfortable. What she wrote reminds us that there is always more we can do. “In situations like mine, some are lost to inactivity. Relief Society needs to be a place where we can embrace sisters of all ages, regardless of who they are or what they’ve done.”

Crystal cried on her first day. She wrote: “My former Young Women leader put her arm around me and invited me to sit with her. I was with wives, mothers, and grandmothers. I shared my feelings, and they listened. For the first time I felt the strength of being part of a group of women striving to be more like Christ. I felt so blessed to be a part of this worldwide organization.”

8. GIVE YOUNG WOMEN OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE.

“I was asked to play the piano for our Sunday meetings,” wrote Amy. “Knowing I was needed helped me develop a bond with the sisters. It’s like what President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said about new members in the Church needing a friend, an assignment, and nourishment by the good word of God [see ‘Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep,’ *Ensign*, May 1999, 108]. I needed the same things.”

A new Relief Society sister, Cate, wrote: “I came to learn that I had an important role in Relief Society after I was called as an instructor. I have learned a lot. I am not married yet, but I feel I am ready for marriage and motherhood thanks to Relief Society.”

Charlotte, a young woman, took the initiative. She wrote: “I have looked for service opportunities because I rarely have the opportunity to attend Sunday Relief Society meetings. However, service opportunities have been abundant and taught me the meaning of Relief Society.”

9. KNOW THAT YOU ARE WELCOME AND WANTED.

Brooke wrote, “The simple desire of the women in my ward to ask us questions about what was important to us was huge. I realized that although these women had different life experiences than I did, we still had the same basic hopes, dreams, and fears.”

Robyn, however, had a difficult time. “I was new and the only one my age that was in Relief Society,” she wrote. “At first I felt I didn’t belong.” But Robyn kept going with her mom. “Slowly I got to know the women and grew to love Relief Society and visiting teaching.”




Deborah wrote:

“I knew I was a Relief Society sister when Bonnie, my Relief Society president, asked me to assist her in cleaning a sister’s apartment. The sister had lived in poverty and then died unexpectedly. As we gently sifted through what had been a difficult end to her life, we came across the sister’s bridal portrait. There, smiling up at us, was a stunning, bright-eyed brunette in her white satin bridal gown. Quietly Bonnie said, ‘This is how we’ll remember her.’ I felt a love for a sister that I had not met in mortality. We were Relief Society sisters. Bonnie and I finished the day with tears and a hug.”

Let us truly become a “circle of sisters,” as President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, tenderly referred to us as sisters in Relief Society. Let us build on what we have in common. Our progression from Young Women to Relief Society is God’s path for us as His daughters to grow and develop. Truly, as the Relief Society motto says: “Charity Never Faileth” (see 1 Corinthians 13:8). ■





What Shall I Do?

This simple question found repeatedly in the scriptures can help us determine God's will for us.

By John Hilton III

Assistant Professor of Ancient Scripture,
Brigham Young University

In the scriptures we find many stories of people who asked an important question: “What shall I do?” King Lamoni’s father asked this question of Aaron the missionary (see Alma 22:15); a multitude in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost asked it of Peter and the Apostles (see Acts 2:37); and a rich young ruler asked it of the Savior (see Luke 18:18). What can we learn from this question and those who asked it?

First, we can learn from what has led people to ask this question. Second, we can learn from the various responses to the question. And perhaps most important, we can reflect on how asking, “What shall I do?” and similar questions can be valuable in our own lives.

Willing to Learn

Those who asked the question “What shall I do?” share several significant characteristics. First, they listened to the preaching of the gospel. For example, before the people asked John the Baptist, “What shall we do?” they listened to his preaching (see Luke 3:3–14). And before King Lamoni’s father asked, “What shall I do that I may have . . . eternal life?” (Alma 22:15), he listened intently to Aaron, who “did expound unto him the scriptures” (verse 13). Listening to the word of God was also important when Peter and the Apostles preached to the people in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Through the Spirit, Peter was able to deliver his message

to people who spoke many different languages, and he testified that Jesus is the resurrected Christ. The people “were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37).

A desire to do one’s duty is another important aspect of learning what to do. In some cases, a new calling or ordination can prompt people to better learn their duty. Several sections in the Doctrine and Covenants came forth because a person wanted to know his or her duty and inquired of the Lord through the Prophet Joseph Smith. For example, “three of the Whitmer sons, each having

received a testimony . . . , became deeply concerned over the matter of their individual duty” (D&C 14, section introduction). In response to their concern, Joseph Smith received sections 14, 15, and 16 of the Doctrine and Covenants.¹

In addition, humility is essential to seeking direction. It takes a person with a humble heart to ask the question “What shall I do?” When Alma and Amulek preached to “a great multitude” of Zoramites who “were poor in heart,” Alma observed that “their afflictions had truly humbled them, and that they were in a preparation to hear the word” (Alma 32:4, 6).

Receiving an Answer

Often the response to the query “What shall I do?” is simply to repent. Aaron instructed the father of King Lamoni to “repent of all [his] sins, and [to] bow down before God, and call on his name in faith, believing that [he should] receive” (Alma 22:16). Similarly, Peter told his audience on the day of Pentecost to “repent, and be baptized” (Acts 2:38).

However, responses to the question “What shall I do?” are not always the same. John the Baptist answered this question in three different ways to three different groups of people (see Luke 3:11–14). The Savior gave different counsel to the rich young ruler than He did to the lawyer who tempted him (see Luke 18:18–23;

10:25–28). But in each case the individuals seeking answers were instructed to take a specific action that almost always involved making changes in their lives that demonstrated their obedience to God.

Asking with Real Intent

There are many ways we can learn what God would have us do. Certainly we can listen more diligently to the preaching of the word, strive to fulfill our duties, and humble ourselves. And as President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has taught, we can and should directly ask of the Lord, “What shall I do?” President Eyring said:

“If you have had trouble getting answers to your prayers, try asking today, ‘What is there that you would have me to do?’

“That prayer will be answered if you are sincere and if you listen like a little child, with real intent to act.”²

As Latter-day Saints, we have made covenants to do God’s will. Thus, each of us has the responsibility to seek to know what God would have us do. As we feast on the words of Christ, seek to do our duty, and humble ourselves, revelation will come. We can and must ask the question “What shall I do?” ■

NOTES

1. See also Doctrine and Covenants 23; 51; 53; 54; 66; 72; 75; 108.
2. Henry B. Eyring, “Choose to Be Good” (Brigham Young University devotional, Nov. 12, 1991), 6–7, speeches.byu.edu.



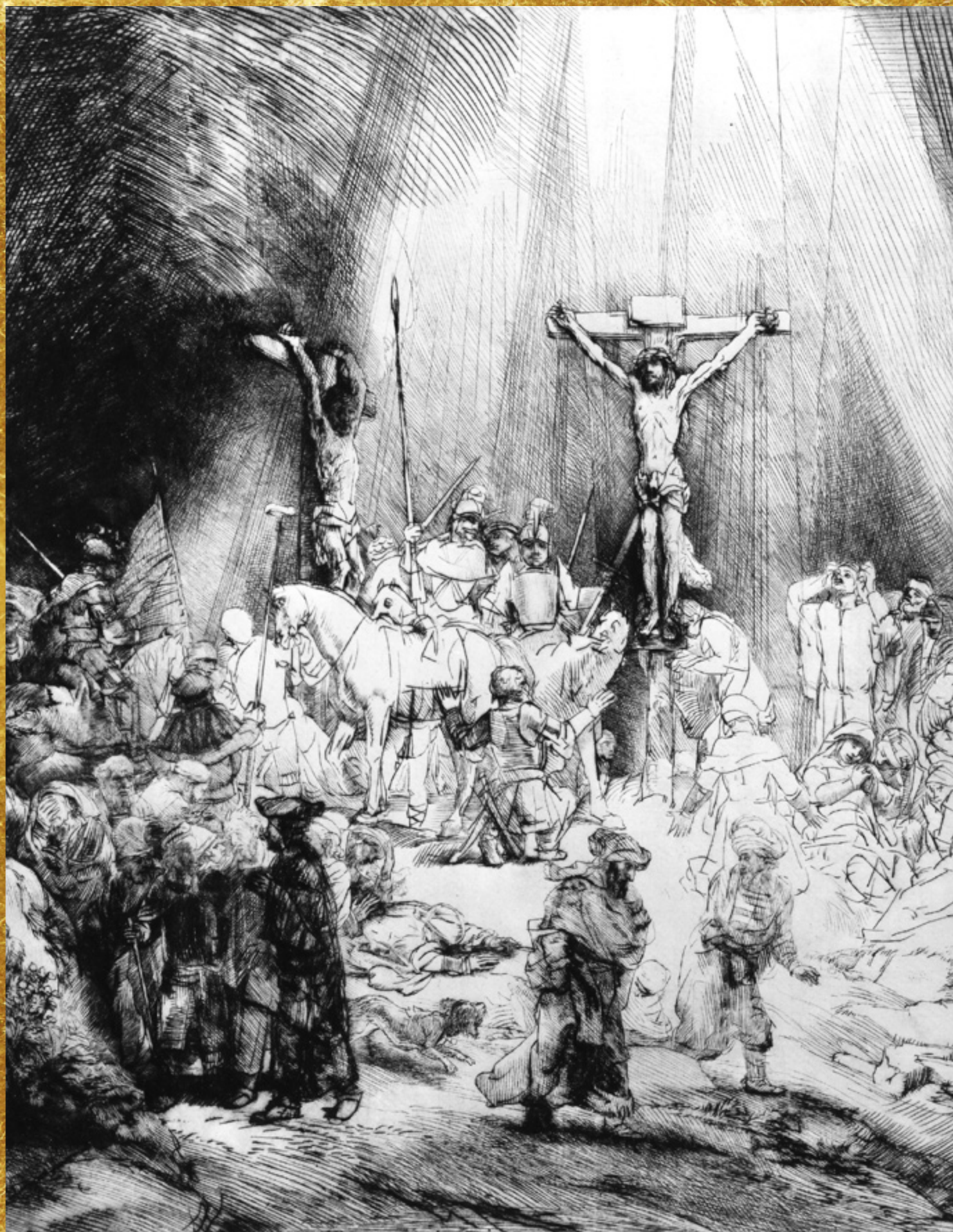
Filling the Lamp

By Rosemary Noble Palmer

*A drop at a time.
One thought at a time.
One good deed at a time.
One prayer, one smile.
One scripture memorized and
applied in daily life.
One Church meeting attended,
Spirit felt.
One time sticking up for the
downtrodden.
One obedient act.
One honest friend made.
One day lived joyously.
One courageous choice.
One duty done well and
promptly.
One chore finished without
complaint or reminder.
One inspiring song heard,
book read.
One mistake fixed.
One offense forgiven.
One grateful expression.
One kindness shown.
One recollection of divine
worth that transforms.
One hug given.*

*Each drop of oil, small,
Together fill the lamp
Just one drop at a time.*







By Elder D. Todd Christofferson

Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

Finding Your Life

In giving His life, Christ saved not only His own life but our lives as well. He made it possible for us to exchange what would otherwise have been an ultimately futile mortal life for eternal life.

When Jesus and His Apostles were together in Caesarea Philippi, He asked them this question, “Whom say ye that I am?” (Matthew 16:15). Peter, with reverent eloquence and power, responded, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16; see also Mark 8:29; Luke 9:20).

It thrills me to read those words; it thrills me to say them. Shortly after this sacred moment, when Jesus spoke to the Apostles about His impending death and Resurrection, Peter contradicted Him. This earned Peter a stinging rebuke—for not being in tune with, or not savoring, the things of God “but those that be of men” (Matthew 16:21–23; see also Mark 8:33). Then Jesus, “showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom [He had] reproved” (D&C 121:43), kindly instructed Peter and his Brethren about taking up one’s cross and losing one’s life as the way to find an abundant and eternal life, He being the perfect example (see Matthew 16:24–25).

I want to talk about the Lord’s seemingly paradoxical declaration that “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it” (Matthew 10:39; see also Matthew 10:32–41; 16:24–28; Mark 8:34–38; Luke 9:23–26; 17:33). It teaches a powerful, far-reaching doctrine we need to understand and apply.

A thoughtful professor offered this insight: “As the heavens are higher than the earth, God’s work in your life is bigger than the story you’d like that life to tell. His

life is bigger than your plans, goals, or fears. To save your life, you'll have to lay down your stories and, minute by minute, day by day, give your life back to him."¹

The more I think about it, the more amazed I am at how consistently Jesus gave His life to the Father, how perfectly He lost His life in the will of the Father—in life and in death. This is precisely the opposite of Satan's attitude and approach, which have been widely adopted in today's self-centered world.

In the premortal council, in volunteering to fill the role of Savior in the Father's divine plan, Jesus said, "Father, *thy* will be done, and the glory be *thine* forever" (Moses 4:2; emphasis added). Lucifer, on the other hand, declared, "Behold, here am I, send me, *I* will be thy son, and *I* will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely *I* will do it; wherefore give *me* thine honor" (Moses 4:1; emphasis added).

Christ's commandment to follow Him is a commandment to reject once again the Satanic model and to lose our life in favor of the real life, the authentic life, the celestial-kingdom-enabled life that God envisions for each of us. That life will bless everyone we touch and will make saints of us. With our current, limited vision, it is a life that is beyond comprehension. Indeed, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

I wish we had more of the conversation between Jesus and His disciples. It would have been helpful to have some additional light about what it means, in practice, to lose one's life for His sake and thereby find it. But as I pondered it, I realized that the Savior's comments just before and after His declaration provide valuable guidance. Let's consider three of these contextual comments.

Take Up Your Cross Daily

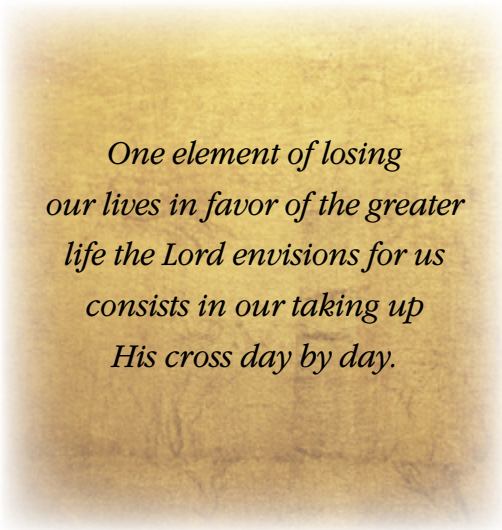
First are the Lord's words spoken just before He said, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it" (Matthew 16:25). As recorded in each of the synoptic Gospels, Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). Luke adds the word *daily*—"let him . . . take up his cross daily" (Luke 9:23). In Matthew, the Joseph Smith Translation expands this statement with the Lord's definition of what it means to take up one's cross: "And now for a man to take up his cross, is to deny himself all ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and keep my commandments" (Matthew 16:24, footnote *e*).

This accords with James's declaration: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, . . . to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). Taking up one's cross is a daily life of avoiding all that is unclean while affirmatively keeping the two great commandments—love of God and love of fellowman—on which all other commandments hang (see Matthew 22:37–40). Thus, one element of losing our lives in favor of the greater life the Lord envisions for us consists in our taking up His cross day by day.

Confess Christ before Others

A second accompanying statement suggests that finding our life by losing it for the Savior's sake and the gospel's sake entails a willingness to make our discipleship open and public. "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38; see also Luke 9:26).

Elsewhere in Matthew, we find a companion statement:



*One element of losing
our lives in favor of the greater
life the Lord envisions for us
consists in our taking up
His cross day by day.*



“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

“But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 10:32–33).

One obvious and rather sobering meaning of losing your life by confessing Christ is to lose it literally in sustaining and defending your belief in Him. We have grown accustomed to thinking of this extreme requirement as applying in history as we read about the martyrs of the past, including most of the ancient Apostles. Now we see, however, that what was historical is moving into the present.²

We know not what may come in the future, but if any of us should face the trauma of literally losing our life in the Master’s cause, I trust that we would show courage and loyalty.

The more common (and sometimes more difficult) application of the Savior’s teaching, however, has to do with how we live day by day. It concerns the words we speak, the example we set. Our lives should be a confession of Christ and, together with our words, testify of our faith in and devotion to Him. And this testimony must be stoutly defended in the face of ridicule, discrimination, or defamation on the part of those who oppose Him “in this adulterous and sinful generation” (Mark 8:38).

On a different occasion the Lord added this remarkable statement about our loyalty to Him: “Think not that I am come to send peace on [the] earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

“For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against

Our lives should be a confession of Christ and, together with our words, testify of our faith in and devotion to Him.

her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

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

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

“And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:34–38).

Saying that He came not to send peace but rather a sword seems at first impression a contradiction to the scriptures that refer to Christ as “The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6), the proclamation at His birth—“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14)—and other well-known

references, such as “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you” (John 14:27).

“It is true that Christ came to bring peace—peace between the believer and God, and peace among men. Yet the inevitable result of Christ’s coming is conflict—between Christ and the antichrist, between light and darkness, between Christ’s children and the devil’s children. This conflict can occur even between members of the same family.”³

I’m confident that a number of you have been rejected and ostracized by father and mother, brothers and sisters as you accepted the gospel of Jesus Christ and entered into His covenant. In one way or another, your superior love of Christ has required the sacrifice of relationships that were dear to you, and you have shed many tears. Yet with your own love undiminished, you hold steady under this cross, showing yourself unashamed of the Son of God.

The Cost of Discipleship

A few years ago a member of the Church shared a copy of the Book of Mormon with an Amish friend in Ohio, USA. The friend began to read the book and could not put it down. He and his wife were baptized, and within seven months two more Amish couples were converted and baptized members of the Church. Their children were baptized several months later.

These three families decided to remain in their community and continue their Amish lifestyle even though they had left the Amish faith. However, they were subjected to “shunning” by their close-knit Amish neighbors. Shunning means that no one in their Amish community will talk to them, work with

We can and must love one another as Jesus loves us. As He said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”



them, do business with them, or associate with them in any way. This includes not just friends but also family members.

Initially, these Amish Saints felt alone and isolated as even their children were subjected to shunning and were removed from their Amish schools. Their children have endured shunning by grandparents, cousins, and close neighbors. Even some of the older children of these Amish families, who did not accept the gospel, will not talk to or even acknowledge their parents. These families have struggled to recover from the social and economic effects of shunning, but they are succeeding.

Their faith remains strong. The adversity and opposition of shunning has caused them to be steadfast and immovable. A year after being baptized, the families were sealed in the temple and continue faithfully attending the temple on a weekly basis. They have found strength through receiving ordinances and entering into and honoring covenants. They are all active in their Church group and continue searching for ways to share the light and knowledge of the gospel with their extended families and community through acts of kindness and service.

Yes, the cost of joining The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints can be very high, but the admonition to prefer Christ above all others, even our closest family members, applies also to those who may have been born in the covenant. Many of us became members of the Church without opposition, perhaps as children. The challenge we may confront is remaining loyal to the Savior and His Church in the face of parents, in-laws, brothers or sisters, or even our children whose conduct, beliefs, or choices make it impossible to support both Him and them.

It is not a question of love. We can and must love one another as Jesus loves us. As He said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to

another” (John 13:35). So although familial love continues, relationships may be interrupted and, according to the circumstances, even support or tolerance at times may be suspended for the sake of our higher love (see Matthew 10:37).

In reality, the best way to help those we love—the best

way to love them—is to continue to put the Savior first. If we cast ourselves adrift from the Lord out of sympathy for loved ones who are suffering or distressed, then we lose the means by which we might have helped them. If, however, we remain firmly rooted in faith in Christ, we are in a position both to receive and to offer divine help.

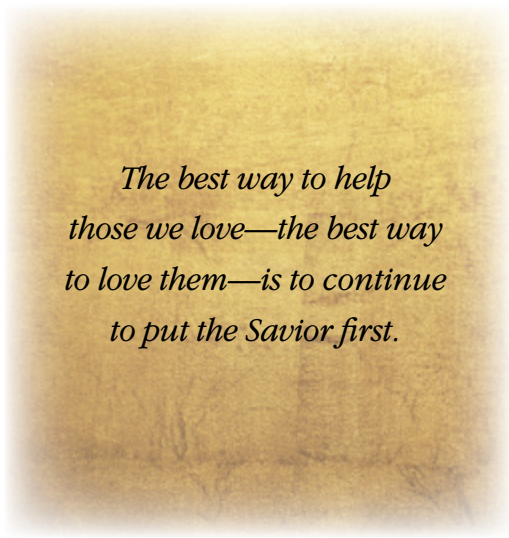
When the moment comes that a beloved family member wants desperately to turn to the only true and lasting source of help, he or she will know whom to trust as a

guide and a companion. In the meantime, with the gift of the Holy Spirit to guide, we can perform a steady ministry to lessen the pain of poor choices and bind up the wounds insofar as we are permitted. Otherwise, we serve neither those we love nor ourselves.

Forsake the World

The third element of losing our lives for the Lord’s sake is found in His words: “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26). As given in the Joseph Smith Translation, His words read: “For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and yet he receive him not whom God hath ordained, and he lose his own soul, and he himself be a castaway?” (Luke 9:25 [in the Bible appendix]).

To say that forsaking the world in favor of receiving “him . . . whom God hath ordained” is countercultural in today’s world is certainly an understatement. The priorities



*The best way to help
those we love—the best way
to love them—is to continue
to put the Savior first.*

and interests we most often see on display around us (and sometimes in us) are intensely selfish: a hunger to be recognized; an insistent demand that one's rights be respected; a consuming desire for money, things, and power; a sense of entitlement to a life of comfort and pleasure; a goal to minimize responsibility and avoid altogether any personal sacrifice for the good of another—to name a few.

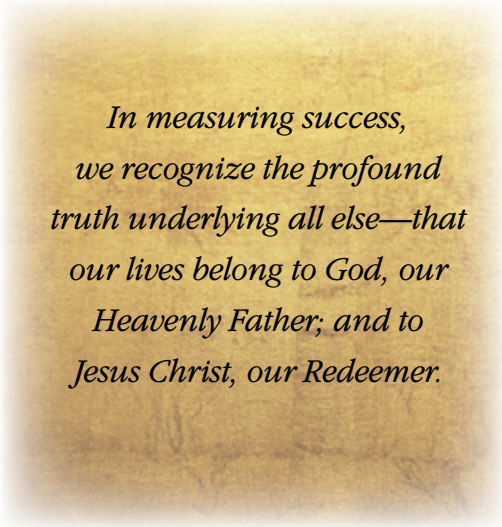
This is not to say that we should not seek to succeed, even excel, in worthy endeavors, including education and honorable work. Certainly, worthwhile achievements are laudable. But if we are to save our lives, we must always remember that such attainments are not ends in themselves but means to a higher end. With our faith in Christ, we must see political, business, academic, and similar forms of success not as defining us but as making possible our service to God and fellowman—beginning at home and extending as far as possible in the world.

Personal development has value as it contributes to development of a Christlike character. In measuring success, we recognize the profound truth underlying all else—that our lives belong to God, our Heavenly Father; and to Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Success means living in harmony with Their will.

In contrast to the narcissistic life, President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) offered a simple expression of the more excellent way:

“When we are engaged in the service of our fellowmen, not only do our deeds assist them, but we put our own problems in a fresher perspective. When we concern ourselves more with others, there is less time to be concerned with ourselves! In the midst of the miracle of serving, there is the promise of Jesus that by losing ourselves, we find ourselves! [See Matthew 10:39.]

“Not only do we ‘find’ ourselves in terms of acknowledging divine guidance in our lives, but the more we serve our fellowmen in appropriate ways, the more substance there is to our souls. . . . We become more substantive as we serve others—indeed, it is easier to ‘find’ ourselves because there is so much more of us to find!”⁴



*In measuring success,
we recognize the profound
truth underlying all else—that
our lives belong to God, our
Heavenly Father; and to
Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.*

Lose Your Life in His Service

I recently learned of a particular young adult sister who decided to serve a full-time mission. She had developed a capacity to connect with and relate to people from almost every belief system, political persuasion, and nationality, and she worried that wearing a missionary name tag all day, every day, might become an identifier that could impede her exceptional ability to establish relationships. Just a few

weeks into her mission, she wrote home about a simple but meaningful experience:

“Sister Lee and I rubbed salve into an old lady’s arthritic hands—one of us on either side—while we sat in her living room. She didn’t want to listen to any spoken messages, but let us sing, loved us to sing. Thank you, black missionary name tag, for giving me license to have intimate experiences with complete strangers.”

By the things he suffered, the Prophet Joseph Smith learned to lose his life in the service of his Master and Friend. He once said, “I made this my rule: *When the Lord commands, do it.*”⁵

I think we would all be content to match Brother Joseph’s level of faithfulness. Even so, he was once forced to languish for months in the jail at Liberty, Missouri, suffering physically but probably more emotionally and spiritually because he was unable to help his beloved wife, his children, and the Saints while they were being abused and persecuted. His revelations and direction had brought



them to Missouri to establish Zion, and now they were being driven from their homes, in winter, across the entire state.

Despite it all, in those conditions in that jail, he composed an inspired letter to the Church of the most elegant and uplifting prose, parts of which now comprise sections 121, 122, and 123 of the Doctrine and Covenants, concluding with these words: “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).

Of course, the greatest illustration of saving one’s life by losing it is this: “O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done” (Matthew 26:42). In giving His life, Christ saved not only His own life but our lives as well. He

made it possible for us to exchange what would otherwise have been an ultimately futile mortal life for eternal life.

The theme of the Savior’s life was “I do always those things that please [the Father]” (John 8:29). I pray that you will make it the theme of your life. If you do, you will save your life. ■

From a Church Educational System devotional address, “Saving Your Life,” delivered at Brigham Young University on September 14, 2014. For the full address, go to devotionals.lds.org.

NOTES

1. Adam S. Miller, *Letters to a Young Mormon* (2014), 17–18.
2. See Martin Chulov, “Iraq’s Largest Christian Town Abandoned as ISIS Advance Continues,” *The Guardian*, Aug. 7, 2014, theguardian.com.
3. Kenneth Barker, ed., *The NIV Study Bible*, 10th anniversary ed. (1995), 1453.
4. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 85–86.
5. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 160.

The greatest illustration of saving one’s life by losing it is this: “O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.”



Caring FOR THE Needy IN Our Families

Those with crying needs surround us and we can help. If we have eyes to see and ears to hear, we will be motivated to reach out to them in service. Those who serve come to know the joy of giving because service brings blessings that

money cannot buy. There are many ways we can get involved in helping our families, extended families, and community.

These stories about caring for family members show how serving unselfishly can bring us closer to those we serve and to the Savior.

Christ set the example for us to succor others as He did.

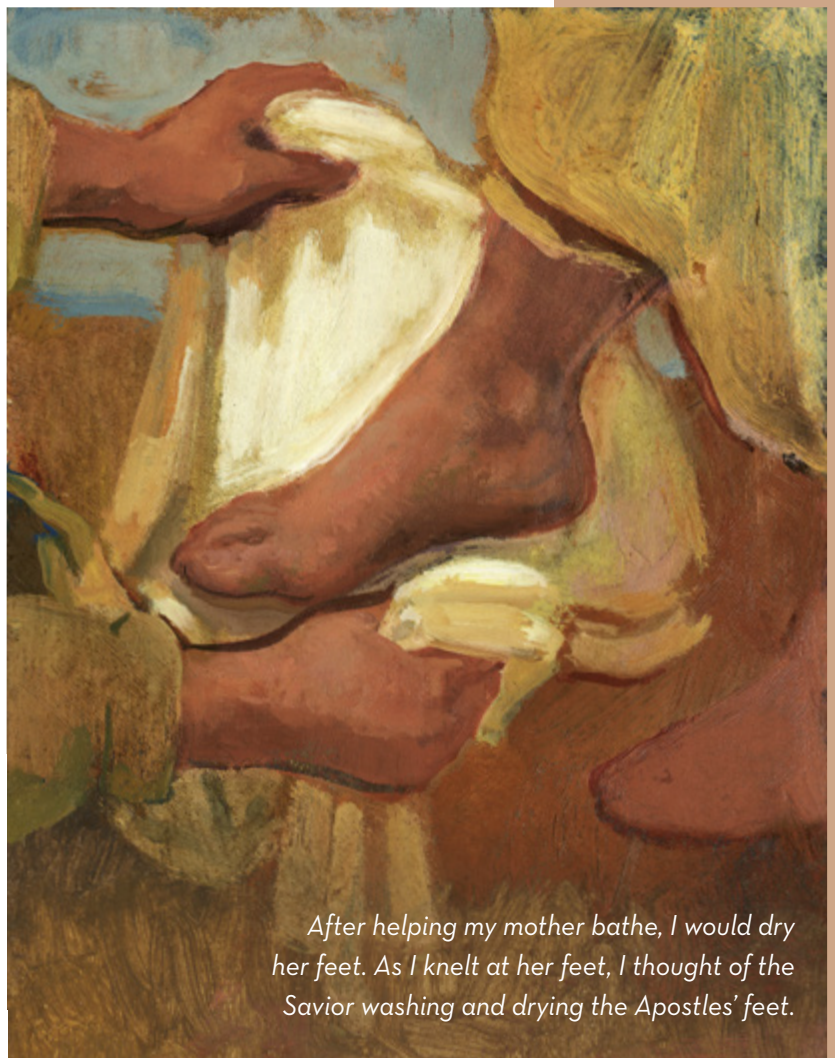
Emulating the Savior

My mother came to live with my family after she was widowed. Though her health was poor, she retained a cheerful disposition and positive outlook. We felt it a blessing and pleasure to share our home with her.

However, as time passed, I began to feel the weight of caring for her. I had been released as a seminary teacher when she moved in, and I missed my calling. Caring for my mother didn't feel as rewarding as teaching, but I loved her and wanted to serve her. I didn't want my mother, who had given me so much, to sense my conflicting feelings. I made my concerns a matter of prayer, and the answer came in a sweet and tender way.

After helping my mother bathe, I would dry her feet because it was painful for her to reach down. As I knelt at her feet, I thought of the Savior washing and drying the Apostles' feet (see John 13:4–17). The Spirit confirmed to me that simply by striving to meet my mother's needs, I was emulating the Savior.

I also learned that Christlike service doesn't go just one way. Typically, after my



After helping my mother bathe, I would dry her feet. As I knelt at her feet, I thought of the Savior washing and drying the Apostles' feet.

I have felt the love of the Savior as we have helped Luke take steps in fulfilling his priesthood duties.

mother's baths, I would stand in the tub and help her get out and dry off. One time I had forgotten to place my towel close to the tub so I could dry my own wet legs and feet. As I stood on the bath mat and stretched for a towel, I could feel my mother gently rubbing and drying my legs with her own towel. In spite of the effort and discomfort to her, she was rendering me a service. I felt as though the Savior were drying my feet. Peace filled my soul, and I was reminded that the Lord notices and values our every act of service.

Lyanne Jaubert-Sanderson, British Columbia, Canada

Helping My Son Serve

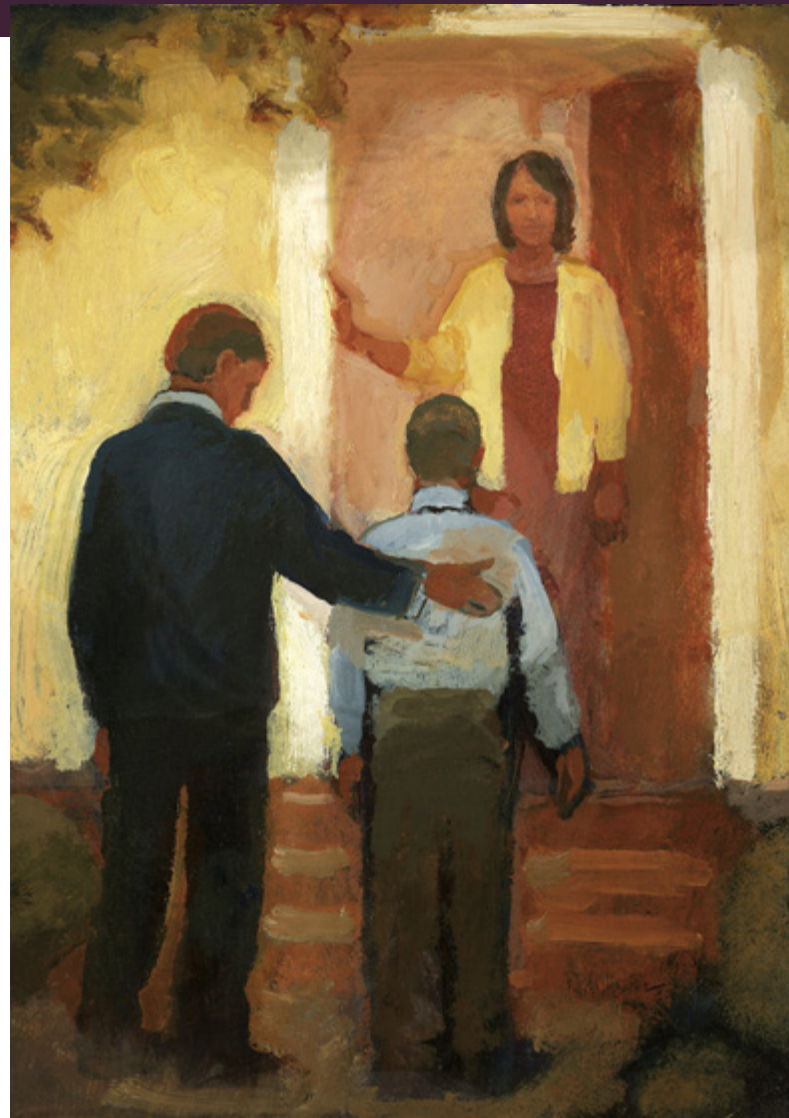
My son Luke was born with Down syndrome. He also has some autistic tendencies and physical health problems. He has no vocal language and is severely learning disabled. However, that has not stopped Luke's progression and participation in priesthood service.

Some years ago Luke became my home teaching companion and went with me to visit a number of families in our ward. I had the blessing of being able to help train him, which was a great and humbling experience.

Though it was my role to teach him, I learned so much more from him through his unfailing diligence and obvious joy in carrying out his priesthood responsibilities. Each time we visited our home teaching families, he would make sure that I taught from the scriptures, that we didn't stay too long, and that we didn't leave without having a prayer with the family. Although he cannot speak, he has influenced the lives of many.

Luke has brought joy not only to our family but also to our ward family. I have learned that the Lord will inspire each of us in the ward as to how to serve and work with Luke. I have felt the love of the Savior as we have helped Luke take steps in fulfilling his priesthood duties.

John McLaverty, Worcestershire, England



Keeping My Promise

When I was baptized at the age of 18, I wanted to be like my Savior, and I knew if I followed His example I could become more like Him. I started by sharing the gospel with my younger sisters, Laurie and Connie, who were both eventually baptized.

After my 19th birthday, my dad was diagnosed with cancer and was told he had only months to live. Before Dad passed away, his last words to me were, "Look after Mom, Laurie, and Connie." I promised I would. Just weeks after my father's death, my mother succumbed to a heart problem and passed away also. She too asked me to care for my younger sisters.

After my parents' funerals, I had little time to grieve because I soon took on the responsibility to care for my sisters Connie, who was 12, and Laurie, who was 16. At 19 years old, I was still a teenager myself.

It took everything I had to attempt to compensate for what my sisters had lost. I relied on everything I could find for help—I turned to prayer, scripture study, the words of the prophets, and priesthood blessings. I strived to keep my sisters active in attending church and participating in the Young Women program. I called upon my Heavenly Father many times while caring for my sisters, and He gave me the abilities I lacked.

I always reminded my sisters of the plan of salvation and the knowledge that we would see our parents again. We found great comfort when we performed our parents' temple work and were sealed to them for eternity.

I am grateful I was given this special opportunity to serve and love my sisters. I would not be the person I am today if I had not kept the promise I made to my parents. My sisters are grown, but I continue to be there for them. I now look back with wonder and awe, knowing that I was only able to accomplish this difficult act of service with the help and guidance of my Heavenly Father.

Cindy Rose Cooper, Ontario, Canada

Becoming More like Christ

After my grandmother had a stroke in 1996, I invited her to move in with my family. When I was young, I was afraid of Grandma—or “Tu Tu,” as we called her. She was often harsh, critical, and unkind. She was strong in another faith and was not happy when my parents, my siblings, and I joined the Church. We never dared talk to her about the gospel because we feared what she would say.

Caring for Tu Tu helped me see her with new eyes. She had worked hard throughout her life and remained strong, bold, and resilient in her old age. It was difficult for her to have to rely on someone else because she was so independent and self-reliant. After spending much of my life fearing my grandmother, the years Tu Tu spent in our home were humbling as I recognized her maturity and wisdom. She was grateful to be in our home and happy to be surrounded by family.

One day the missionaries came for dinner and asked us if we knew anyone who wasn't a member who might like to talk to them. My husband said, “We have someone right here at our table”—referring to Tu Tu! She shocked us all when she said she would be happy to listen. Within a few months, my grandmother, now in her 90s, was baptized.

My husband and I were concerned about the time and energy we spent caring for Tu Tu. We worried that our children would feel neglected and resent those years. But we later realized that it made them more comfortable around older people—they were quick to make conversation and at ease in offering help. Our children had developed a spirit of service.

My grandmother lived with us for five years until her passing. The experience brought out the best in me and in my family. All the time that we gave in service is nothing compared to what we gained. Caring for family members within the walls of our homes is a great opportunity to love and serve, to refine ourselves, and to become more Christlike.

Linda Blackhurst, Utah, USA ■

FOLLOWING THE SAVIOR'S EXAMPLE

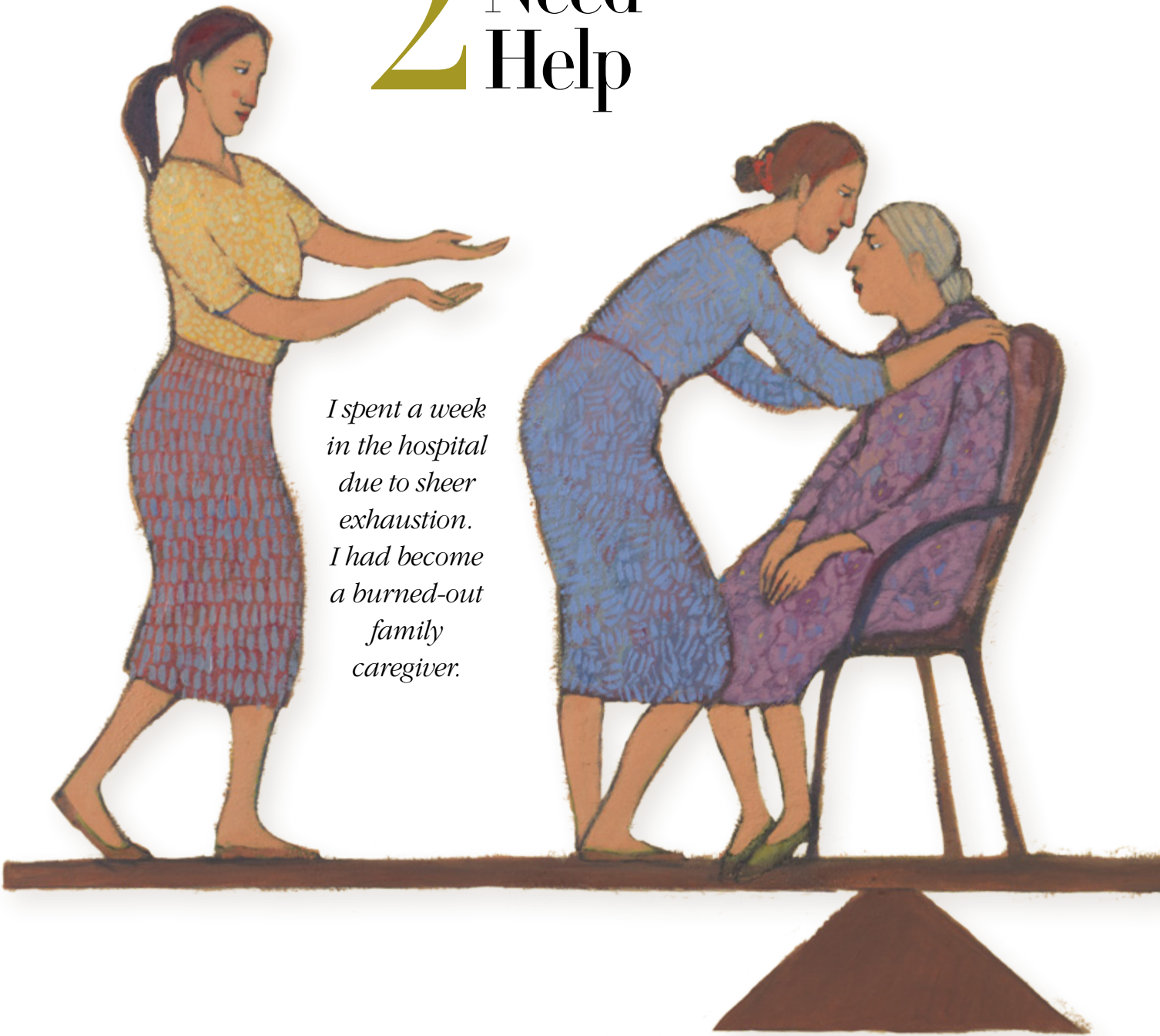
“I am confident there are within our sphere of influence those who are lonely, those who are ill, and those who feel discouraged. Ours is the opportunity to help them and to lift their spirits. The Savior brought hope to the hopeless and strength to the weak. He healed the sick; He caused the lame to walk, the blind to see, the deaf to hear. He even raised the dead to life. Throughout His ministry He reached out in charity to any in need. As we emulate His example, we will bless lives, including our own.”

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

WHEN ONE
NEEDS CARE,

2 Need Help

*I spent a week
in the hospital
due to sheer
exhaustion.
I had become
a burned-out
family
caregiver.*



By Nancy Madsen-Wilkerson

Program Manager, Utah Caregiver Support Program

I saw my role as a family caregiver emerging as my aging mother sat at my dining room table. A portable file of medical bills and prescription drug information lay over the tabletop. My mother, with touch-tone phone in hand, was attempting to navigate a phone tree system to order prescription medications. Before she could push the correct button, we heard the automated phone system say, “I’m sorry, I didn’t recognize your choice.” Over the next several hours, I noticed nothing had changed on the dining room table, and yet I realized everything was about to change for me. I was 35 years old.

During the ensuing years, I accompanied my mother to a variety of health-related appointments and helped manage her medications, financial affairs, and medical bills. I found myself rushing around so I could then slow down when I was with her, trying to do the best I could for her with little or no information. Mom was aggravated with her declining health and frustrated that she was losing control of her life. She vacillated between being grateful for our help and having the impression that her adult children were sometimes against her.

My own life was also in transition. My middle-aged husband was diagnosed with a terminal illness, three of our four daughters were married, and I became a young grandmother. I continued to work full-time in my home office in order to have the flexibility I needed to be everything to everyone. I learned the hard way that I was not invincible and spent a week in the hospital due to sheer exhaustion. I had become a completely burned-out family caregiver.

My story is not unique. A kaleidoscope of various caregiving scenarios can be found in communities worldwide as families strive to care for aging loved ones. Two questions warrant our thoughtful consideration:

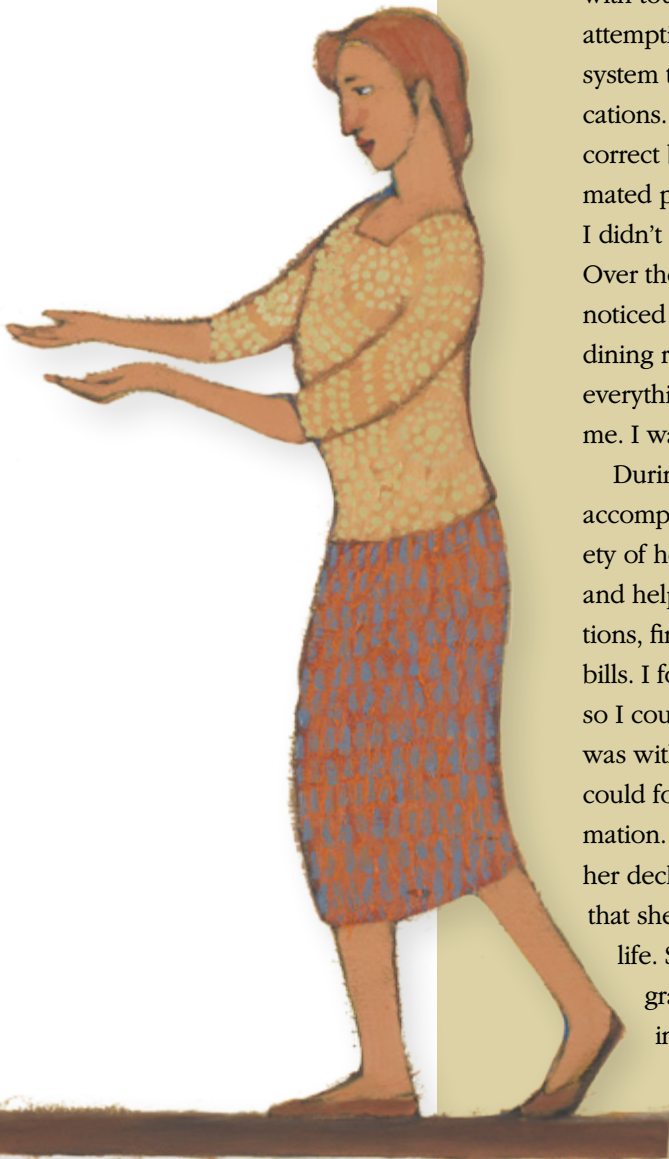
What can we do to support family caregivers?

How are we preparing to face unscheduled changes in our lives and those of our loved ones?

The following principles and practices may be helpful as we ponder these important matters.

Seeking Divine Perspective

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World” instructs us that in sacred family responsibilities, “extended families should lend



ILLUSTRATIONS BY KATHLEEN PETERSON



support when needed,” especially when circumstances arise that necessitate adaptation.¹ We are additionally counseled that “the purposes of Church welfare are to help members become self-reliant, to care for the poor and needy, and to give service.”²

As priesthood holders and Relief Society sisters, we have the opportunity to watch over and strengthen any caregivers who may be in our charge. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves.”³ While honoring the self-determination of each individual and family, we can seek divine guidance and perspective in knowing how we can appropriately participate in providing temporary relief when they become caregivers or when they seem to be reaching burn-out in caring for a family member.

Starting the Conversation

It is important to discuss our health-care wishes with our loved ones, and we know we should put our wishes in writing, but most of us have not taken these steps. When such steps have not been taken, families may struggle with decisions that often have to be made under difficult circumstances and emotional distress.

An *advance directive* allows you to direct your health-care wishes in advance so they will be honored at a time when you may not be able to speak for yourself. *Durable powers of attorney* for medical and financial issues allow you to designate

someone of your choosing to act in your behalf and in accordance with your wishes. It may be helpful to think of this as a quality-of-life issue, for that is exactly what it is.

In the same way that we do not wait for a natural disaster to begin our emergency preparedness, we should prepare in advance for aging and caregiving roles. As we assess probable needs and then plan accordingly, we enable the Lord’s promised blessings of peace. He will bless us for our effort, knowing we have done all we can while we are able to do so.

Maintaining Perspective

The relationship between a caregiver and care receiver is a sacred one. Sometimes, though, as our responsibilities increase over time, our nurturing love and emotional support can give way to being “careful and troubled about many things.” Like Martha, we may find it difficult to keep “that good part” in perspective, as Mary did, especially when we are overwhelmed. (See Luke 10:38–42.)

In those times, the Savior pleads for us to share our burdens with Him so that He can help us bear them. “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). He told Paul, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles lovingly reminds us that the same

WHERE TO FIND HELP

- “Federal Resources for Caregivers” (whitehouseconferenceonaging.gov/happening/resources-caregivers.html). Source for finding agencies and community-based organizations that help aging adults and their caregivers. Information on disabilities, veterans, hospice care, housing, employee assistance programs, National Institutes of Health resources, and more.
- “U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Administration for Community Living” (acl.gov/Get_Help/Index.aspx). Local resources for brain health, older adults, disabilities, funded resource centers, and more.
- “Alzheimer’s Association” (alz.org). Information and resources for all types of dementia and related disorders. Source for finding specific dementia organizations.
- “Alzheimer’s Disease International” (alz.co.uk). International listing of Alzheimer’s and dementia organizations.
- “National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization: CaringInfo” (caringinfo.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3289). Free advance directives for each state.

promise of help given to the people of Alma (see Mosiah 24:14) applies “to you caregivers who are burdened.”⁴ He explained, “Sometimes we are ‘healed’ by being given strength or understanding or patience to bear the burdens placed upon us.” In this way, we can, like the people of Alma, “submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord” (Mosiah 24:15).⁵

“Therefore, let your hearts be comforted . . . ; for all flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God” (D&C 101:16). Trusting the Lord and His promises will aid us in keeping perspective and allow His atoning sacrifice to become effectual in our lives.

Sharing Tasks

The oftentimes taxing role of a caregiver can be extremely rewarding when balance and perspective are integrated with support from others. This is vital to avoid compromising our own health as a result of compassion fatigue. The Savior bids all who wish to be “called his people” to “bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light” (Mosiah 18:8).

When I was suddenly hospitalized, it became obvious that it had not been in anyone’s best interest for me to shoulder the majority of the caregiving responsibilities alone. I had been serving my elderly mother at the unintended expense of my own health and well-being.

I decided to initiate a win-win strategy to engage support by creating two lists. One list comprised all of the responsibilities I carried, and the second list contained the names of family and friends. I shared the list of tasks with each individual, and with humility and gratitude I accepted their willingness to each choose a tangible way they could serve in a way that was a good fit for them.

We must resist the urge to assume that others are too busy to help with our caregiving roles or that this is only our responsibility. By allowing others to step forward from the most unlikely places, we can learn that most people really do want to help. Providing this opportunity to them will bring balance into our lives, and our effectiveness as a caregiver will actually increase overall.

“And see that all these things are done in wisdom and order; for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength” (Mosiah 4:27).

Using Community Resources

Valuable resources are available to help caregivers, but few are accessed because people do not know where to find them. The scriptures counsel us to “seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118). To that end, as we seek knowledge both spiritual and temporal, we can turn to a variety of reputable organizations and websites that are dedicated to caregiver education and support and to dealing with disabilities, dementias, and chronic diseases (see sidebar).

Knowledge is power, and finding and making use of appropriate resources will aid the caregiver in accessing that power. The available information can be invaluable in teaching caregivers to become self-reliant and can give guidance in creating a good quality of life for all those family members involved in the caregiving experience.

Walking the Path of the Savior

“There are only four kinds of people in the world: Those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers, and those who will need caregivers.”⁶

While anxiously engaged in preparing for our own advancing years, may we also be found clothing ourselves with “the bond of charity” (D&C 88:125) and feeding the Savior’s sheep (see John 21:16) with our willingness “to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light” (Mosiah 18:8). It can be one of the greatest sanctifying privileges we have in life as we walk the path the Savior has modeled for us by the way He lived His life. ■

NOTES

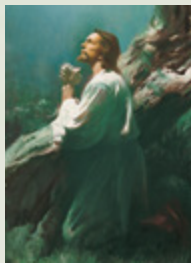
1. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
2. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 6.1.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 284.
4. Dallin H. Oaks, “He Heals the Heavy Laden,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 8.
5. See Dallin H. Oaks, “He Heals the Heavy Laden,” 7–8.
6. Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving, www.rosalynncarter.org.



In Eden all things were created in a paradisiacal state—without death, without procreation, without mortal probationary experiences.



Adam and Eve stepped down from their state of immortal and paradisiacal glory to one of trial and testing on earth. This is known as the Fall.



THE Three Gardens OF GOD

*Join with me in gaining
a sound and
sure knowledge of
the Atonement.*

I feel, and the Spirit seems to accord, that the most important doctrine I can declare, and the most powerful testimony I can bear, is of the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

His Atonement is the most transcendent event that ever has or ever will occur from Creation's dawn through all the ages of a never-ending eternity.

It is the supreme act of goodness and grace that only a god could perform. Through it, all of the terms and conditions of the Father's eternal plan of salvation became operative. . . .

In speaking of these wondrous things I shall use my own words, though you may think they are the words of scripture, words spoken by other Apostles and prophets.

True it is they were first proclaimed by others, but they are now mine, for the Holy Spirit of God has borne witness to me that they are true, and it is now as though the Lord had revealed them to me in the first instance. I have thereby heard His voice and know His word. . . .

May I invite you to join with me in gaining a sound and sure knowledge of the Atonement.



**By Elder Bruce R.
McConkie
(1915–1985)**

Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

Christ's disciples waited nearby and soon fell asleep as Jesus went into Gethsemane alone. Jesus "cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners" (Mark 14:41).



In Gethsemane (above) and at Golgotha (below), Jesus Christ shed His blood, ultimately dying on the cross. He atoned for the sins of the world and ransomed us from the Fall.



We must cast aside the philosophies of men and the wisdom of the wise and hearken to that Spirit which is given to us to guide us into all truth.

We must search the scriptures, accepting them as the mind and will and voice of the Lord and the very power of God unto salvation.

As we read, ponder, and pray, there will come into our minds a view of the three gardens of God—the Garden of Eden, the Garden of Gethsemane, and the Garden of the Empty Tomb where Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene.

In Eden we will see all things created in a paradisiacal state—without death, without procreation, without probationary experiences.

We will come to know that such a creation, now unknown to man, was the only way to provide for the Fall.

We will then see Adam and Eve, the first man and the first woman, step down from their state of immortal and paradisiacal glory to become the first mortal flesh on earth.

Mortality, including as it does procreation and death, will enter the world. And because of transgression a probationary estate of trial and testing will begin.

Then in Gethsemane we will see the Son of God ransom man from the temporal and spiritual death that came to us because of the Fall.

*The body of
Jesus Christ was laid in
a tomb in a garden.*



Three days later Christ arose from the tomb, leaving it empty. He had burst the bands of death and stood triumphant over the grave—thus completing the perfect Atonement.



At the empty tomb, the resurrected Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene and asked, “Why weepest thou? . . . She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master” (John 20:15–16).

And finally, before an empty tomb, we will come to know that Christ our Lord has burst the bands of death and stands forever triumphant over the grave.

Thus, Creation is father to the Fall; and by the Fall came mortality and death; and by Christ came immortality and eternal life.

If there had been no Fall of Adam, by which cometh death, there could have been no Atonement of Christ, by which cometh life.

And now, as pertaining to this perfect Atonement, wrought by the shedding of the blood of God—I testify that it took place in Gethsemane and at Golgotha, and as pertaining to Jesus Christ, I testify that He is the Son of the Living God and was crucified for the sins of the world. He is our Lord, our God, and our King. This I know of myself independent of any other person.

I am one of His witnesses, and in a coming day I shall feel the nail marks in His hands and in His feet and shall wet His feet with my tears.

But I shall not know any better than I know now that He is God's Almighty Son, that He is our Savior and Redeemer, and that salvation comes in and through His atoning blood and in no other way.

God grant that all of us may walk in the light as God our Father is in the light so that, according to the promises, the blood of Jesus Christ His Son will cleanse us from all sin. ■

From "The Purifying Power of Gethsemane," Ensign, May 1985, 9–11; punctuation and capitalization standardized.

This was Elder McConkie's last apostolic witness in mortality; he passed away two weeks later.

Then Jesus said to Mary, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17).



MAKING THE Sabbath A Delight

Wholesome activities with your children can help make the Sabbath a delight.

By Paula J. Lewis

Teaching children how to create an atmosphere appropriate for the Sabbath is not easy, but with some thought, you can center your Sunday activities on gospel teachings in ways that are entertaining and enlightening for the whole family. Here are some ideas:



- **MAKE A SUNDAY ALBUM.** Get a three-ring binder, some page protectors, and cardstock. Attach an illustration from a magazine such as the *Ensign* to a sheet of cardstock. On the facing page write an inspirational story from the life of the person in the photo. You can do the same thing with photographs of your ancestors by researching and including stories about their lives.
- **CREATE SUNDAY GAMES** by cutting out and laminating the games that come in the *Friend*. If you need to write on them, use an overhead projector marker. The ink will wash off easily with a damp cloth.
- **MAKE A FAMILY TRIVIA GAME.** Gather up information about relatives and use it to generate questions. Write each question on a card (for example, “Who served a mission in Rome, Italy?”) along with the answer. Take turns asking questions of the other players.
- **WRITE A CREATIVE LETTER TO A MISSIONARY** or a loved one. Get a big piece of paper and have everyone in the family write on it in a different color and in a different direction. You can also write on a roll of adding machine tape or the plain side of wrapping paper.
- **ASK FAMILY MEMBERS TO TELL STORIES** about “the good old days.” Have someone record the stories to include in a family history.
- **WRITE NOTES OR DRAW PICTURES** of appreciation for your bishopric, neighbors, and family members. You can focus on a different person each Sunday.
- **MAKE A LIST OF BLESSINGS.** In different colors of ink, write the names of the people and things you are thankful for on a roll of shelf paper. Number each item. The list will become quite long if you really think about your blessings and express your gratitude for them. Of course, you can use other paper instead, but you can roll the shelf paper

into a scroll and tie a ribbon around it to remind you of your Heavenly Father’s love for you.

- **CATCH UP ON JOURNAL WRITING** by taking time to write about recent events, or follow the counsel of President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, to reflect about how you have seen the hand of the Lord in your life.¹
- **HOLD A FAMILY COUNCIL** and decide how to serve others or how to focus your Sabbath observance on the Savior.

Whatever you do on Sundays, ask if the Savior would approve of the activity. Uplifting activities “inviteth and enticeth to do good continually” (Moroni 7:13). Ask yourself, “What message am I sending to God by what I do on the Sabbath day?” If you allow the Spirit to help you focus your activities on Christ, Sunday can be the best day of the entire week for you and your children. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTE

1. See Henry B. Eyring, “O Remember, Remember,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 67.



BLESSINGS OF HONORING THE SABBATH

“For members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, honoring the Sabbath is a form of righteousness that will bless and strengthen families, connect us with our Creator, and increase happiness. The Sabbath can help separate us from that which is frivolous, inappropriate, or immoral. It allows us to be in the world but not of the world.

“. . . Truly keeping the Sabbath day holy is a refuge from the storms of this life. It is also a sign of our devotion to our Father in Heaven.”

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Shipshape and Bristol Fashion: Be Temple Worthy—in Good Times and Bad Times,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 41–42.

Blessings

OF THE SABBATH DAY

Saints around the world talk about how their lives have been blessed in unique ways by this special, holy day.

By Marissa A. Widdison

Church Magazines

Picture yourself receiving the most important invitation of your life: a chance to spend a day with Jesus Christ. How would you prepare spiritually and physically for such a day? What blessings might you hope would come from such a visit?

The Lord has invited each of us to set aside a day to commune with Him—the Sabbath day, which He has blessed and made holy (see Exodus 20:11). What blessings do you enjoy when you keep the Sabbath day holy? Here are some thoughts from Saints around the world that might prompt ideas and impressions of your own.

Closeness to God and Christ

Sister Andrea Julião, from São Paulo, Brazil, discovered that just as relationships with earthly friends grow stronger when we spend time together, our relationship with Heavenly Father becomes stronger when we focus on Him through Sabbath worship.

While visiting family who weren't members of the Church, Sister Julião decided to wake up early Sunday and try to find a Latter-day Saint church building in the area. As her family prepared for a day of adventurous recreation,

Sister Julião searched the neighborhood until she met someone who pointed out a steeple in the distance. Sister Julião was able to attend worship services. "I had the most amazing Sabbath day," she said. "I felt Heavenly Father's love so strongly. I felt that He enjoys when His children obey His teachings. I gained a stronger testimony of the Church of Jesus Christ."

Healing and Relief

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, spoke about how the Sabbath day blessed his life as a young professional: "I first found delight in the Sabbath many years ago when, as a busy surgeon, I knew that the Sabbath became a day for personal healing. By the end of each week, my hands were sore from repeatedly scrubbing them with soap, water, and a bristle brush. I also needed a breather from the burden of a demanding profession. Sunday provided much-needed relief."¹

Time for Family History

Not long ago, 10-year-old Eliza from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, gave a talk in sacrament meeting about one way



ILLUSTRATIONS BY PASCAL CAMPION



that focusing on Sabbath-appropriate activities has blessed her life. Because Eliza sometimes struggled with boredom on Sundays, she and her family decided that indexing would be a good activity to try. Eliza soon discovered that she loved working with the names and records. “When I start, I just want to keep doing it forever,” she shared with the congregation.

When Eliza’s great-grandma heard how much she enjoyed family history, she taught Eliza how to add stories and pictures to their family tree online. “It is so much fun, I love it!” Eliza said. “When I do family history work, I feel the spirit of Elijah. It is an awesome feeling.”

A Lifted Soul

Sister Cheryl A. Esplin, first counselor in the Primary general presidency, testified of the blessing of taking the

sacrament on the Sabbath day: “When I partake of the sacrament, I sometimes picture in my mind a painting that depicts the resurrected Savior with His arms outstretched, as if He is ready to receive us into His loving embrace. I love this painting. When I think about it during the administration of the sacrament, my soul is lifted as I can almost hear the Savior’s words: ‘Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come, him will I receive; and blessed are those who come unto me’ [3 Nephi 9:14].”²

Chances to Minister

Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that one of the reasons why we need to rest from our labors on Sunday is that they take us away from “the opportunity to minister to others.”³

Ministering on the Sabbath is something Sister Zola Adjei came to love while growing up in the Kpong Branch in Ghana. While home from boarding school during the summers, she and other youth would go in groups to visit members of their branch they hadn't seen in a while. "It was a sacrifice because most of us felt very hungry after church, and we were so far from our homes that we didn't have time to eat and gather again," Sister Adjei said. But the sacrifice was worth it, as they were able to pray and sing hymns with their fellow branch members and invite them to church and activities. One of the youth would offer to walk with them to church the next Sunday.

"This practice formed a bond amongst us," Sister Adjei said. "Some of us have stayed strong friends from the decisions we made to go out and bring back our lost friends by giving up a few hours of our Sabbath day."

Missionary Opportunities

In today's world, making Sunday a holy day will surely set us apart—giving us chances to share the gospel in a natural way as others notice the difference in our weekly routine. The Davies family experienced this while living on the island of Grenada with their young daughter, Adrielle. "None of Adrielle's friends are members of the Church, and while many of them believe in God, Sunday to them is simply another day of the weekend," explained Sister McKenzie Lawyer Davies, Adrielle's mother.

A few months ago, Adrielle was invited to a birthday party at a movie theater on Sunday. Her family decided to drop off a gift instead of going to the movie and party. "Because we simply stopped by to wish them well, we were able to share our beliefs about the Sabbath with them in a friendly and open way," Sister Lawyer Davies said. "It made me happy that my little girl was already sharing the gospel."

Protection from Worldliness

Doctrine and Covenants 59:9 states, "And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments

upon my holy day." Modern prophets and apostles have taught that the idea of keeping ourselves "unspotted from the world" is both an invitation and a promised blessing that work hand in hand.

For example, President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, taught that as we avoid worldly distractions on the Sabbath day, we are blessed with protection from obsession with worldly things: "In this day of increasing access to and preoccupation with materialism, there is a sure protection for ourselves and our children against the plagues of our day. The key to that sure protection surprisingly can be found in Sabbath observance."⁴

Quality Family Time

The Olson family in Brigham City, Utah, USA, found that even changing one small aspect of their Sabbath day brings about great blessings. Instead of watching regular television on Sunday, they focus on Church-sponsored media. They found that watching the Bible videos (see BibleVideos.org) with their children invites the Spirit as well as questions from the kids that prompt good family discussions.

"Not watching TV on the Sabbath led to the biggest shift in focus for me," said Sister Lacey Olson. "We might feel like there are so many rules with regards to Sunday, but I think the Sabbath is a day unrestricted with regards to service and charity. If we choose, the Sabbath day can arm us with rejuvenation to face the world in the following week."

The Lord teaches us in the scriptures that we should "remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8). When we recognize the Sabbath as a precious opportunity to claim spiritual blessings, those words become an invitation from Him. How will we respond? What promises are in store for ourselves and our families? ■

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, "The Sabbath Is a Delight," *Ensign*, May 2015, 129.
2. Cheryl A. Eskin, "The Sacrament—a Renewal for the Soul," *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 13.
3. L. Tom Perry, "The Sabbath and the Sacrament," *Ensign*, May 2011, 9.
4. James E. Faust, "The Lord's Day," *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 35.

GAINING GOSPEL INSIGHTS THROUGH MOTHERHOOD

*Motherhood can give us unique opportunities
to learn of the Lord's doctrine through the Spirit.*

By Katy McGee

Any mother knows that time management changes drastically after children come to the family. In relearning how to manage my time with four little ones, I've experienced discouraging moments—especially when it comes to gospel study. It's tricky to schedule scripture study and be sure it's meaningful. But a few experiences have taught me that as I am obedient and prayerful, the Lord will teach me in other ways.



Our Heavenly Parent

One day while I was ironing, one-year-old Claire began to cry in her crib. It was naptime, and I knew that if I could quickly give her a pacifier, she would fall back to sleep. Three-year-old Lucy was playing in the room where I was ironing. I debated for a moment and then decided to keep the iron on, knowing I'd be out of the room for only a few moments. "Lucy, do you see that iron on my tall table?" I asked. "It's *very* hot. I need to give Claire her pacifier. Please don't touch the iron while I'm gone, or it will hurt you."

I was sure Lucy understood, so I quickly slipped out of the room. I returned a moment later, and I heard a whimper from behind a chair.

"Lucy?" I asked. "Where are you?"

She didn't reply.

"Are you OK? Why are you hiding?"

I walked over behind the chair and sat on the floor. Her face was buried in her hands. After a few refusals to tell me what happened, she finally said, "Mommy, I touched your iron."

At first I was confused that she hadn't heeded my warning. Then I felt heartbroken that she would hide from me after making a small mistake, afraid she had lost my love and confidence. I knew she was powerless to take the pain away, and only I could help her burned finger feel better. I comforted Lucy, and as I rushed her to the bathroom sink to ease the pain, the Spirit whispered to my heart: "This is how Heavenly Father feels when His children fail to heed His warnings and won't allow Him to ease their pain when they need it most." In that moment I felt such joy at this knowledge and a confidence in the Lord's willingness to teach me.

Pure Charity

A few years later I was called to be a counselor in my ward Relief Society presidency. I felt inadequate to fulfill this calling. I began to study the principle of charity. I prayed to develop more Christlike

charity for the sisters I served. But I wasn't quite sure what this spiritual gift would look or feel like.

My anxiety was weighing on my mind as I made lunch one day. My third daughter, Annie, was sitting on the middle landing of our stairs, engrossed in her two-year-old imagination. I watched as she leaned forward to grab a toy, lost her balance, and tumbled down four or five stairs. I ran to her and tried to calm her as she cried. I quieted her enough to hear a little sob coming from the kitchen table. I looked over to see five-year-old Claire crying.

"Come here," I said. "What's wrong?"

She ran to join Annie and me in a family hug. The words she spoke were a direct answer to my prayerful question about charity.

"I saw Annie start to fall, and then I watched her and saw how sad she felt," she said. "I would rather fall down the stairs for Annie than watch her have to fall down."

The thought immediately came to my mind through the Spirit, "*That* is charity."

Growing in Faith

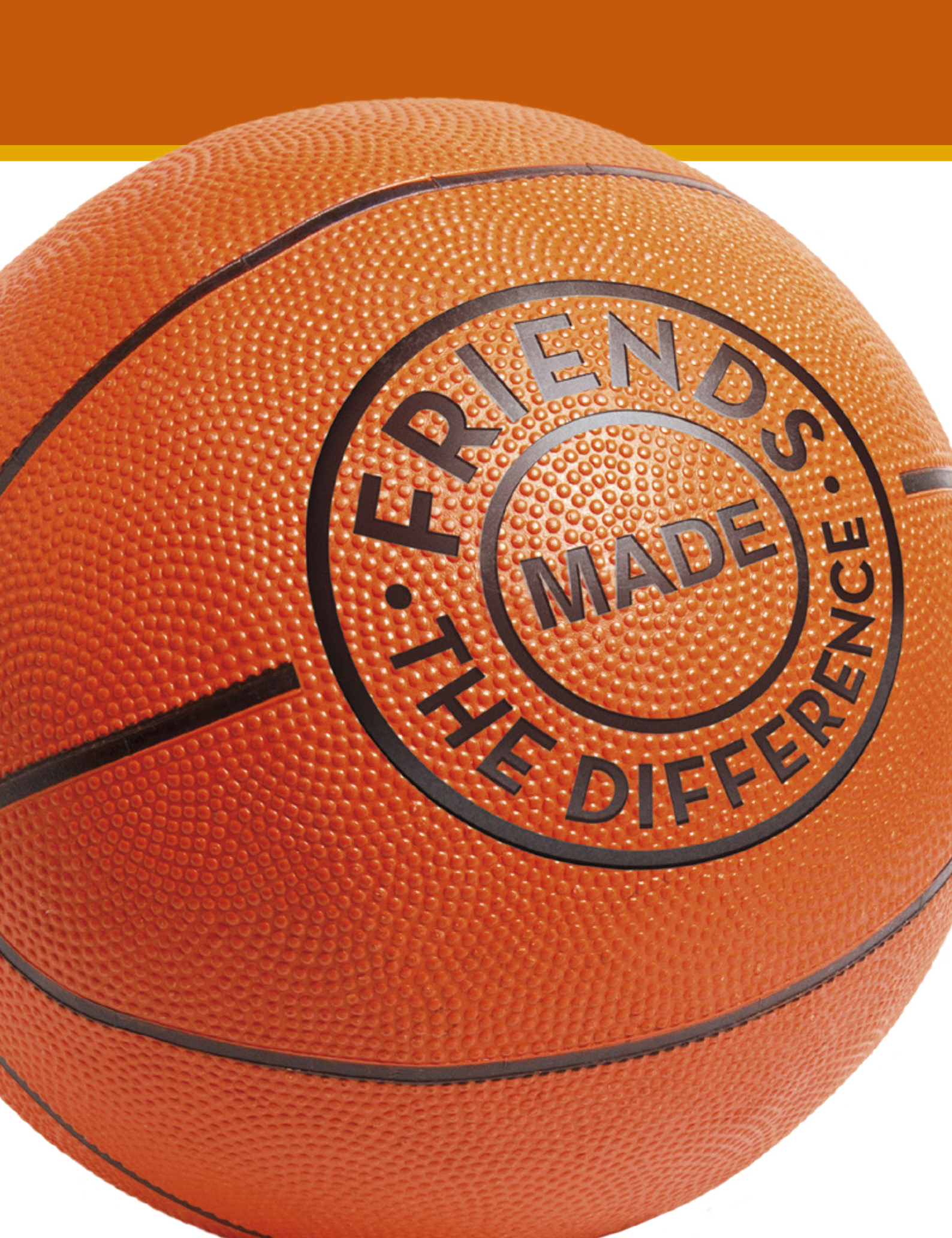
Most recently, my husband taught our children about the story of Moses. I said, "I think the faith of Moses's mother is amazing! She sent him down the river and prayed that Heavenly Father would keep him safe. Can you imagine the great faith it took for her to trust Heavenly Father with her baby?"

Lucy asked, "Mom, do you have that much faith?"

It was a profound question. I thought about it for a moment and then shared a few experiences that I have had when I successfully relied on the Lord with faith. The discussion that followed was edifying for the entire family. Her question comes to my mind all the time. It is strengthening to know that I can have faith like Moses's mother.

As I walk by faith, ask in prayer, and obediently study, the Lord uses my experiences as a mother to teach me His doctrine through the Spirit. And He teaches me often, regardless of the time constraints of parenthood. ■

The author lives in Idaho, USA.



FRIENDS
MADE
THE DIFFERENCE

“Can Ben Come Over to Play?”

By Lisa L. Williams

In September 1995, after I had been a single parent for two years, my son and I moved to a smaller home in Arlington, Texas, USA. My son, Ben, was almost eight years old, and it was just the two of us.

One day after we moved, I received a phone call from Sharon, whose son Zander was one of Ben's classmates. She asked if Ben could come over to play one afternoon with her son. I agreed but asked if Zander could come over to our house first so I could get to know him. He came the very next day. Zander was a really cute boy, and he and Ben soon became best friends.

Sharon became one of my best friends also.

Although she was considerably younger than me, our boys were the same age, and that seemed to supersede anything else. Ben and Zander played sports on the same team, rode bikes together, and attended Cub Scouts together each week. Zander had two brothers and a sister who were good examples to my son. We ate dinner at each other's homes and even went on vacation together. Our two families loved each other.

We learned that Zander's family was Mormon very quickly because Zander did not play sports or attend birthday parties on Sunday. Instead, his family went to church and spent time at home as a family. Ben loved Zander's dad, John, and he loved the spirit in Zander's home.

Every year Zander asked Ben to come to his church's Halloween party and Christmas party. I always said yes. Zander and his family also attended events at our church.

It wasn't long before Ben started asking if we could switch to Zander's church. I always responded, “No, sweetie, we have our own church.” Ben never questioned my answer, but he kept asking that same question over the next few years.

Two boys—one in elementary school, the other in high school—each discovered the gospel of Jesus Christ through a Latter-day Saint friend.

Zander's family always went to a family reunion in Utah during the summer. Zander and his cousins attended a sports camp at Brigham Young University in Provo before or after the reunion. When Ben was nine, Sharon asked if he could join them. So off Ben went with Zander to BYU basketball camp and a family reunion. He had great fun and felt loved and accepted as part of their extended family. Ben loved it so much he went again in 1998.

The following year, I decided to join Ben on the trip with Zander's family. I took a week of vacation, flew to Utah with him, and stayed at John's parents' home while Ben went to the BYU camp.

What I didn't realize is that my life would be changed forever that week. I spent it with the most amazing people. Everyone was kind, sweet, helpful, and interested in Ben and me.

Slowly and simply, I began asking questions about the Book of Mormon and the temple, and everyone was willing to answer my questions. I felt compelled to learn more about the Spirit I had been feeling. I wanted to feel it more.

When it was time to return to Texas, John's father came over to the car. He said, “Lisa, I think you and Ben, together, should take the missionary lessons.”

I replied, “Yes, sir, we will do that when we get home.”

About a week after we returned home I kept my promise and called John to ask if we could schedule a lesson with the missionaries. He said, “Of course!”

We had the best missionaries the Lord could have sent us. I asked immediately if we could begin attending

church, and our lessons went rapidly and smoothly. When the missionaries asked us to be baptized, I knew the gospel was true (my son already did), and we accepted.

We were baptized on September 12, 1999, and confirmed the following week. I attended the temple on November 16, 2000, to receive my endowment. The members of the Arlington First Ward put their arms around Ben and me and have been there for us ever since.

It Started with Softball

By Rafael B. Hoyos

I was raised in Tucson, Arizona, USA, in another Christian faith and was very active in that religion. I was particularly involved in its youth organization, which sponsored sporting events, dances, and weekend retreats.

During my high school years, however, funding for our programs ran low, and many of the activities were cut. One day at school I complained to a classmate, Gordon Luke, and told him I wished we had more activities.

Gordon, a Latter-day Saint, told me that his church had a softball tournament coming up and that they needed more players. He invited me to come, so I did. Over the next several months, Gordon and I became better friends, and I participated in more and more church activities, including Mutual, dances, and even a road show production.

I was a little bit of a debater and wanted Gordon to understand my beliefs, and I challenged him on many of his. I asked him, “How do you pay for all those activities?”

“Well,” said Gordon, “we believe that people should tithe.”

“What does that mean?”

“It means we pay a tenth of our income to the Lord.” He went on to explain all the things tithing was used for. I was very impressed—not only with the system but with Gordon’s understanding of it.

Ben and Zander have both served missions and brought others to Jesus Christ. I am blessed with a good life, wonderful friends, and the Spirit surrounding me with love. My son and I are blessed with the gospel and the blessings it brings. And all this because a classmate’s mother took the time to simply ask, “Can Ben come over to play?” ■

The author lives in Texas, USA.

In time, I went on dates with a Latter-day Saint girl, and at Christmas, she gave me a copy of the Book of Mormon. She also gave me a copy of *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* by Elder LeGrand Richards (1886–1983) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, which I read three times before I graduated from high school.

When I began college the next summer, I sought out the missionaries at the institute and asked to learn more. Before long, we began the discussions.

The afternoon that the elders and I watched a filmstrip of the First Vision in a darkened room in that institute building, I was touched deeply. I could tell that they were too. The Spirit was stronger than anything I’d ever felt, and there was nothing I could do to deny it. I knew that God the Father and Jesus Christ *had* appeared to young Joseph Smith.

I took the rest of the discussions, read the scriptures, and prayed about the Church. I knew I needed to be baptized, but I was torn—I was the oldest male in a very close, very traditional Hispanic family, and my breaking from tradition would devastate them.

When I told my parents of my decision to be baptized, my father told me I could no longer live in their home. He also told me that he had trusted me to make good decisions and had therefore allowed a lot of freedoms, but now

When Gordon told me his church softball team needed players, I signed up.

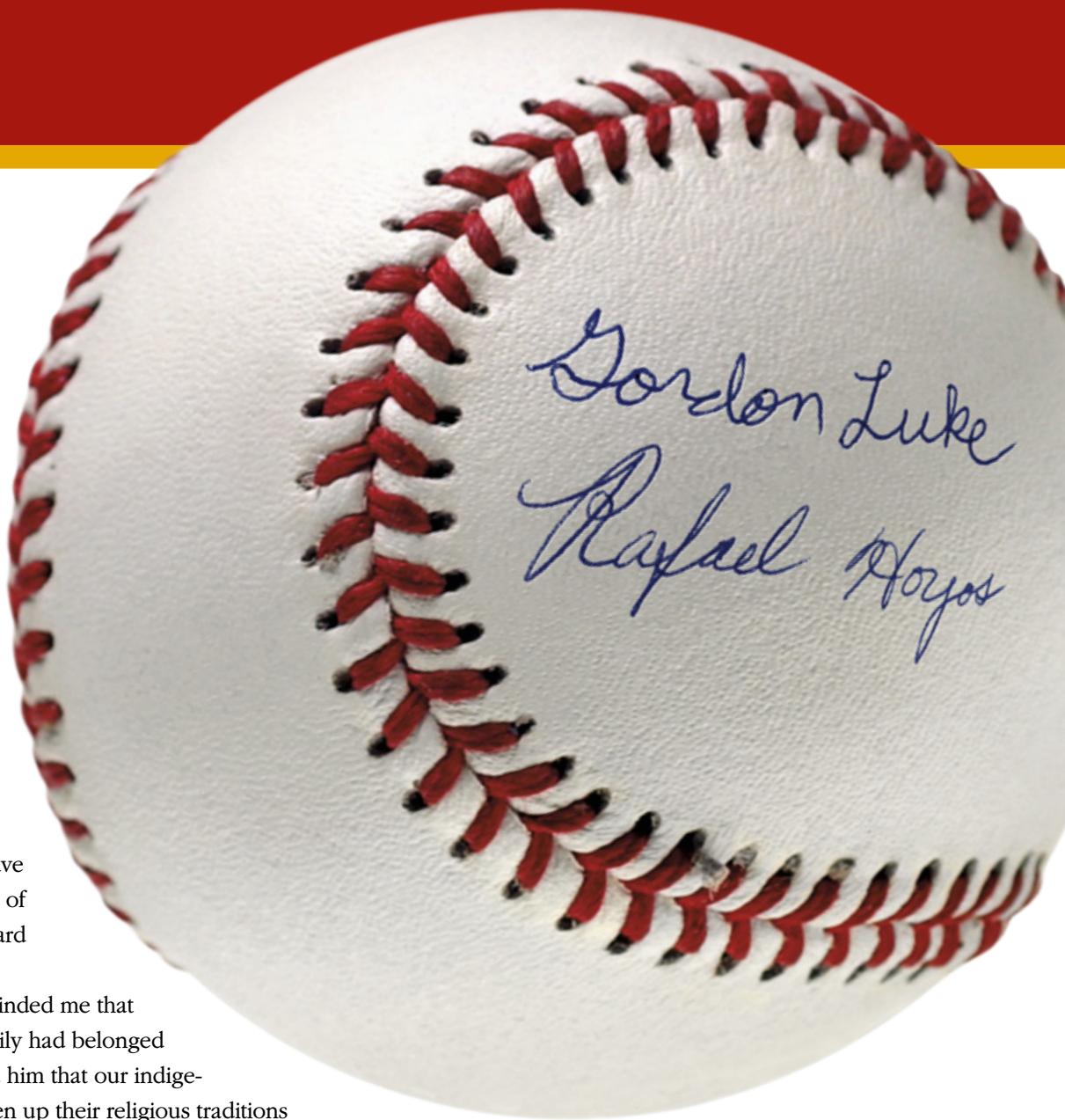
that I was making bad choices, as he saw it, my sisters would not have the same benefits. That, of course, created some hard feelings on their part.

When my father reminded me that for generations our family had belonged to one faith, I reminded him that our indigenous ancestors had given up their religious traditions to follow Jesus Christ. I said, "Please allow me to do the same. I will always be grateful you and Mom raised me with a strong faith in Jesus Christ."

But my father held his position. Although I knew my decision was hurting our family, I moved forward and was baptized October 1, 1979. I've never regretted it.

Some young men I met at institute invited me to live with them. A year and a half later, I left to serve as a missionary in Guayaquil, Ecuador. When I returned, I continued my studies and I married my wife, Linnea. We have four children who have been sealed in the temple, three of whom also served missions, and I currently serve as bishop of our ward.

Today my family has softened somewhat toward the Church, and they have attended baby blessings and



baptisms with us. I know they are building the kingdom of God in their circles of influence just as I am doing in mine.

I am grateful to my friend Gordon, who gave me my first taste of the restored gospel by inviting me to activities. And I am grateful to a kind Heavenly Father, who gave me a powerful conversion experience in a small institute classroom; whenever I face trials and challenges, I can go back to that foundational experience. My knowledge of the reality of the Father and the Son, of the Savior's Atonement, and of the prophetic calling of Joseph Smith has served as an anchor in my life. ■

The author lives in Kansas, USA.



Marriage is ordained of God, and as these couples testify, working together brings joy.

Creating a Joyful Marriage— *Together*



Dale and Rita Bills of Utah, USA, fell in love after discovering how much they enjoyed talking to each other. Now, after more than 40 years together, they still find joy in talking. “We talk about the gospel, our children, and our grandchildren,” says Dale. “We read novels, biographies, and talks from general conference together. In the process, we laugh, cry, ponder, discuss, learn, and grow together.”

Rita remembers that on their honeymoon, they went to several different temples in Utah. “We still love to be together in the celestial room, holding hands and quietly contemplating things of eternal significance,” she says. “Our temple service strengthens our marriage as it helps us to become one with each other and with the Lord.”

Joy in marriage is a result of building the marital relationship on gospel principles and on a concern for one’s spouse.

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: “Harmony in marriage comes only when one esteems the welfare of his or her spouse among the highest of priorities. When that really happens, a celestial marriage becomes a reality, bringing great joy in this life and in the life to come.”¹



Building a Family Together

“My husband, Dale, and I have often wondered what our lives would have been like without the scheduled chaos and sometimes messy life moments that having children brings,” says Linda Ottley from Utah. “Naively, we began our parenthood years with visions of ruffles and bows and shiny, happy faces. However, those shiny, happy faces have been ours, as we have shared in the joys and sorrows and the ups and downs of parenting. The joy of marriage is not just experienced in perfect moments. By having children, we have learned who we really are and what we’re made of. Through raising a family together, we have discovered the kind of love where we care more about someone else’s welfare than our own.”

Parenting is exactly about that kind of selfless love. Early in their marriage, Don and Janice Ryther of Washington,

USA, discovered they were unable to have children of their own. “We decided to adopt, and with each child, we went to the temple to have them sealed to us so we could be an eternal family,” says Janice. “Each time our joy multiplied as we added another child with his or her unique personality. Our joy multiplied again as we watched each of our two daughters kneel across the altar to be sealed to a young man who held the priesthood.”

Don says, “Our son has taken a different path that has complicated his life. Remembering our temple covenants and promises has given us hope as we continue to pray daily for him. It has been a blessing to have an eternal partner to experience the happy times with as well as the times of trial in this life. As we continue to work together, we find joy as we discover new depths in ourselves and collectively as a family unit.”





Building a Spiritual Foundation Together

Mike and Stacey Sitton of Utah have learned that daily prayer and scripture study have brought them joy in marriage.

“As we pray together each morning and night, we are reminded that treating each other as the Savior would treat us is a great way to help us take upon ourselves His name,” says Mike. “As we read from the scriptures each morning, we learn more about how the prophets followed the Lord. This in turn helps us to always remember Him in our marriage. Then as we apply the teachings of the scriptures and living prophets, we are strengthened in our resolve to keep His commandments.”

Together Again One Day

Peering into the sealing room in the Los Angeles California Temple where she and her now-deceased husband, Winston, were married more than 50 years ago brings peace to Sally Smith.

“On a rainy Thursday morning in January, we knelt across that sacred altar and were sealed for time and all eternity,” she says. “We felt great joy, but it was joy tinged with sadness because we had no family with us—only five friends. My husband, who grew up in a less-active family, and I, a Jewish convert of three years, chose to marry in the Lord’s appointed way in spite of intense pressure from parents and siblings. With a borrowed wedding dress and a borrowed car, and with none of the festivities that typically accompany marriage, we not only set our life’s course in that Los Angeles temple sealing room—we also set our eternal course.

“After a lifetime of being together, my dear Win and I are now separated by a painful parting. Nevertheless, through the Savior’s atoning sacrifice and the reality of the sealing power of the priesthood, I feel hope—even joy—during this trying season of my life, knowing we will one day be together again.” ■

NOTE

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Celestial Marriage,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 94.

HANDS ACROSS THE ALTAR

By Lorraine Jeffery

*Strong, unblemished, untried hands
clasped across the altar—making a promise.
Unknown challenges will stretch tendons;
tragedies will break bones;
tasks will wear calluses
and scar fingers.*

*The hands promised support, protection, love,
comfort, compassion, trust, and
righteousness.*

*They tilled gardens, blessed heads, paid bills,
fixed water pipes, drove cars, and
wiped tears.*

*Now they are large-knuckled and
blue-veined, with skin like parchment.
The parchment of a promise kept.*



BUILDING OUR MARRIAGE

*After marriage, life fills with struggles as quickly as it fills with dreams.
But the Lord offers us the means to build a marriage to last for eternity.*



By Christopher Deaver

Not long after I started dating Julia, I quickly realized she was the one I wanted to marry. She was beautiful, focused, educated, and full of testimony. I didn't tell her early on that I wanted to marry her, but I stayed focused and did everything I could to demonstrate my love for her. There were definitely challenges, but I prayed for faith, and the Lord granted it to me. Eventually, we looked at each other with joy across the altar in the temple, and we knew the Lord had blessed us.

Life Got Busy

We lived happily ever after—until something happened. Life got busy. Just as fast as our life had filled with hopes and dreams, it filled with challenges. Months after our wedding, unexpected struggles arose—including a devastating job loss.

I was stressed, and I had no idea what to do. Julia and I were frustrated with the situation and even with each other. The future had looked so bright, but we got stuck and couldn't see past our challenges. Months of frustration and discord turned into years. We were getting a lot of advice from people, some suggesting we just divorce to spare ourselves the troubles we faced. But that didn't seem right at all.

Eventually, we realized just how deeply we needed the Lord and each other. We began recommitting ourselves to a more focused effort to do all the things that would invite the Spirit into our hearts and home: attending the temple, praying together, and reading the scriptures together. We prayed fervently together as a couple, pleading with the Lord for His help. We realized that the only way out of our trials was through them—together. And then something happened, something amazing. Our hearts became softer, more caring, and filled with greater concern for each other. We became more thoughtful in what we said to each other and to our children.

Built to Last

During that trying time, I found comfort and strength in the experience of the Latter-day Saint pioneers. After being persecuted for years, they arrived in the Utah desert and

welcomed the words of the prophet Brigham Young (1801–77): “This is the right place.”¹

In addition to building their homes and community, they worked tirelessly to build a temple they could finally keep without fear of destruction. But then, after several years of toil, tensions between the U.S. government and the Saints led them to temporarily abandon Salt Lake City and to bury the temple foundation to protect it from harm.

When they returned to the temple site and dug up the foundation, they found it had cracked. Because they were eager to receive the blessings of the temple, the Saints wanted to finish building it. But Brigham Young told them that the temple must be built “to stand through the Millennium.”² And with that, the Saints went back to work. They removed the old foundation and found a more durable rock for the new foundation. They spent 40 years building a temple that has lasted well over a century.

An Eternal Promise

As we build our lives and our families, it matters what materials we use: our time, our efforts, and our choices. And in a world that trains us to expect immediate results, we need to understand that building a marriage for eternity takes a lot of time and effort. If we've struggled in life, family, or marriage, we can't give up. We must turn it around.

We need the Lord's power. He will strengthen us to create a foundation that matters, one that lasts forever. He taught:

“Therefore, whoso heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock—

“And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock” (3 Nephi 14:24–25).

If we build the foundations of our lives, marriages, and families on Him, we will not fail. ■
The author lives in California, USA.

NOTES

1. Brigham Young, in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* (2004), 146.
2. Brigham Young, in *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual*, 2nd ed. (2003), 390.



By Elder Larry R.
Lawrence
Of the Seventy

The Light

OF THE PERFECT DAY

*Accumulating as much light as we can is the key
to successfully passing the test of mortal life.*

Would you be surprised to learn that your success in life depends upon how much light you gain while you are here? Success is not about how much money you make or how many medals you win or how much fame you achieve. The real objective of our existence is to gain light.

Our physical bodies grow bigger when we feed them nourishing food. Our spirits grow brighter when we feed them light. “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). Our Father in Heaven was once a mortal man who gradually progressed until He became a being with a fulness of light. He wants the same for you and me because a fulness of light means a fulness of joy.

Our Heavenly Father loves us so much that when we left our premortal life to come to earth, He gave each of us a parting gift: the Light of Christ, our conscience. As the scriptures state, “The Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world” (D&C 84:46).

Heavenly Father’s greatest desire is that we follow the light we were born with so we can receive more light. As we continue to follow the light our Father sheds on us, we receive more light and we become more like Him.

The gift of the Holy Ghost—in addition to the light we were born with—gives



WE OBTAIN MORE LIGHT AS WE:

- Love others.
- Study the scriptures.
- Obey the commandments.
- Hearken to the Holy Ghost.
- Serve in the temple.

us a great advantage. It is one of the greatest gifts we can receive in mortality because it brings more opportunities for obtaining light and truth. Without the Holy Ghost, we are like a person walking slowly home in the dark with only a flashlight as a guide. When we accept the gospel of Jesus Christ and are baptized, we are offered a floodlight and a guide who knows the way. Now we can walk faster and see our way during our homeward journey.

Increasing in Light

“That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (D&C 50:24).

This verse perfectly summarizes our

purpose on earth. Eternal progress simply means increasing in light. As our spirits become brighter and brighter, we are working toward that “perfect day” when we can be *like God* and *with God*.

Think of this concept of light the next time you attend an endowment session in the temple. You start in a dimly lit room. As you increase in knowledge, the room becomes brighter. At last your journey of light takes you to the glorious celestial room. Our experience in the temple is symbolic of our journey on earth. Things get brighter and brighter until we finally reenter the Lord’s presence.

Exceeding light is an attribute of every resurrected celestial being. When the angel Moroni appeared to Joseph in his room, the young prophet observed that the angel’s “countenance [was] truly like lightning”

(Joseph Smith—History 1:32).

Matthew used the same words to describe the angels at the Lord’s tomb, recording that their “countenance was like lightning” (Matthew 28:3 [see also Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 28:3, footnote *a*]).

When it comes time for each of us to be resurrected, how will the Lord determine whether we receive a telestial body, a terrestrial body, or a celestial body? The answer is easier than you may think. If we have accumulated enough celestial light in our spirits, we will be resurrected with celestial bodies. If we have accumulated only enough light to qualify for terrestrial or telestial



bodies, that is the glory we will receive in the Resurrection.

The Doctrine and Covenants explains:

“Your glory shall be that glory by which your bodies are quickened.



“Ye who are quickened by a portion of the celestial glory shall then receive of the same, even a fulness” (D&C 88:28–29).

As long as we stay on the strait and narrow path, trying to live the commandments and improve ourselves, we are accumulating light. But what happens when we stray from the path and break the commandments? What happens to our light?

The scriptures are clear about this: “He that repents not, from him shall be taken even the light which he *has* received” (D&C 1:33; emphasis added). In other words, while some people are gaining light, others are losing it. Satan can take away light whenever we disobey truth (see D&C 93:39).

The important thing to ask is, how can we obtain more light so that it “groweth brighter and brighter” within us? I suggest five ways.

Love Others

One of the best ways to gain light is to learn to love as our Father in Heaven loves. We call this kind of love *charity*. Mormon exhorts us to “pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love” (Moroni 7:48) Love rapidly brings more light into our spirits; contention and jealousy take light away.

Remember, the first commandment is to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, and mind (see Matthew 22:37–38). The reward for loving God and for putting Him first in our lives is huge. Jesus taught, “If your eye be single to *my* glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light” (D&C 88:67; emphasis added).

The second commandment is to love our neighbor as ourselves (see Matthew 22:39). This may be more difficult to do because our neighbors are not perfect. The real secret for learning to love others is found in serving them. That’s why it comes natural to love our

children, even though they too are far from perfect.

The more you serve, the more you love, and the more you love, the more light you receive. Missionaries—both old and young—develop a glow about them that is visible to others. Full-time service is rewarded by lots of spiritual light.

Study the Scriptures

There is no shortcut to learning truth. You have to invest time in reading the scriptures and the teachings of the prophets. If you want to grow spiritually, you have to feed your spirit by feasting on the word every day. According to the Doctrine and Covenants, truth is just another name for light (see D&C 84:45).

Before you open your scriptures each day, pray that you will learn something new to add light to your spirit. Then search for new insights and understanding. Also ask



yourself, “How do these things I am reading apply to my life?” You have to be willing to invest time if you want to gain more light.

A related source of light to our spirits is found in memorizing scriptures. Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of



the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “Scriptures are like packets of light that illuminate our minds” and that “great power can come from memorizing scriptures.”¹ Memorized scriptures become a gift you give to yourself—a gift that keeps on giving more and more light.

Obey the Commandments

As you discover the commandments in the scriptures, go and do them. For example, if you read the divine counsel to “retire to thy bed early” and “arise early” (D&C 88:124), you had better obey. If you are reading the Doctrine and Covenants and come across the commandment “Thou shalt not speak evil of thy neighbor” (D&C 42:27), then you better watch what you say from now on. As you learn truth, you must apply it to accumulate light.

If you gain light but don’t use it, you may lose it.

Hearken to the Holy Ghost

Hearkening to the Spirit is one way President Thomas S. Monson has gained so much light. He has learned to follow the promptings and impressions that come to him. The scriptures teach, “Every one that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit cometh unto God” (D&C 84:47).

If you expect spiritual promptings, they will come. If you act on them, you will receive more. If the Holy Ghost asks you to do something that is difficult (like break a bad habit), and you listen and obey the prompting, you will experience a spurt of spiritual growth and a big infusion of light.

Serve in the Temple

When we consider the Lord’s temples, we naturally think of light. For example, consider what the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote about the dedication of the Kirtland Temple in 1836: “The people of the neighborhood came running together (hearing an unusual sound within, and seeing a bright light like a pillar of fire resting upon the Temple).”²

There is so much light and truth to be gained from temple service that the temple may be referred to as the University of the Lord. Temple light is even more beneficial to your spirit than sunlight is to your body. Consider yourself blessed if you are able to bask in this heavenly light on a regular basis.

Be a Light

Every temple, every chapel, every mission office, every Latter-day Saint home, and every Church member should be a light to the world. As Peter reminded the Saints in his day, God “hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

That we may spend our entire lives accumulating as much light as we can in our spirits is my prayer. That doing so is the key to successfully passing the test of mortal life is my testimony. That we can obtain light by following the suggestions above is my witness. ■

NOTES

1. Richard G. Scott, “The Power of Scripture,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 6.
2. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 2:428.



A Sinless Man

Fervently ♩ = 104-120

Words by David B. Larsen
Music by Janice Kapp Perry

1. A sin - less, pure, and ho - ly man did what none else could do. The
 2. A sin - less, pure, and ho - ly man, o - bed - ient to God's plan, Sub -
 3. A sin - less, pure, and ho - ly man with hum - ble, bro - ken heart Then
 4. A sin - less, pure, and ho - ly man the third day rose to save. Em -

ver - y Son of God Him - self faced this e - ter - nal truth: With -
 mit - ted in all things to Him be - fore the world be - gan. For
 suf - fered more than man could bear to pay re - demp - tion's part. His
 pow' - ring us to do the same, He burst forth from the grave. In

out His great a - ton - ing gift man - kind would all be lost; With -
 on - ly His pure of - fer - ing could con - quer sin and death— His
 lov - ing off' - ring, so com - plete, lacked yet the fin - al cost— His
 Christ shall all be made a - live, like spring - time flow'rs that bloom. We

out His sac - ri - fice for sin God's works would come to naught.
 guilt - less blood would ran - som us and all man - kind would bless.
 spir - it left Gol - go - tha's cross that no one would be lost.
 praise His vict' - ry o'er the cross— His glor - ious emp - ty tomb.

Inspired by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland,
 "Where Justice, Love, and Mercy
 Meet," April 2015 general conference.

© 2016 by David B. Larsen and Janice Kapp Perry. All rights reserved. This song may be copied for incidental, noncommercial, church or home use. This notice must be included on each copy.

SPIRITUAL REHABILITATION

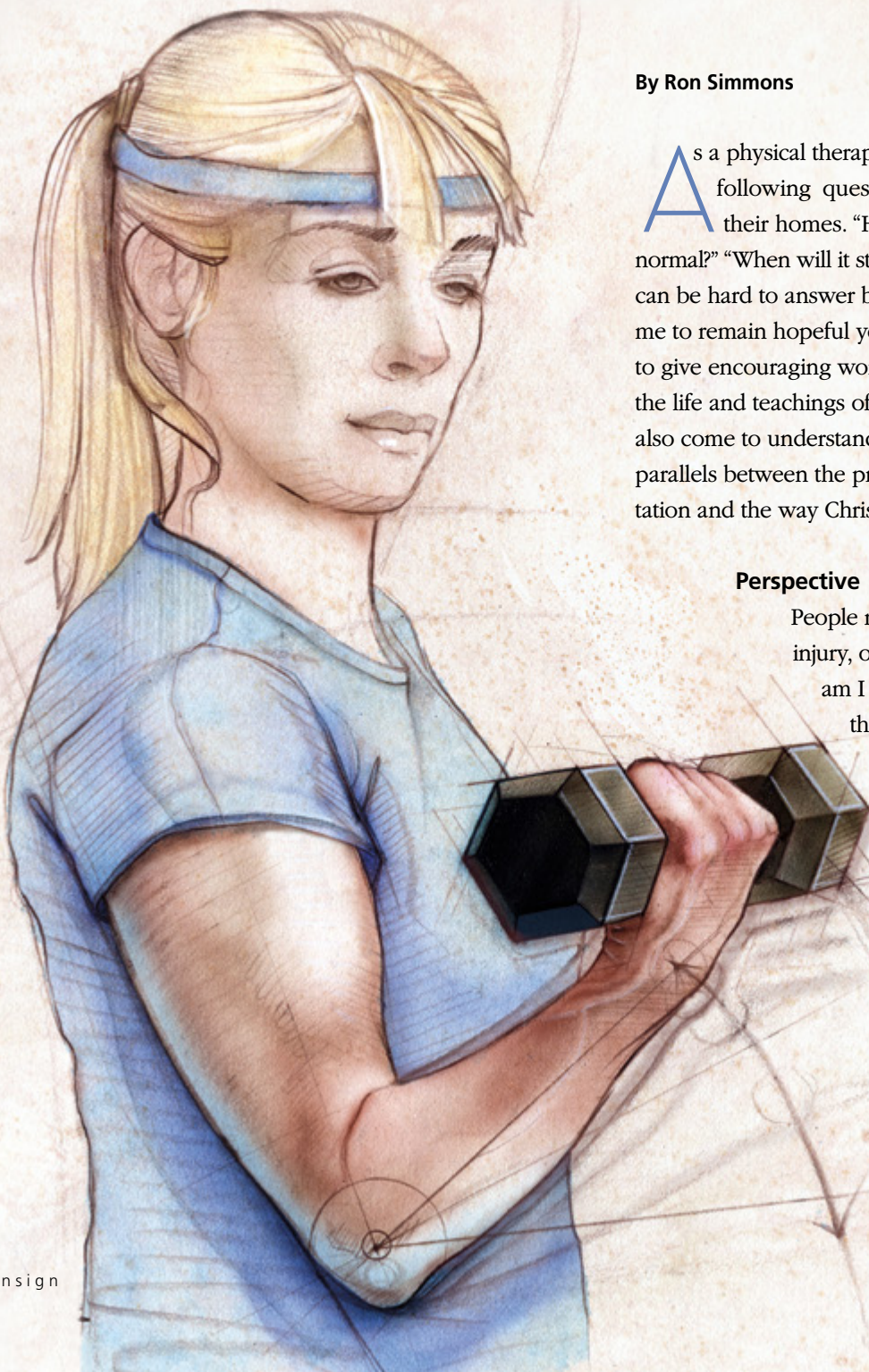
Recognizing the similarities between physical rehabilitation and spiritual rehabilitation can change our perspective and give us patience to persist.

By Ron Simmons

As a physical therapist, I am often asked the following questions as I visit patients in their homes. “How am I doing?” “Is this normal?” “When will it stop hurting?” Such questions can be hard to answer because it is important for me to remain hopeful yet honest. As I have strived to give encouraging words, I have pondered on the life and teachings of the Master Healer. I have also come to understand that there are many parallels between the process of physical rehabilitation and the way Christ heals our souls.

Perspective

People recovering from surgery, injury, or disease often ask, “How am I doing?” They wonder if they are behind schedule or if they are doing something wrong. I have realized that part of my job as a physical therapist is to give patients proper perspective.



I share with them my observation that everyone heals at a different rate. Each person is different, but I have noticed that if patients consistently do their exercises as instructed, they improve little by little until at some point they are healed. While some might get better faster than others, consistency will get all to the same place.

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, taught a similar principle: “The Lord doesn’t expect us to work harder than we are able. . . . Our Heavenly Father asks only that we do the best we can—that we work according to our full capacity, however great or small that may be.”¹ Our Savior, too, often gives us proper perspective on our spiritual journey, reminding us to “be of good cheer” (D&C 61:36). He comforts us by saying, “Behold, ye are little children and ye cannot bear all things now; ye must grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth” (D&C 50:40). He teaches us to be diligent and to keep “exercising” faith, forgiveness, patience, and charity. He reminds us to trust that He will fulfill His promises.

When I teach patients certain exercises, they rarely get them right the first time. They need repetitive cues and reminders. They also sometimes need feedback and correction. We, too, have received instruction from the Master, and few of us get it right the first time. He encourages us not to give up. He lovingly calls us to repentance and corrects us when needed. He delights in every little step of progress we make and appreciates our best efforts.

There have been times when I have found myself in prayer asking my Father in Heaven, “How am I doing? Am I where Thou wouldst have me be? Am I doing what Thou wouldst have me do?” As we ask these questions, He can give us divine perspective. Often the answer will be to “hold on thy way” (D&C 122:9) and to “continue in steadfastness” (D&C 49:23).

Comparison Can Bring Discouragement

“Is this normal?” is another tough question for me to answer as a physical therapist. *Normal*, a comparative word, is perhaps unfairly used. Two patients may have the same surgery on the same day by the same surgeon but have different symptoms and different experiences in recovery. Pre-existing medical conditions, previous fitness levels, or even previous attitudes and expectations can all contribute to surgical outcomes. Similarly, all of us have different personalities, different upbringings, different strengths and weaknesses, and different life experiences. How can we compare ourselves fairly to each other? We can’t.

I often remind my patients neither to listen to the stories of others’ bad experiences nor to compare themselves with those who claim extraordinary results. I encourage them to evaluate their progress based on their own situations. I teach them that if they are consistent, they will see small gains daily. Sometimes the gains may be imperceptible, until one day they will notice they are doing much better than before.

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught this principle from a spiritual perspective: “Sometimes . . . in our daily efforts to become more Christlike, we find ourselves repeatedly struggling with the same difficulties. As if we were climbing a tree-covered mountain, at times we don’t see our progress until we get closer to the top and look back from the high ridges. Don’t be discouraged.”²

Just as each patient progresses little by little, with diligence, we too grow spiritually “line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little” (2 Nephi 28:30).

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, emphasized this principle as it applies to testimonies:

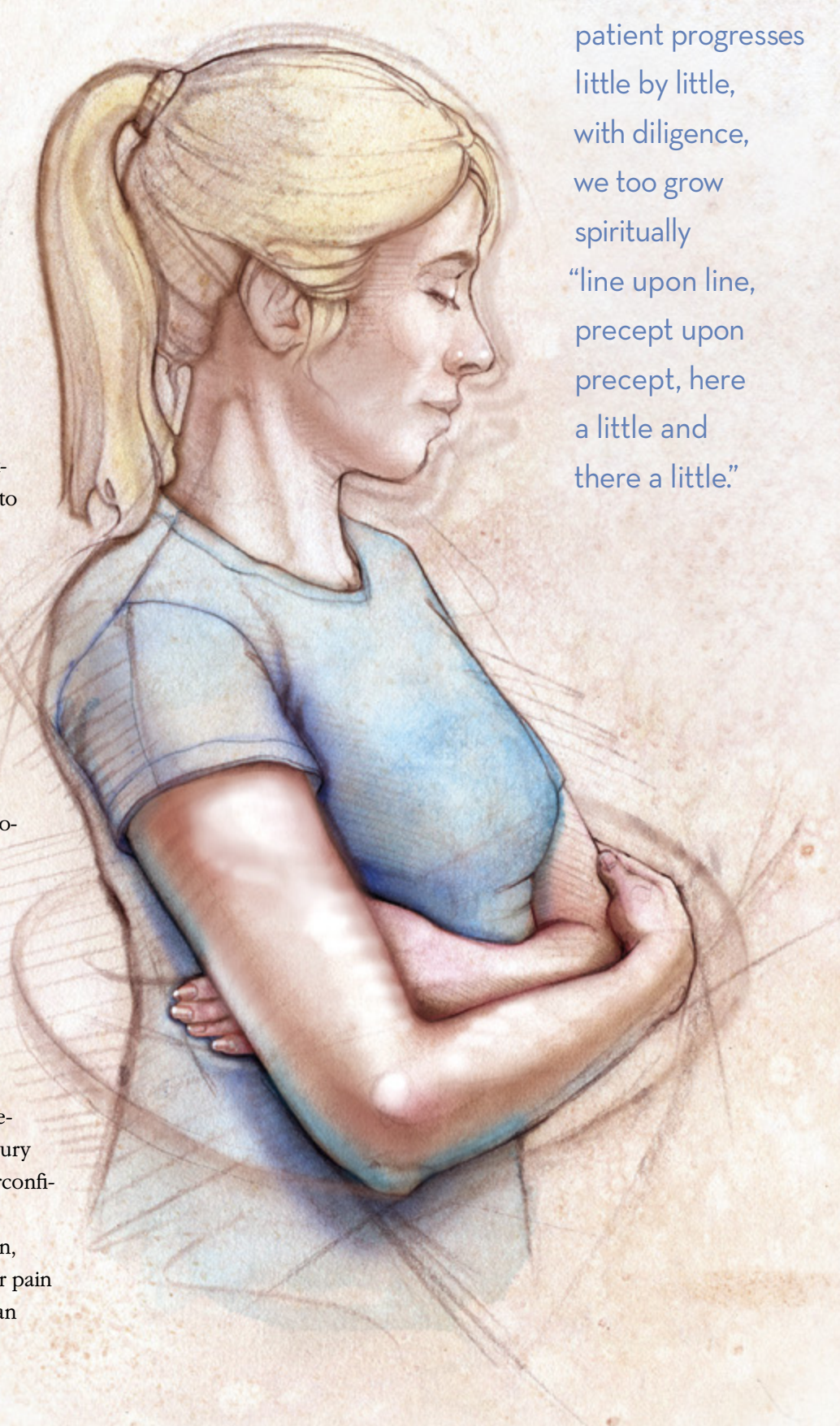
“A testimony is not thrust upon you; a testimony grows. We become taller in testimony like we grow taller in physical stature; we hardly know it happens because it comes by growth.”³

Pain Can Be Good

To accurately answer a patient who asks, “When will it stop hurting?” one would need to be able to predict the future. Everyone perceives pain differently, and what hurts one person may not hurt another. We all try to avoid pain, but pain is also necessary to protect us from harm. Pain tells us something is wrong. It deters us from hurting ourselves. Too much pain can be counterproductive. No pain at all can lead us to further injury. There must be the right amount and intensity of pain, especially during recovery. If a patient’s pain is too severe, she will not be able to participate in therapy and her results will not be ideal. If a patient experiences no pain after a recent injury or surgery, he may become overconfident and injure himself.

Contrary to popular belief, then, pain can be good. And in life, our pain can be more than physical. We can

Just as each patient progresses little by little, with diligence, we too grow spiritually “line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little.”



experience spiritual pain and emotional pain. Our trials, hardships, and uncomfortable experiences also can be considered types of pain.

When our first parents lived in the Garden of Eden, there was no pain, sorrow, or hardship. Thus there was no growth, progress, or joy. (See 2 Nephi 2:23–24.) Adam and Eve understood that it would be better to experience sorrow so that they could learn the difference between good and evil (see Moses 5:10–11). When life is painful, we learn by experience to choose the right.

The Savior reminds us that in the world we will have “tribulation” but to “be of good cheer,” for He has “overcome the world” (John 16:33). There is no pain, illness, or hardship that He doesn’t know. He stands “all the day long” (2 Nephi 28:32) with arms extended and beckons us to lean on Him.

Healing Takes Time

We live in a world of instant results. Often very little effort is required on our part to get what we want. Many patients want to recover as quickly as possible to return to work and other activities, and I bring unwelcome news when I tell them that it will take time to heal. Though I can estimate the healing time required, it might take longer than expected.

The same may be true in our spiritual recovery from the sorrows of life or from the consequences of sin. Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that repentance “takes time—painful time!”⁴ President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) said: “Developing spirituality and attuning ourselves to the highest influences of godliness are not an easy matter. It takes time and frequently involves a struggle.”⁵

Struggle Brings Strength

When a neighbor saw me standing next to an unsteady patient, she asked me, “Aren’t you going to help her?” I realized that to the neighbor it may have looked like I was not

helping my patient, but indeed I was helping as I allowed her to struggle. It was through the struggle that she would grow stronger and more confident in her ability to stand and walk. I was always close in case she began to fall, and I assisted her when she could not complete her task alone.

I reflected on the times when I had looked upward to heaven, saying, “Father, where art Thou? Wilt Thou not help me?” And yet I knew that Heavenly Father and His Son were there, allowing me to pass through my struggles but ever ready to assist me when I needed help. I now see how They taught me, supported me, and loved me through my difficult times.

The Savior gives these comforting words:

“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. . . .

“Wherefore, I am in your midst. . . .

“And the day cometh that you shall hear my voice and see me, and know that I am” (D&C 50:41–42, 44–45).

Hope amid Pain

Our Father in Heaven hears our prayers. Our Savior, Jesus Christ, is the Great Healer and individually assists us throughout our “spiritual rehabilitation.” Let us remain hopeful during our painful experiences. Let us keep an eternal perspective and remember our divine potential as we progress step by step. Let us remember the Savior’s words: “What I say unto one I say unto all, be of good cheer, little children; for I am in your midst, and I have not forsaken you” (D&C 61:36). ■

The author lives in Nevada, USA.

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Two Principles for Any Economy,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 56.
2. Neil L. Andersen, “Repent . . . That I May Heal You,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 41.
3. Boyd K. Packer, “The Quest for Spiritual Knowledge,” *New Era*, Jan. 2007, 4.
4. M. Russell Ballard, “Keeping Covenants,” *Ensign*, May 1993, 7.
5. Howard W. Hunter, “Blessed from on High,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 61.



**FINDING
NEW LIFE
IN CHRIST**

Follow Him and find new life Discover how



SHARING THIS YEAR'S EASTER VIDEO

A video with testimonies of people from around the world can be found at FollowHim.mormon.org. Share your own testimony of the Savior using the social media hashtag #Hallelujah.



The passing of a loved one is often a very tender time, filled with soul-searching and self-reflection for those left behind. Many wonder, as did Job in ancient times, “If a man die, shall he live again?” (Job 14:14). This poignant question seems particularly appropriate during this time of year, the Easter season, as we remember the Savior’s Atonement and celebrate His glorious Resurrection.

Because of His Atonement and Resurrection, the Lord Jesus Christ is able to heal every pain, understand every heartache, and overcome every loss. From the Book of Mormon we learn:

“And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people.

“And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities” (Alma 7:11–12).

Through trials great and small, as each of us seeks to find the Savior, to love Him, and to follow Him, we will find strength in Him. These truths are what inspired George Frideric Handel to compose his magnificent oratorio

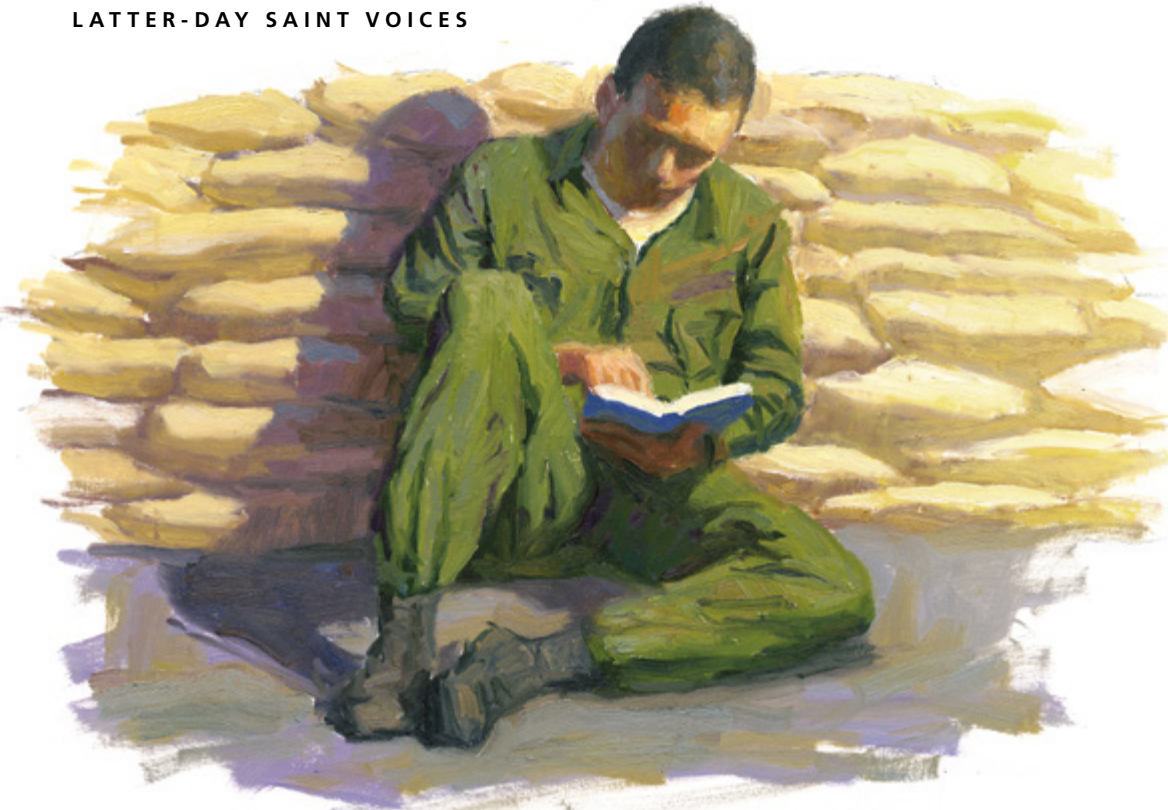
Messiah. Its “Hallelujah Chorus” is a majestic declaration of testimony and love for the Savior. During this Easter season, with its celebration of new life through Christ, we can find peace and joy for ourselves through our faith in Jesus Christ and help others draw closer to the Lord of lords and King of kings by sharing with them our beliefs about the Atonement and Resurrection.

Beginning March 13, visit FollowHim.mormon.org to view a powerful new video celebrating the Savior’s victory over sin and death. You can also share your testimony of what Easter means to you on social media using the hashtag #Hallelujah.

President Thomas S. Monson has taught:

“To all who have lost loved ones, we would turn Job’s question to an answer: If a man die, he *shall* live again. We know, for we have the light of revealed truth. ‘I am the resurrection, and the life,’ spoke the Master. ‘He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die’ [John 11:25–26].

“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” (“I Know That My Redeemer Lives!” *Ensign*, May 2007, 25). ■



While I was sitting in my bunker reading the Book of Mormon, I decided to do as the scriptures direct and ask God if the Book of Mormon was true.

WAR BROUGHT ME PEACE

Five days after my high school graduation, I enlisted in the military. Just before leaving for Vietnam, I had a distinct impression that my enlistment was the beginning of a spiritual journey.

Two hours after I arrived at my new unit, enemy rockets exploded in the camp. A mortar attack followed that night. It all seemed exciting until the second week, when several men died. Sobered, I started reflecting on the meaning of life.

I soon met a helicopter crew chief named Graig Stephens. One day the subject of religion came up. He told me he was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and asked if I wanted to know more. Although my parents were not members of the Church, they had taught me faith in Jesus Christ.

That evening in an empty bunker, Graig read me the first discussion. What

stood out in my mind was not the logic of the discussion or the manner in which he presented it but rather the sincerity and humility of this young soldier.

In the next few days, Graig taught me the other discussions. After each discussion we would kneel in prayer. He always asked me to pray, but I couldn't seem to do it. I remember becoming distraught over some principle of doctrine and decided I didn't want to hear any more about the Church. Graig spent the next day looking for someone who could answer my questions.

At dusk he brought a helicopter pilot—a returned missionary—from another troop to see me. This brother answered my questions and testified that he knew the Church was true. Then he told me I was as ready for baptism as anyone he had ever seen. I couldn't utter a word. When he

finished speaking, I found myself thinking, "You know something, he's right."

A short while later, while sitting in my bunker reading the Book of Mormon, I decided to do as the scriptures direct and ask God if the Book of Mormon was true (see Moroni 10:4–5). Bowing my head, I took my request to the Lord. No sooner had I done so than I felt an undeniable feeling of warmth and peace such as I had never experienced. I knew that God had answered my prayer. I knew that the Book of Mormon was true. Knowing that the Book of Mormon was true, I knew that Joseph Smith had to be a prophet. Shortly thereafter, I was baptized in the Gulf of Tonkin.

As I came out of the waters of baptism, I had a feeling of being totally clean. Life had never been so sweet. It took traveling thousands of miles to a war zone, but I finally found the peace my soul had been seeking. ■

Robert Swenson, Alabama, USA

IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO?

I sat in my living room crying. It had been only a few days since I had had a miscarriage, and I couldn't stop thinking about the loss of our baby. So many things reminded me of the tragedy, especially my closet full of maternity clothes.

Every time I went into my room, the clothes seemed to stare at me from their hangers. Most of them were brand new and never worn, reminding me that I was no longer pregnant. I was still too weak to stand up for more than a few seconds to put them away.

Suddenly someone knocked on my door. When I opened it, I saw my visiting teacher standing on the doorstep. It was the same visiting teacher who had been watching my children when my doctor confirmed to my husband and me that I had miscarried.

"Is there anything I can do for you?" she asked.

"Yes," I said. "I need your help putting away my maternity clothes."

I led her into the bedroom, emptied drawers, and stripped hangers. Then I lay in bed while she folded my clothes and gently laid them in boxes. After she had taped the boxes and carried them downstairs so I wouldn't have to look at them, I felt my spirits lift.

Afterward she went into the kitchen,

loaded the dishwasher, wiped the counters, and tidied up—things I still wasn't able to do. When she left,

my house was clean, my clothes were out of sight, and my heart wasn't quite so heavy anymore.

The Apostle John taught, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18). When we reach out to share the Savior's love, we are strengthened by His courage. Because my visiting teacher was filled with the love of Christ, she came immediately when the Spirit prompted her to come.

We received many expressions of love during that terrible time, including flowers, cards, cupcakes, and childcare, all of which we appreciated. But the expression that helped the most was when my visiting teacher, not knowing how badly I needed her, knocked on my door, and asked, "Is there anything I can do for you?" ■
Loralee Leavitt, Washington, USA

I lay in bed while she folded my clothes and gently laid them in boxes.



BLACKBERRY CANES

Blackberries grow like weeds on the western coast of Canada. The plants sprout and grow everywhere and will take over everything they can reach—fields, sidewalks, roads, and beaches are lined with blackberry cane. In the fall neighbors work together to pick berries to use in their homes.

As I joined in picking blackberries one year, I was determined that not only would I pick enough to make jam for myself and my family, but I would also make extra to give to the sisters I visit teach. The best place to pick blackberries in my neighborhood was down by the elementary school, where pathways and fields are lined with brambles reaching

eight feet (2.4 m) high. I had already been there picking the week before, and I knew many others had already gone there as well, so it was likely that there wouldn't be much fruit left.

As I prepared to pick berries again, I thought I would try picking in a different place. Out my kitchen window I could see a vacant lot next to the street. Hardly anyone went by there, and canes were spreading out over an acre of land. Surely there would be lots of fruit where no one had picked. I put my buckets in the back of the car and headed over.

Soon I was hot, scratched, and perplexed as I stood in the middle of the acre of brambles. The canes were

barren, full of thorns but without any sign of flowers or fruit. I had found exactly three berries in all that land, and I couldn't understand why. My jam jars, however, still needed to be filled, so I headed over to the school to see if any fruit was left there.

When I got to the school fields, I found even more berries than I needed and more still ripening, even though many people had already picked there. I suddenly recognized what had happened: blackberry canes produce much more when their fruit is picked. Because our neighborhood had shared this patch for years, the canes responded with crops year after year. Where the canes had not been

I headed over to the school to see if any fruit was left there.



HELP THOU MINE UNBELIEF

used, they had remained dry and fruitless. Through sharing that blackberry patch over the years, we had created abundance—there was more fruit than all of us collectively needed.

This experience reminded me of how tithes and fast offerings work. The Lord has promised us that when we pay tithing, He will open “the windows of heaven, and pour [us] out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (3 Nephi 24:10). In sharing what we have through inspired programs of the Church, we create temporal and spiritual abundance for our families, our communities, and ourselves. ■

Rhiannon Gainor, California, USA

One weekend I woke up and was unable to hear in my left ear. I called an ear, nose, and throat doctor and made an appointment.

The doctor immediately sent me to an audiologist for a hearing test. I began to worry when I could not hear any of the test sounds in my left ear. At the end of the test, the audiologist concluded that I had sensorineural hearing loss, meaning a cranial nerve used in hearing was damaged.

I was shocked. I was only 26 years old and was already discussing the need for a hearing aid. One of my biggest passions is music. Would I still be able to play my instruments and sing?

The doctor prescribed a steroid to see if it would help, but he was positive my hearing loss was permanent.

My emotions soon got the better of me, and tears flooded my eyes. I was afraid of what the future would bring, and I was sad that I would never hear normally again.

That night my husband, Brian, suggested that he give me a priesthood blessing. I expected that the blessing would give me comfort and strength to deal with my hearing loss, but instead Brian promised in his blessing that my hearing would be fully restored. I couldn't believe it.

“My husband must be mistaken,” I thought. The doctor had seen many cases like mine and said that my hearing would not return.

Afterward, I asked Brian if he thought the promised blessing was his will or the Lord's. Brian told me he had felt a strong prompting to make the promise. I wasn't convinced.

As I pondered my condition, I remembered a scripture in the book of Mark where Jesus tells a desperate father that “all things are possible to him that believeth.” The man responded, “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief” (Mark 9:23–24). This was my plea to my Heavenly Father that night. I wanted to believe that I would be healed, but I was unsure. I lacked faith the Lord would help me in my crisis.

After my prayer I thought about a lesson I had taught the young women about the power of priesthood blessings. I had told the class to ask for blessings and that the Lord can heal the sick through blessings. How could I expect them to believe me if I lacked faith? I decided to put my trust in the Lord—He had not lied to me before.

Two weeks later, my hearing completely returned. The audiologist and doctor were shocked.

I will forever be grateful to Heavenly Father that my hearing was restored, but I am even more grateful for the lesson I learned. Even if it's not always in the way we are promised in a blessing, I know the Lord will bless us if we put our faith and trust in Him. ■

Stephanie Hughes, Texas, USA





**By Elder
Dallin H. Oaks**
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

RESURRECTION— THE BEGINNING OF IMMORTALITY

Death is not the conclusion of our identity.

I wonder if we fully appreciate the enormous significance of our belief in a literal, universal resurrection. . . . The Prophet Joseph Smith declared:

“The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it” [*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 49].

Of all things in that glorious ministry, why did the Prophet Joseph Smith use the testimony of the Savior’s death, burial, and Resurrection as the fundamental principle of our religion . . . ? The answer is found in the fact that the Savior’s Resurrection is central to what the prophets have called “the great and eternal plan of deliverance from death” (2 Nephi 11:5).

In our eternal journey, the resurrection is the mighty milepost that signifies the end of mortality and the



beginning of immortality. . . . We also know, from modern revelation, that without the reuniting of our spirits and our bodies in the resurrection we could not receive a “fulness of joy” (D&C 93:33–34). . . .

The “lively hope” we are given by the resurrection [see 1 Peter 1:3] is our conviction that death is not the conclusion of our identity but merely a necessary step in the destined transition from mortality to immortality. This hope changes the whole perspective of mortal life. . . .

The assurance of resurrection gives us the strength and perspective to endure the mortal challenges faced by each of us and by those we love, such things as the physical, mental, or emotional deficiencies we bring with us at birth or acquire during mortal life.

Because of the resurrection, we know that these mortal deficiencies are only temporary!

The assurance of resurrection also gives us a powerful incentive to keep the commandments of God during our mortal lives. Resurrection is much more than merely reuniting a spirit to a body held captive by the grave. . . . The prophet Amulek taught, “That same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world” (Alma 34:34). . . .

The assurance that the resurrection will include an opportunity to be with our family members—husband, wife, parents, brothers and sisters, children, and grandchildren—is a powerful encouragement for us to fulfill our family responsibilities in mortality. It helps us live together in love in this life in anticipation of joyful reunions and associations in the next. ■

From “Resurrection,” Ensign, May 2000, 14–16.



How do we avoid being swept along in the strong currents of the adversary's wind and waves?

"Let us be grateful for the beautiful Old Ship Zion, for without it we are cast adrift, alone and powerless, swept along without rudder or oar, swirling with the strong currents of the adversary's wind and waves.

"Hold tight, brothers and sisters, and sail on within the glorious ship, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and we will reach our eternal destination."

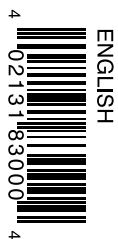


In Church Magazines

Ensign: Marriage is ordained of God, and as these Latter-day Saints testify, working together as husband and wife brings joy. See “Creating a Joyful Marriage—Together” (page 58). See also “Building Our Marriage” (page 62).

New Era: This month, youth can read testimonies of Jesus Christ from His special witnesses (page 18), as well as how His Atonement can help them overcome various negative feelings (page 23). In addition, their top dating questions are answered (page 12).

Friend: Help your family get ready for Easter by doing an activity each week from “One Step Closer to Easter” (page 24). You can also read President Uchtdorf’s message about the Savior on page 2. Learn about Jesus Christ and His Resurrection all month long!



THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS