

Ensign



175TH
ANNIVERSARY
of
RELIEF
SOCIETY

p. 38



Elizabeth Howard, Eliza Roxcy Snow, and Hannah Tapfield King sit for a photograph circa 1867. Around this time, Eliza R. Snow accepted the assignment from President Brigham Young (1801–77) to help organize Relief Societies throughout the Church. She became the second Relief Society General President in 1880 and served until her death on December 5, 1887.

Photograph courtesy of Church History Library

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Ensign

A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF
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March 2017 Volume 47 • Number 3

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Family Home Evening Ideas

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



“Be an Example of the Believers,”
page 18: Elder Keetch discusses the impor-
tance of defending the doctrines of the

gospel with love and kindness. After reading
his talk, you could talk
about times in family
members’ lives when
they have needed to
defend the gospel.
You could also read a
scripture story about
someone who stood
up for their beliefs, like
the story of Daniel or
Esther. You might try
role-playing a situation
where family members
can practice sharing
their beliefs with a calm
and understanding
attitude. For additional
insights and ideas,
consider watching
the video “Everyday
Example: When Beliefs
Are Questioned”
([lds.org/go/beliefsE317](https://www.lds.org/go/beliefsE317)).

BETTER THAN YOU THINK

Our family home evenings typically
involve trying to compete with
young children playing, wrestling,
or even fighting. When we pray,
they often struggle to sit still.
Sometimes we’ll get their attention
with a Church video, and they’ll
share some precious thoughts
(score!). But then chaos again
ensues. I felt like a failure until
a talk by Elder David A. Bednar
reminded me that *consistency* is
the key to family home evening
(see October 2009 general con-
ference). You may feel like you’re
failing at family home evening, but
you’re likely doing better than you
think. And when we meet consis-
tently, our families will be blessed
in ways that bring lasting joy.

Chris Deaver, California, USA

“Still in Force Today,” page 50: Elder
González teaches that sharing the gospel is
one way we can fulfill the Savior’s ancient

commandment to do
His works—a command-
ment still in force today.
Ask family members to
share ways they could
invite those not of our
faith to take action in
relation to the gospel
(ideas might include
inviting someone to read
the Book of Mormon,
attend a Church meet-
ing, watch a Church
video, or attend a
visitors’ center). Who do
you know that might
be ready to receive such
an invitation? Consider
watching videos of the
stories mentioned in
the article, such as “The
Woman at the Well”
([lds.org/go/wellE317](https://www.lds.org/go/wellE317))
and “Jesus Heals a
Man Born Blind”
([lds.org/go/blindE317](https://www.lds.org/go/blindE317)).

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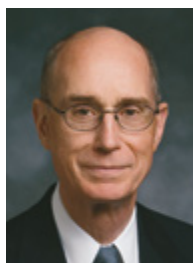
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the Ensign blessed your life?
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or questions, use the “Submit an
Article” link on our web page.



**By President
Henry B. Eyring**

First Counselor in
the First Presidency

ARMED WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS

God's prophet on earth, President Thomas S. Monson, has declared, "Today, we are encamped against the greatest array of sin, vice, and evil ever assembled before our eyes."¹

Would you be surprised to learn that President Monson uttered those words 50 years ago? If we were encamped against an unprecedented array of wickedness back then, how much more so does evil threaten us today? For good reason, the Lord has proclaimed of our dispensation, "Behold, the enemy is combined" (D&C 38:12).

The war in which "we are all enlisted"² began before we were born on earth. It began even before the earth was created. It began many millennia ago in the premortal realm, where Satan rebelled and "sought to destroy the agency of man" (Moses 4:3).

Satan lost that battle and "was cast out into the earth" (Revelation 12:9), where he continues his war today. Here on earth "he maketh war with the saints of God, and encompasseth them round about" (D&C 76:29) with lies, deception, and temptations.

He wars against the prophets and apostles. He wars against the law of chastity and the sanctity of marriage. He

Wars against the family and the temple. He wars against what is good, holy, and sacred.

How do we battle such a foe? How do we fight against the evil that appears to be engulfing our world? What is our armor? Who are our allies?

The Power of the Lamb

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that Satan has power over us only to the degree that we permit him.³

Seeing our day, Nephi "beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb, and upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and *they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory*" (1 Nephi 14:14; emphasis added).

How do we arm ourselves with righteousness and power? We keep the Sabbath day holy and honor the priesthood. We make and keep sacred covenants, work on our family history, and attend the temple. We strive continuously to repent and plead with the Lord to "apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins" (Mosiah 4:2). We pray and serve and testify and exercise faith in Jesus Christ.



We also arm ourselves with righteousness and power as we “treasure up in [our] minds continually the words of life” (D&C 84:85). We treasure up those words by immersing ourselves in the holy scriptures and in the words of the Lord’s chosen servants, who will share His will, mind, and voice (see D&C 68:4) during next month’s general conference.

In our battle against evil, we must always remember that we have help from both sides of the veil. Our allies include God the Eternal Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost.

Our allies also include the unseen armies of heaven. “Fear not,” Elisha told a fearful young man as they faced an army of evil, “for they that be with us are more than they that be with them” (see 2 Kings 6:15–16).

We need not fear. God loves His Saints. He will never abandon us.

I know that God, in answer to prayer, has fulfilled my petitions to deliver me from evil. I testify that with the help of God the Father, the Savior of the world, and the Holy Ghost, we can be assured that we will be given more than enough power to withstand whatever evil forces we face.

May we always be armed with righteousness so that we can have confidence in the ultimate victory. ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Correlation Brings Blessings,” *Relief Society Magazine*, Apr. 1967, 247.
2. “We Are All Enlisted,” *Hymns*, no. 250.
3. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 214.

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

President Eyring reminds us we are waging a war against evil. You could begin by singing “We Are All Enlisted” (*Hymns*, no. 250) with those you teach. Then you might invite them to share how they’ve been protected through righteousness and brainstorm ways to protect their family against Satan, such as choosing wholesome media, holding family councils, or having weekly family home evening. You might challenge them to prayerfully ponder how to build up their family’s fortifications and encourage them to create a plan to implement their ideas.

I Had Already Decided

By Madison Thompson

I once received a valuable lesson in a Young Women class on sexual purity—a topic that made a lot of the youth squirm in their seats. I don't remember everything I learned that day, but I do remember my leader talking about one of her personal standards—to always remain sexually pure. Her words stayed with me, and I then made the conscious decision to adopt it as one of my own personal values.

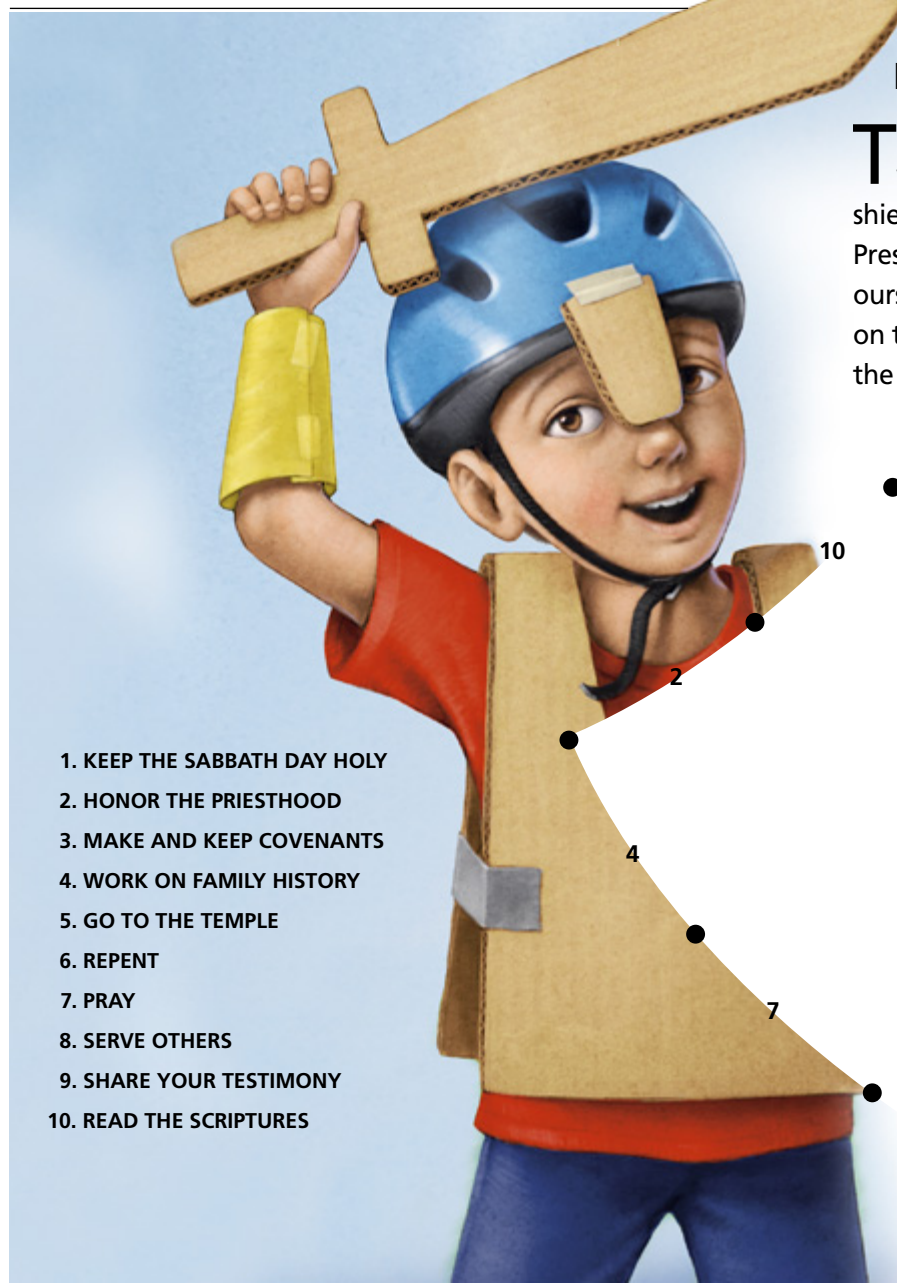
One day as I was riding home on a bus from a sporting event, someone on the bus started a game of truth or dare. Bored, some of the other kids and I joined in. When it came

to my turn, I was dared to do something that I knew wasn't right. This could've been a hard decision for me to make, but the words of my Young Women leader came to my head, and the choice was easy. I quickly declined. I had already made up my mind on what I would do in that situation.

I know that when we go to church and make room for the things we are taught there, we will be blessed with greater spiritual strength and protection from the temptations of the world.

The author lives in Utah, USA.

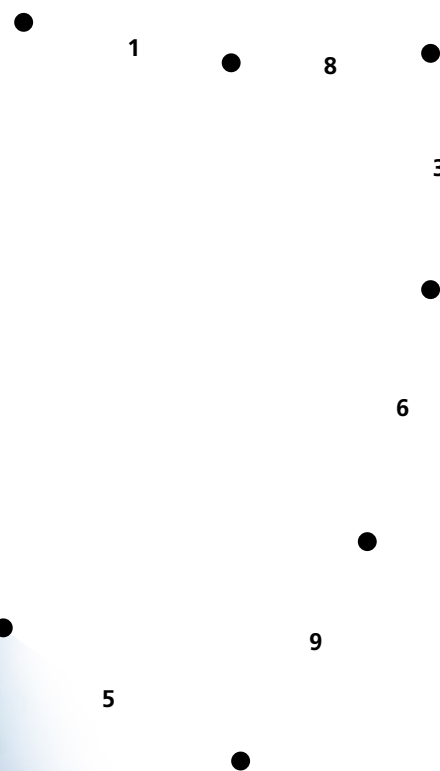
CHILDREN



Put on Your Armor

There are a lot of bad things in the world today. The gospel is like a shield that protects us. Here are 10 things President Eyring tells us to do to protect ourselves. For each one, find the number on the picture and draw a line between the dots. Color it in when you're done!

1. KEEP THE SABBATH DAY HOLY
2. HONOR THE PRIESTHOOD
3. MAKE AND KEEP COVENANTS
4. WORK ON FAMILY HISTORY
5. GO TO THE TEMPLE
6. REPENT
7. PRAY
8. SERVE OTHERS
9. SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY
10. READ THE SCRIPTURES



The Enabling Power of Jesus Christ and His Atonement

Prayerfully study this material and seek for inspiration to know what to share. How will understanding the purpose of Relief Society prepare daughters of God for the blessings of eternal life?



Faith
Family
Relief

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13). “Though we all have weaknesses, we can overcome them,” says President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency. “Indeed it is by the grace of God that, if we humble ourselves and have faith, weak things can become strong.”¹

Our Savior says in the Doctrine and Covenants, “I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up” (D&C 84:88).

“Nephi is an example of one who knew, understood,

and relied upon the enabling power of the Savior,” says Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Nephi’s brothers bound him with cords and planned his destruction. Please note Nephi’s prayer: ‘O Lord, according to my faith which is in thee, wilt thou deliver me from the hands of my brethren; yea, even *give me strength that I may burst these bands* with which I am bound’ (1 Nephi 7:17; emphasis added).

“... Nephi did not pray to have his circumstances changed. Rather, he prayed for the strength to change his circumstances. And I believe he prayed in this manner precisely because he knew, understood, and had

experienced the enabling power of the Atonement.

“I do not think the bands with which Nephi was bound just magically fell from his hands and wrists. Rather, I suspect he was blessed with both persistence and personal strength beyond his natural capacity, that he then ‘in the strength of the Lord’ (Mosiah 9:17) worked and twisted and tugged on the cords, and ultimately and literally was enabled to break the bands.”²

Additional Scriptures and Information
Isaiah 41:10; Ether 12:27;
reliefsociety.lds.org

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Gift of Grace,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 108.
2. David A. Bednar, “Strength beyond Our Own,” *New Era*, Mar. 2015, 4.



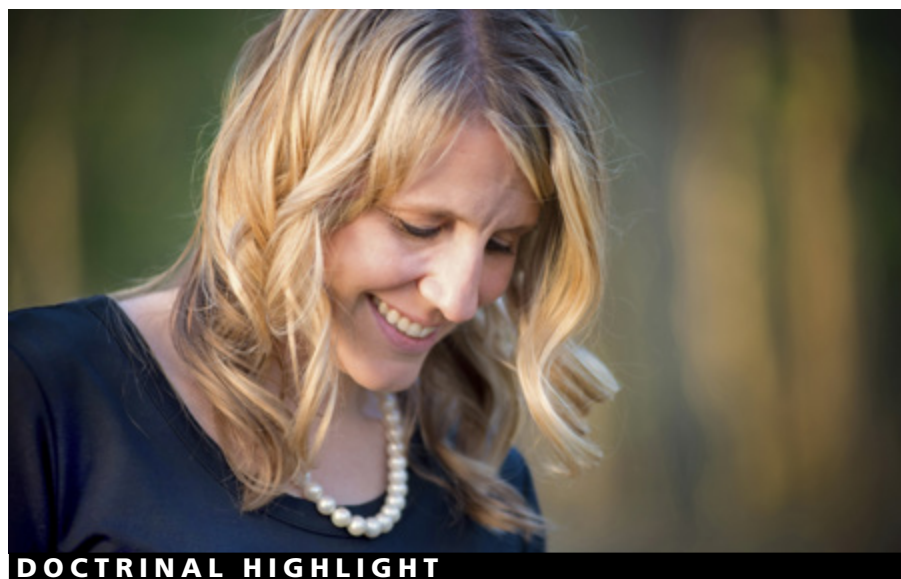
Consider This

How can the enabling power of Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice help our weaknesses be made strong?

OCTOBER 2016 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 2016 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

Joy Is Key to Our Spiritual Survival

When the focus of our lives is on God’s plan of salvation . . . and Jesus Christ and His gospel, we can feel joy regardless of what is happening—or not happening—in our lives. . . .

“ . . . His joy is constant, assuring us that our ‘afflictions shall be but a small moment’ [D&C 121:7] and be consecrated to our gain. . . .

“ . . . As in all things, Jesus Christ is our ultimate exemplar, ‘who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross’ [Hebrews 12:2]. Think of that! In order for Him to endure the most excruciating experience ever endured on earth, our Savior focused on *joy*! . . .

“If we look to the world and follow its formulas for happiness, we will never know joy. . . . Joy is a gift for the faithful.”

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Joy and Spiritual Survival,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 82, 83, 84.

PROPHETIC PROMISE



TWO THINGS THAT FAITH CANNOT DO

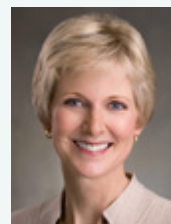
1. “Our Father in Heaven . . . will not force anyone to choose the path of righteousness. God did not force His own children to follow Him in the premortal world. How much less will He force us now as we journey through this mortal life?

“God will invite, persuade. God will reach out tirelessly with love and inspiration and encouragement. But God will never compel—that would undermine His great plan for our eternal growth. . . .

2. “Faith cannot . . . force our will upon God. We cannot force God to comply with our desires—no matter how right we think we are or how sincerely we pray. . . .

“No, the purpose of faith is not to *change* God’s will but to empower us to *act on* God’s will. Faith is trust—trust that God sees what we cannot and that He knows what we do not.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Fourth Floor, Last Door,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 16, 17.



EXTEND CHARITY TO OTHERS

“Jesus Christ is the perfect embodiment of charity. . . .

“ . . . We want to use the light of the gospel to see others as the Savior does—with compassion, hope, and charity. The day will come when we will have a complete understanding of others’ hearts and will be grateful to have mercy extended to us—just as we extend charitable thoughts and words to others. . . .

“Our obligation and privilege is to embrace improvement in *everyone* as we strive to become more like our Savior, Jesus Christ.”

Jean B. Bingham, First Counselor in the Primary General Presidency, “I Will Bring the Light of the Gospel into My Home,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 6, 8.

Becoming a Better Member Missionary

President Thomas S. Monson said in the October 2013 general conference:

“Now is the time for members and missionaries to come together. . . . [The Lord] will assist us in our labors if we will act in faith to fulfill His work.”

Two Apostles encouraged us to become better member missionaries. Use the November 2016 issue or visit conference.lds.org to read what they said.

—See Neil L. Andersen, “A Witness of God,” 35.

—See Dallin H. Oaks, “Sharing the Restored Gospel,” 57.

CONFERENCE STORIES

Turning Points

Use the November 2016 issue or visit conference.lds.org to read what changed these lives.

- What did President Henry B. Eyring learn about the Aaronic Priesthood when he was a priest? —See “That He May Become Strong Also,” 75.
- What did Elder Dale G. Renlund learn about repentance when he was 12? —See “Repentance: A Joyful Choice,” 121.
- How did Elder Gary E. Stevenson gain his testimony of the Book of Mormon? —See “Look to the Book, Look to the Lord,” 44.
- What did Elder Craig C. Christensen do as a seminary student that changed the way he reads the Book of Mormon? —See “A Choice Seer Will I Raise Up,” 27.



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

NOT ACCORDING TO PLAN

By David Dickson

Church Magazines

A trip to the temple with my teenage daughters turned out quite differently from what we had in mind.

When my daughter Lisa turned 12, she wanted more than anything to go to the temple and perform baptisms for the dead with her older sister, her mother, and me.

What a memorable day that was! We decided we wanted to have that amazing experience again soon.

And then I closed my eyes for a few seconds and her 13th birthday came and went. That was when Lisa reminded me that we hadn't gone back to the temple as a family to do baptisms.

I shook my head. Surely she was mistaken! But a quick mental review convinced me she was right. Yes, my wife and I had gone to the temple as a couple. Yes, Lisa and her older sister, Michelle, had gone with their Mutual group. But had it really been over a year since we took our oldest two daughters to do baptisms at the temple?

It was time to adjust a few priorities so we could be in the temple together again. My two teenage daughters and I made plans to attend the following Saturday—no matter what. Of course, we expected the same joyful experience as before.

Arriving at 7:30 a.m., we figured we'd walk right in. Not so. That day was unusually busy, and I hadn't thought to call ahead. When we entered the baptism waiting room, we learned there would be an hour's wait before we could even change clothes and wait in the baptism seating area. This was already quite a bit different from our first trip together a year ago.

Still, we knew it would be worth the wait. The three of us sat down and read scriptures and Church magazines. The hustle and bustle of life paused. During that hour I soaked in the spirit and quiet of the temple. Daily life

melted into the background.

In time, they called our names to come to the desk.

That's when we opened Lisa's recommend only to discover it had expired two weeks prior. Now things were *definitely* not like our first temple trip. Not even close.

My beautiful daughter hid her disappointment well until we made it to the parking lot. Then the tears began to fall. Feeling nothing at all like a dad-of-the-year, my thoughts and emotions tumbled around as we climbed back into the car.

Why hadn't I thought to check her recommend beforehand? Surely a nudge from the Spirit could have spared us that moment of discouragement after waiting for so long to be back in the temple together. Had I flat-out missed a prompting?

As we talked on the drive home,



however, we reached a few conclusions. Conclusion one, we'd been able to spend time inside the temple when we simply wouldn't have if we'd noticed the expired recommend earlier that morning. Conclusion two, we had enjoyed an increased portion of the Spirit for the better part of an hour. And conclusion three, we all felt a strong determination to return soon.

This was not the experience we'd wanted, but we learned a lot from it. We also felt strengthened simply by being there. In short, we were glad we went, even though the experience was nothing like we'd intended.

I suspect that life often follows this pattern. Sometimes the way is thorny and takes us in directions we hadn't planned. But, as the hymn says, if we keep following the Lord's path, He always leads us "to a joyful end" ("Be Still, My Soul," *Hymns*, no. 124). ■

MY REGRETS, HER FORGIVENESS

By Jeffrey A. Haines

*I wondered if I had any regrets in the way I had treated my wife.
I couldn't think of any. How could that be?*

My sweet wife of 35 years was dying of cancer. From across the room I watched her as she sat in her recliner. I had settled her there after giving her some breakfast and helping her get ready for the day. It was a comforting morning routine we had established several weeks before, when our doctors told us there was nothing more they could do for her.

Part of this morning routine included scripture study. To help conserve her strength, I had placed her heavy set of scriptures on a board that reached across the armrests of her recliner. She opened her scriptures and grasped some of the pages in her hand as if to turn to the place where she had been reading the day before. However, she was so tired and frail that she dozed off before she got the pages turned. There she slept, not moving for 30 minutes, unable to shake the fatigue that overcame her.

As I watched her, I thought what a blessing she had been in my life. I loved her so! I began to wonder if I had any regrets about the way I may have treated her at any time in our life together. I knew I had done things I should have regretted, but at that moment I could not

think of any. I asked myself, “How can this be? I am an imperfect man with weaknesses and foibles. Surely I should be able to remember something I did that offended or hurt her.”

Then the Spirit whispered to me that I felt no regrets because my wife loved me and had forgiven me long ago of anything I may have done. As tears rolled down my cheeks, I nestled into the warm comfort and glow of this peaceful thought. I loved her too and would continue to care for and serve her until she left mortality.

As I uttered a silent prayer of gratitude to my Father in Heaven for allowing me the blessing of receiving her into my life, the Spirit whispered to me again that this is the way of our Savior too. Jesus Christ loves us, and He forgives us as we sincerely repent and serve Him. Through His Atonement, He removes our regrets.

Peace flooded over me even more. I love my Savior. I know He loves me and forgives me as I receive His love and serve Him. His love “is the most desirable above all things” (1 Nephi 11:22). It gives peace to my soul (see John 14:27). ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



WHAT CAN WE DO NOW TO AVOID REGRETS?

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, helps us answer this question in his October 2012 general conference talk "Of Regrets and Resolutions." He taught:

"To avoid some of the deepest regrets of life, it would be wise to make some resolutions today. Therefore, let us:

1. Resolve to spend more time with those we love.
2. Resolve to strive more earnestly to become the person God wants us to be.
3. Resolve to find happiness, regardless of our circumstances.

"It is my testimony that many of the deepest regrets of tomorrow can be prevented by following the Savior today."



WILLING TO FORGIVE

"The Lord looks upon the light we have received, the desires of our hearts, and our

actions, and when we repent and seek His forgiveness, He forgives. As we consider our own lives and the lives of our loved ones and acquaintances, we should be equally willing to forgive ourselves and others."

Elder Craig A. Cardon of the Seventy, "The Savior Wants to Forgive," *Ensign*, May 2013, 16.



By Douglas D. Holmes

First Counselor in
the Young Men
General Presidency

THE POWER OF TEACHING DOCTRINE

How can we increase our ability to teach doctrine with power and authority?

As a new mission president, I arrived at our assigned mission with great anticipation of missionary meetings being filled with the Spirit like I remembered as a young missionary. But after completing our first round of zone conferences, I was disappointed. The Spirit was not as abundant as I had hoped, and some missionaries seemed unengaged.

As my wife and I pondered and prayed about how to invite a greater spirit into our lives and the lives of the missionaries, we were led to focus our teaching on the doctrine of Christ and its power to change us. As we pursued this course over the following months, several missionaries came to me sharing regrets about past behaviors and expressing a desire to be more diligent in keeping mission rules and living the gospel.

What Caused This Change?

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, frequently taught: “True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior. The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior.”¹



I knew this before, but following this experience with my missionaries, I had a much greater appreciation for the power and virtue of the word of God to change hearts (see Alma 31:5). As our mission progressed and we



continued to focus on teaching doctrine, their hearts changed and so did ours. Because we understood doctrine, we understood the “why” of obedience, not simply the “what” and “how.”

Why Is Teaching Doctrine So Powerful?

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, taught that “the word of God is the doctrine taught by Jesus Christ and by His prophets.”² True doctrine is centered in Christ. His doctrine, when taught and received by the Spirit, will always increase faith in Jesus Christ (see Alma 32:28–43; Moroni 7:25, 31–32).³ Faith is “the moving cause of all action” or behavior.⁴ As the Father and Son are revealed to us through Spirit-filled words, our faith grows, our desires to repent and obey increase, and we are changed.

The power to change hearts is not in the teacher but in “the virtue of the word of God” (Alma 31:5). Letters on a page or sound waves coming out of a mouth have no inherent power to change hearts, but when true words are charged by the Holy Spirit of God, they can bring about a mighty change of heart (see 1 Corinthians 2:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; Mosiah 5:2; Alma 5:7; D&C 68:4). When we teach His word by the Spirit, the Holy Ghost carries light and truth unto the heart of the learner (see John 6:63; 2 Nephi 33:1; D&C 84:45). When learners open their hearts to receive the word, the Spirit enlightens their minds and

changes their hearts—their motives and behaviors.

The Book of Mormon is a powerful witness that “true doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behaviors.” Here are just a few examples:

- King Benjamin taught the words he received from an angel to his people, and the Spirit brought a mighty change to their hearts that they had “no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually” (Mosiah 5:2).
- As Alma the Elder taught the people, “their souls were illuminated by the light of the everlasting word,” and they were saved (Alma 5:7; see also verse 9).
- The sons of Mosiah, “because of the power of his word” (Alma 26:13), helped bring about a complete change of heart in thousands of the Lamanites (see Alma 17:14–17; 53:10).

How Can We Improve?

There are things all of us can do to increase our ability to teach doctrine with power and authority (see Alma 17:3; Helaman 5:18). We don’t have to earn a doctoral degree in teaching or in religious studies, but we do have to pay a price. The following ideas may help as you seek to invite the power of doctrine into your teaching.

1. *Treasure up and live by the word.* To teach doctrine with power and authority, we need to know the doctrine. The Savior told Joseph and



SIMPLICITY BRINGS UNDER- STANDING

“Preach the first principles of the Gospel—preach them over again: you will find that day after day new ideas and additional light concerning them will be revealed to you. You can enlarge upon them so as to comprehend them clearly. You will then be able to make them more plainly understood by those [you] teach.”

Hyrum Smith, in *History of the Church*, 6:323.

Hyrum Smith that before they sought to declare His word, they must first seek to obtain it. Then they would have His Spirit and His word, “the power of God unto the convincing of men” (D&C 11:21). This kind of understanding “requires more than casual reading,” as President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) taught. It requires daily, concentrated study.⁵

Study alone is not enough. If we are to know the doctrine, we must also live it (see John 7:17; Alma 12:9). Diligent study and application of the scriptures and the words of living prophets is the way we come to have the power of His word “in us” (Alma 26:13; see also Alma 17:2–3; 32:42).

2. *Teach doctrine.* We must be careful to teach only true doctrine. The Holy Ghost is “the Spirit of truth” (John 15:26). Learners can feel His confirming witness when we declare “none other things than the prophets and apostles” (D&C 52:36) and avoid speculation and personal interpretation. One of the best ways to avoid even getting near false doctrine is to keep our teaching simple (see Mosiah 25:22; 3 Nephi 11:39–40). In addition, we should tie the comments and experiences that class members share back to

the doctrines we are studying.

3. *Teach by the Spirit.* We must remember that teaching is never about us. Our eye must be single to God. We are not to entertain or set ourselves up as a light. Paul told the Corinthians that he was with them “in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling” (1 Corinthians 2:3; see also verse 4). That does not sound like Paul used a well-rehearsed and scripted presentation.

If we are to be an instrument in God’s hands to change hearts, we need to get out of the way and let the Holy Ghost teach truth. As you prepare to teach, remember the thing that will matter most in your class is the presence of the Holy Ghost. Do all you can to invite the Spirit into your class. As you teach, don’t be afraid to pause so that you can listen to and feel the Spirit’s direction.

As we feast on and live by every word of God and teach only true doctrine by the power of the Holy Ghost, we will discover the Lord changing our hearts and the hearts of those we teach. I thank God each day for the change His word has brought to my heart and for teachers who taught me true doctrine with power and authority. ■

NOTES

1. Boyd K. Packer, “Little Children,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 17.
2. Henry B. Eyring, “The Power of Teaching Doctrine,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 73.
3. President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught, “The doctrine of Jesus Christ was designed by the Lord to help us increase our faith” (“Let Your Faith Show,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 29).
4. *Lectures on Faith* (1985), 1–2.
5. See Howard W. Hunter, “Reading the Scriptures,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 64.

HOW COULD I MAGNIFY MY CALLING?

By Faith S. Watson

I couldn't see how I could even begin to measure up as a teacher, let alone magnify my calling.

I had just been called to teach early-morning seminary. The person I was replacing was a master teacher who had taught seminary for years. He knew the scriptures better than I did, had more teaching experience than I had, and knew countless awesome sports stories. The class of mostly ninth-grade young men loved him.

We are taught to magnify our callings. I had interpreted that to mean we must spend more time, prepare greater lesson aids, and do better than the person who had previously held the calling. I couldn't see how I could even begin to measure up, let alone magnify my calling.

After I had spent a few days in frequent prayer and had endured several restless nights, a quiet thought crept into my mind: Did I really know what

magnify means? I turned to several scriptures that speak of magnifying our callings (for example, D&C 84:33; 88:80), but they didn't explain what *magnify* means. Then I went to my dictionary and read, "To cause to be held in greater esteem or respect."

I had a firm testimony and love of Heavenly Father and His Son, Their chosen servants, and the gospel. Drawing on my testimony and love, I increased my efforts to keep the commandments, nurture my family, pray, and study the scriptures. As I did these things, I realized that if I prepared diligently for my class, prayed to know the needs of my students, and shared my testimony and love of Heavenly Father and His Son, I could help them learn the gospel and strengthen their own testimonies. I also realized that I would

be magnifying my calling.

My students didn't seem to mind that they didn't hear great sports stories any longer and that they now had a homemaker for their teacher. We had great experiences together nonetheless.



HOLD UP YOUR CALLING

"The Prophet Joseph Smith was once asked, 'Brother Joseph, you frequently urge that

we magnify our callings. What does this mean?' He is said to have replied, 'To magnify a calling is to hold it up in dignity and importance, that the light of heaven may shine through one's performance.' "

President Thomas S. Monson, "Our Sacred Priesthood Trust," *Ensign*, May 2006, 56.

On one occasion, I went to the home of one of my students. He had some challenges, I was worried about him, and I hoped to visit with his single parent.

As I stood on the doorstep, I could see him through the front window sitting at a table studying his scriptures. In front of him stood a small photograph of the Savior I had framed and given to each of my students. Tears ran down my cheeks, and I left without ringing the bell. I was no longer worried about him.

Magnifying my calling, which seemed like an impossible task, turned out to be a sweet experience. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.





By Elder
Von G. Keetch
Of the Seventy

Be an Example of the Believers

The story is told of a small army unit that was assigned a very difficult mission far behind enemy lines. As the unit neared its objective, opposing units became aware of its presence. Superior forces quickly encircled the group and began firing from all sides. As they found themselves surrounded and began to suffer withering fire, the members of this small army unit looked up to find their commander standing upon a rock, exhorting them.

Looking at his men, the commander yelled: “Men, we’ve got them right where we want them. You can just fire in any direction!”

You and I also have a difficult mission in today’s world. It is to teach and defend the truths contained in the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the world in which we live, I know it can be difficult to understand exactly what the best rules of engagement are, especially when you are surrounded

by so many voices willing to challenge the truth. There can often be so many barrages from so many different angles that it is difficult to know how to respond.

I want to talk about what it means to be what the Apostle Paul called “an example of the believers” (1 Timothy 4:12)—what it means to teach and defend eternal truth in the way our Heavenly Father desires while also exemplifying the respect, compassion, and deep love Christ exemplified; what it means to earnestly defend what we know to be right without just firing indiscriminately in any direction at a perceived enemy.

Indeed, it often seems that those two principles are in tension, doesn’t it? We are taught that we must fight “against spiritual wickedness” (Ephesians 6:12) in all of its forms, that we must “stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places” (Mosiah 18:9), and that we

How can you best teach and defend the doctrine of the gospel of Jesus Christ while also showing love, kindness, and understanding?

must never be “ashamed of the gospel of Christ” (Romans 1:16). Yet we are also taught that we should avoid contention and never “stir up the hearts of men with anger” (3 Nephi 11:30), that we should not just “live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18) but that we should also actively “follow after the things which make for peace” (Romans 14:19).



So how do we fulfill our God-given charge to stand firm in the gospel and to teach others the truth without causing contention and anger? It seems, especially in dealing with the controversial issues of the day, that saying anything at all can quickly lead to strife and contention. As you know so well, the world today seems to have little patience with anyone who wants to express a view that is not consistent with newfound trends.

When such challenges come to us, you and I tend to do one of two things: We either beat a hasty retreat, choosing not to engage in an environment that could quickly turn uncomfortable or even hostile; or we become defensive in a point-counterpoint debate that is entertaining to watch but that generates more heat than light.

It is better to study things out in our minds (see D&C 9:8) and then listen carefully for heavenly direction. Work up your courage and use the light within yourself.

May I point out a few things that will always be in play as we do our best to teach and defend the word of God while at the same time showing love and compassion to all people?

Defend the Word

First, we will have the most success when we engage others one on one. In today's polarizing culture of stinging one-liners and perpetual attempts

at one-upmanship, little is usually accomplished in group free-for-alls. That is especially true with social media, where we must be careful that our comments on a sensitive societal issue do not veer from the spirit that Christ would want us to convey.

If we allow ourselves to be limited to 140 characters online, we will often be misunderstood. Usually, much more can be accomplished one on one, face to face, as individuals come to understand each other. That is precisely the way President Thomas S. Monson has taught us we should reach out and rescue—one by one. And it is most often the way the Savior reached out and touched lives during His ministry on earth.

Second, although we would undoubtedly be overjoyed if others

would see the light immediately and agree to receive the missionaries the next day, that need not be our initial goal. Our initial goal is to understand where others are coming from—to respect them as people and to understand their views. Only then can we effectively communicate with others, getting past the sound bites of accusation and misunderstanding that too often dominate our discussions.

Third, let us look for ways we can respect differing views and still live together in society. Rather than simply living according to our own views without infringing on another's freedoms, let us try something better—something that is fundamental in a pluralistic society if everyone is to be treated fairly. We must stand up for the basic civil rights of others,



recognizing their right to express their opinions and speak up for what they believe in, if we are to expect others to stand up for our basic civil rights.

Finally, coming to understand one another rarely occurs in a single event. It is a process—one that often can take a good deal of time. Others may never accept our views, but we can strive to eliminate words like *bigot* and *hate*. Let us see each other as intrinsically good and reasonable, even if we hold basic views that others may never accept.

Act as the Savior Would Act

As you face difficult situations in which you are defending the gospel of Jesus Christ, I hope you will always remember to act as He would act. As the Apostle Paul taught, being “an example of the believers” is much more than just living the principles of the gospel for others to see. Paul tells us specifically that those same gospel principles must be part of our conversation, part of our love for others, part of the spirit we convey, and part of the faith that defines who we are (see 1 Timothy 4:12).

In the end, there really is no tension between the two great gospel principles—when properly understood—of standing up for truth while also respecting and loving others. Our strong conviction of the truth should never cause us to act in a way that is disrespectful or resentful toward

AS YOU DEFEND THE GOSPEL:

- Engage others one on one, face to face.
- Try to understand the views of others.
- Stand up for the civil rights of all.
- See others as good and reasonable.
- Show love, kindness, and understanding.

others. But at the same time, our desire to show kindness and love to everyone should never undermine our duty to stand for truth.

These two principles are really just two sides of the same coin. On one side of the coin is our duty to explain and firmly defend the doctrine of God. On the other side of that same coin is our duty to act in a Christlike way, always showing respect and love.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles put it this way:

“Our tolerance and respect for others and their beliefs does not cause us to abandon our commitment to the truths we understand and the covenants we have made. . . . We must stand up for truth, even while we practice tolerance and respect for beliefs and ideas different from our own and for the people who hold them. . . .

“This inspired caution reminds us that for persons who believe in

absolute truth, tolerance for behavior is like a two-sided coin. Tolerance or respect is on one side of the coin, but truth is always on the other.”¹

In a world that is quickly becoming more polarized and more contentious—where bullets often seem to be coming in rapid-fire staccato from all quarters—may I challenge you to examine both sides of your coin? In each circumstance that arises in your life, ask yourself how you can best teach and defend the doctrine of the gospel of Jesus Christ while also showing love, kindness, and understanding to someone who may not accept that doctrine.

As you do so, I testify that you will have our Heavenly Father’s help and guidance. You will feel Him leading you along, putting thoughts in your mind, feelings in your heart, and words in your mouth at the precise moment they are needed. His Spirit will lead and guide you, transforming you into a true “example of the believers”—not only someone who lives the gospel of Jesus Christ but also someone who defends and explains its doctrine in a firm yet loving and inclusive way. ■

From a devotional address, “An Example of the Believers,” delivered at Brigham Young University–Idaho on June 14, 2016. For the full address, go to web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches.

NOTE

1. Dallin H. Oaks, “Balancing Truth and Tolerance,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2013, 28.

Taste the World in South Africa

By McKenna Johnson

It's a sunny Saturday morning at the Neighbourgoods Market. You walk under the colorful umbrellas strung up outside the entrance and listen to live music while you search for today's perfect meal. Traditional South African fare served from a potjie pot—pesto, oysters, vegetables, bags of spices, terrines—you want to try everything.

Welcome to Johannesburg.

"It is a very warm, welcoming place," says Ross Mpye, 28. The bubbling energy of "Joburg" sometimes surprises visitors, who might not expect skyscrapers. "You won't find lions roaming the streets," Ross says.

A university student studying communications and divorced mother of a five-year-old son, Nate, Ross works as a production support analyst. From her bold palate to her efforts to serve others, she is adventurous, welcoming, and faithful in her daily life.

The Saints in Johannesburg reach out to each other and to those around them. For example, when the house of Ross's friend Tumi flooded, many friends from church helped clean

up the water and cheer up the family. "This was a turning point for Tumi's mom, who wasn't a member," explains Ross. "She started seeing the missionaries, and today she is a member and a Relief Society teacher." Such loving watchcare is fairly typical, as the South African members see each other as brothers and sisters. "We involve ourselves as though it was our problem," Ross says.

As Ross knows, this empathy is exemplified by Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. "This is the kind of love that Heavenly Father blesses us with. He understands and knows my joys and sorrows as a young person today going through the challenges that He makes sure I prevail against," she says.

Ross's relationship with the Savior affects her life in many ways, from her interactions with others at work to her personal study. "Work environments can be hostile," she says. "Some people swear and some make dishonest decisions, thinking they don't matter. I'm blessed to have gospel principles and the teachings



**Different
backgrounds and
cultures don't
keep the South
African Saints from
watching out for
one another.**

of the prophets in my life. When I start my day with scripture study and a prayer, it helps me keep the Spirit with me at all times. When I am faced with temptations, the still, small voice reminds me who I am and what I stand for. This helps me to stay true to my standards."

The Neighbourgoods Market represents Johannesburg's cosmopolitan spirit. For Ross, the truth of the gospel represents something much deeper—the promise of eternal life. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA

PHOTOGRAPH BY NOMPUMELELO MINKY RICHARDS

PHOTOGRAPH BY PAPAMA TUNGELA



MORE ABOUT ROSS

What is your favorite aspect of your culture?

Africans do not forget their ancestors, and neither do Mormons. We do family history and baptisms for our ancestors, and that resonates with Africans.

What is one of your favorite South African dishes?

Prawn masala. I love hot, spicy dishes. It's prawn in a curried sauce served with white basmati rice—it's very tasty.

THE CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA

62,600 Latter-day Saints

168 congregations

71 family history centers

3 missions

1 temple (and 1 other announced)

FACTS

Official name: The Republic of South Africa

Capitals: Pretoria, Cape Town, and Bloemfontein

BY THE NUMBERS

51.8 million people

1,553 miles (2,500 km) of coastline

11 official languages



DELAYING MARRIAGE

The Trends and the Consequences

By Jason S. Carroll, PhD

Professor in the School of Family Life, Brigham Young University
Adapted from an address given at the World Congress of Families, Salt Lake City, Utah, Oct. 29, 2015. Selected portions of this article were updated on Mar. 1, 2017, to respond to reader feedback.

We learn from “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” that “marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.”¹ Unfortunately, the priority of marriage is declining in society as more people view it as simply a couple relationship or a personal life choice rather than a divine institution created by God for our eternal progression and happiness.

Over the past few decades, the age of marriage has been rising in every region of the world for both women and men.² In many developed nations we’re approaching the point where more than half of marriages will occur after age 30. In social science circles, this pattern of delaying marriage is typically viewed as progress and talked about positively. However, it is resulting in some troubling trends

in coupling patterns and family stability, challenging the assumption that delayed marriage is always a positive thing. Perhaps most importantly, the increase in age of marriage across the world has been associated with a rising number of children being born outside of the bonds of

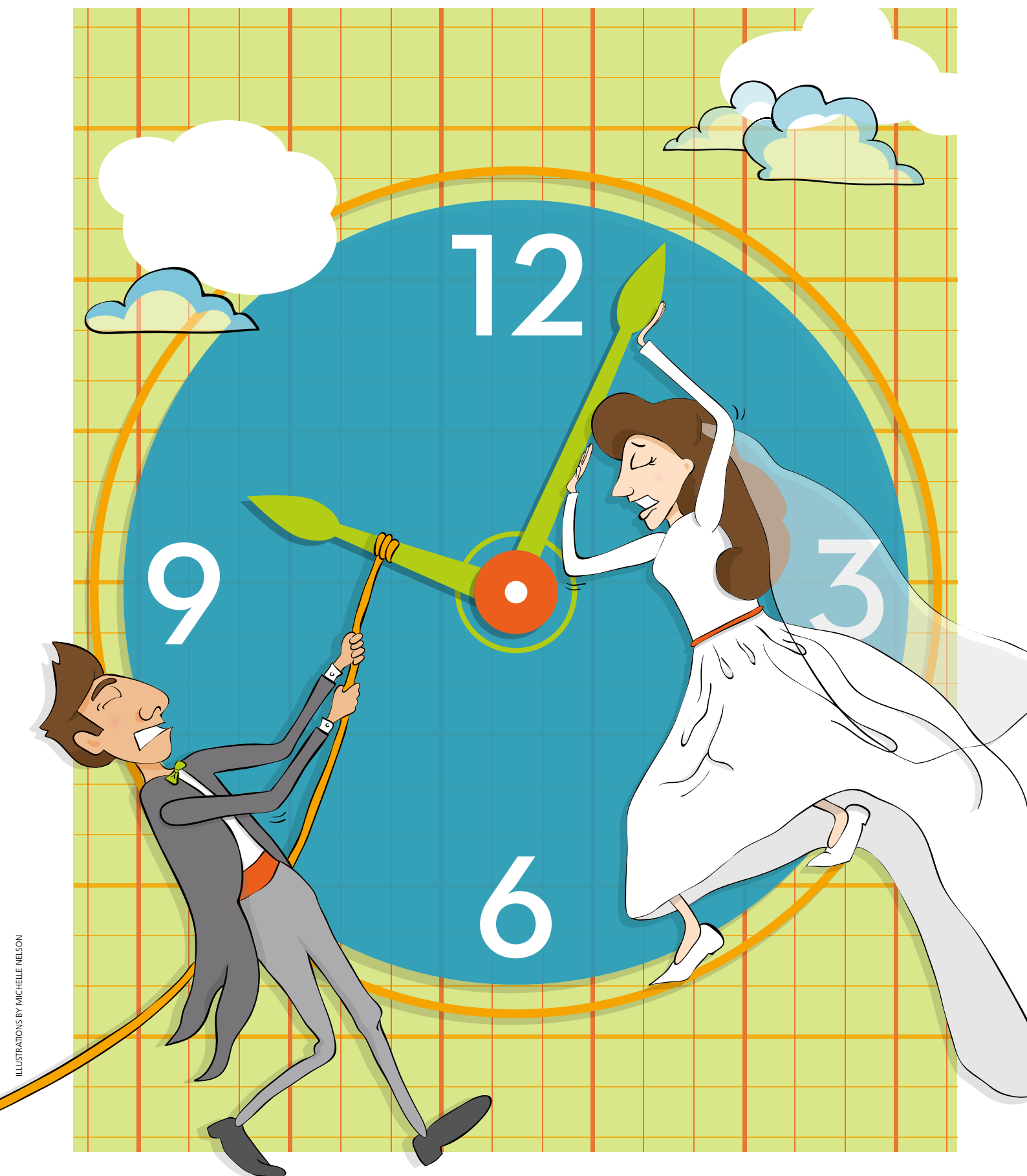
marriage. And couples who are not married and have a child in their 20s are three times more likely to break up before their child’s fifth birthday than are married couples.

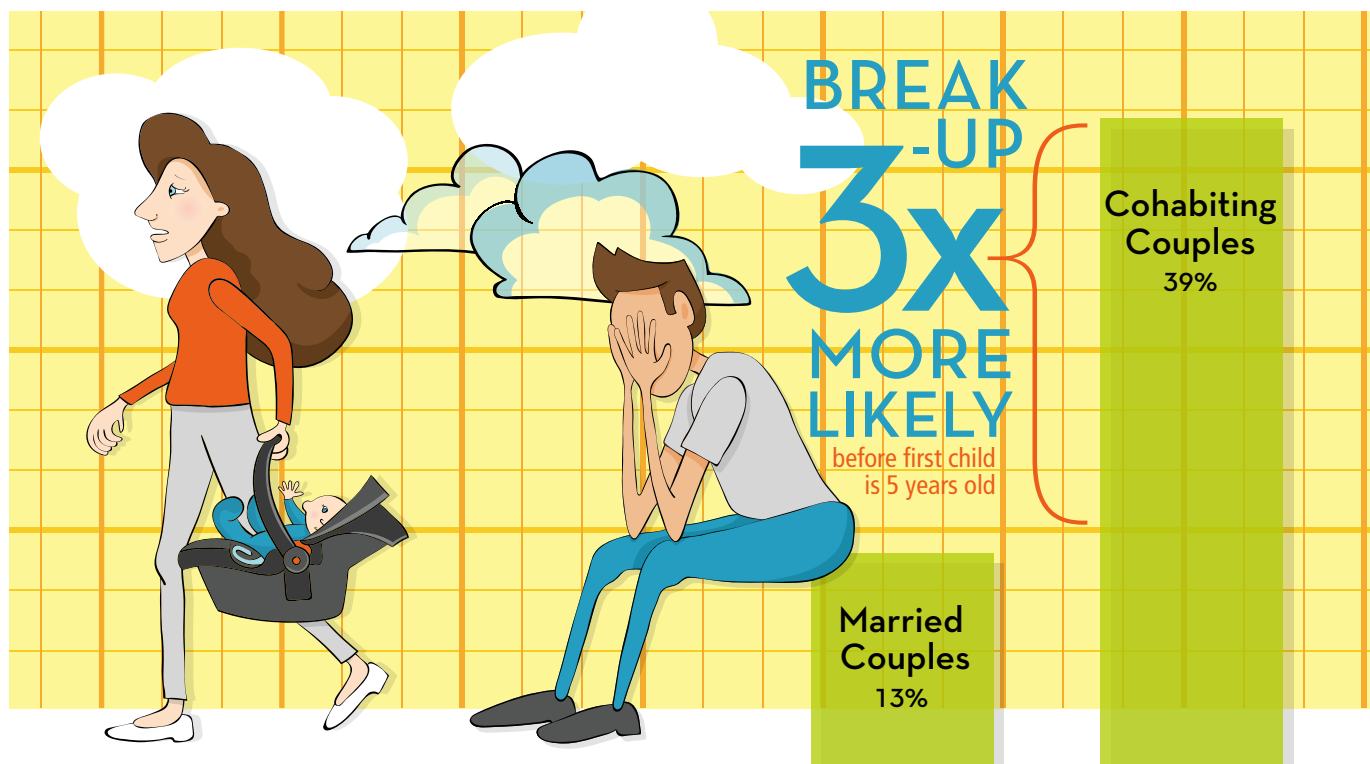
Several of the key arguments in favor of intentionally delaying marriage are paradoxical. A paradox is a proposition which, despite apparently sound reasoning from acceptable premises, leads to a conclusion that seems logically unacceptable or self-contradictory.³ These “marriage-

preparation paradoxes” are like turning a jar lid the wrong direction: you may believe you’re trying to loosen the lid to get what you want, but you’re actually turning it the wrong way and making the lid tighter.

Most of those who engage in the marriage-preparation paradoxes that I will mention are not doing so as part of the abandonment of marriage but because they believe these actions will actually strengthen their future marriages.

Shifting priorities in society often “call evil good, and good evil,” leading many to postpone the blessings of marriage.





Cohabiting men and women who have a child in their 20s are three times more likely to break up before their child's fifth birthday than are married couples.

The Book of Mormon warns against this type of paradoxical logic, saying there will be those “that call evil good, and good evil, that put darkness for light, and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter” (2 Nephi 15:20). Thus, as a result of such paradoxical logic, many young adults are intentionally delaying marriage and are preparing for marriage in ways that are actually producing the opposite of what they intend.

Following are three prevalent marriage-preparation paradoxes that are widely embraced across the world. To be clear, these trends are not common among devout members of the Church, but they are becoming the encouraged norm among young adults in many nations.

1. The Cohabitation Paradox

One common marriage-preparation paradox is the cohabitation paradox. Many young

people are attracted to cohabitation prior to marriage because they believe that it acts as a “test drive.” It is supposedly a way to lessen the risk and chance of divorce. In fact, many of our best and brightest minds in the social sciences back in the 1980s were claiming that we would see a huge reduction in the divorce rate because of the increase in cohabitation. They believed cohabitation would act as a sort of Darwinian “survival of the fittest” mechanism that would weed out the weak relationships and only the strongest would survive into marriage—and divorce rates would thereby decline. This line of thinking is widely believed to be logical. On the surface, the test-drive idea *sounds* quite logical—you wouldn’t buy a car without test-driving it, right?

But that principle doesn’t apply to marriage, and it doesn’t fit the Lord’s pattern. The Lord has made it clear where He stands on this issue. As the Apostle Paul said, “It is the

will of God . . . that ye should abstain from fornication” (1 Thessalonians 4:3; see also 1 Corinthians 6:18; Alma 39:5). The Lord’s wisdom is greater than that of the world. As a second witness of this truth, over 30 years of studies have shown that the opposite of what researchers had anticipated is true: *cohabitation before marriage has historically been associated with greater odds of divorce*. And while some of the newer studies show that there may be a weakening of this association, no study to date has ever shown cohabitation to act as a buffer against divorce.⁴

The numbers demonstrate that despite cohabitation in the name of strengthening a relationship, “happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.”⁵

2. The “Sowing Wild Oats” Paradox

A second paradox is the “sowing wild oats” paradox. In my research on young adults, I have often heard many say that the young adult stage of life is the time to experiment sexually and to “eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die” (see 2 Nephi 28:7). After all, don’t you need to “get this out of your system”? The claim is that such an approach is supposed to help people be ready eventually to “settle down” in marriage.

But a growing body of evidence shows us that quite the opposite is happening.⁶ What we see is that such patterns do not get promiscuity “out of your system,” but rather they get unchaste attitudes and behaviors *into* one’s system—which doesn’t help anyone want to settle down. Dozens of studies have shown that those with higher patterns of sexual promiscuity and more sexual partners actually have a higher likelihood of divorce, not lower,

when they marry. Again, a paradox—the apparent logic doesn’t fit and doesn’t work.

The “sexual chemistry” paradox is an extension of this distorted way of thinking. This is the belief that one needs to test sexual chemistry within a relationship—that the couple shouldn’t move to later stages of commitment until they’ve tested and made sure that the chemistry is a strong and compatible part of their relationship.

Again the research shows that a pattern of sexual restraint—keeping sexual relations within the full commitment of marriage—creates patterns where we see higher-quality marriages and less risk of these relationships dissolving.⁷

3. The “Older Is Better” Paradox

All of this can be tied together in the “older is better” paradox. Too many young people today are growing up with the view that marriage is a transition of loss rather than a transition of gain. Because of this, they see their young adult years as a time to focus on themselves—to get ahead before getting wed.

A number of years ago I worked as a visiting scholar for the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center in Oklahoma, USA. We conducted focus groups all across the country. In these focus groups, the twentysomethings frequently talked about how marriage would ultimately take things away from them. They said they would be losing things like freedom and individuality and failed to realize how marriage can be a transition of gain. In short, they widely believed that marriage takes more than it gives.

The interesting contrast is that we also interviewed twentysomething married couples and they consistently talked about all the benefits



DEFENDING THE LORD’S PLAN

“We need to boldly defend the Lord’s revealed doctrines describing marriage, families, the divine roles of men and women, and the importance of homes as sacred places—even when the world is shouting in our ears that these principles are outdated, limiting, or no longer relevant. . . . If it is the Lord’s plan, it should also be our plan!”

Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women General President, “Defenders of the Family Proclamation,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 15.



THE ADVERSARY'S SINGLE PURPOSE

"The single purpose of Lucifer is to oppose the great plan of happiness, to corrupt the purest, most beautiful and appealing experiences of life: romance, love, marriage, and parenthood [see 2 Nephi 2:18; 28:20]."

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "For Time and All Eternity," *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 21).

that had come into their lives because of being married. Dozens of studies have documented the emotional, physical, economic, and sexual benefits that lasting marriage brings to individuals and society as a whole.

The Apostle Paul has taught what you and I have to gain from marriage: "Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:11). God made man and woman to complement each other (see Genesis 2:18). He created us to bless, help, and learn from one another in our quest for perfection. He doesn't expect us to become perfect before we get married in order to have a successful marriage. In fact, expecting perfection in oneself or a future spouse sets a marriage up for struggle. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has taught, "Since you won't find perfection in your partner, and your partner won't find it in you, your only chance at perfection is in creating perfection together."⁸

Thankfully, the vast majority of active single adults in the Church are not following these social trends. In fact, the commitment to chastity and true marriage preparation among devout single members of the Church stands in stark contrast to the patterns we see in the broader culture. Also, it is important to point out that intentionally delaying marriage is a very different pattern from experiencing marriage at a later age than one would prefer. Studies show that many single adults, both in the broader culture and within the Church, still greatly value marriage and that the timing of marriage in their lives has not been a matter of choice.

Rather than selecting arbitrary ages of when marriages will be most successful, we

need to start teaching and fostering a culture of real maturation and marriage readiness and teach the real foundational factors that we know to be the key elements of successful marriages. Religious faith, commitment, communication, relationship skills, healthy sexuality, and personal maturity have proven to be some of these foundational factors.⁹ When young people have come to understand and develop these skills, *that* is the time they ought to move forward with marriage.

Marriage Forgone

Finally, in addition to these paradoxes, we are seeing the forgoing of marriage altogether for a growing segment of society rather than just a delay of it. That's a dramatic social change with implications not only for one's personal spiritual progress but also for society and the economy.

The Doctrine and Covenants teaches us that temple marriage is necessary to receive exaltation:

"In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees;

"And in order to obtain the highest, a man [and a woman] must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]" (D&C 131:1–2; see also 49:15–16).

Thus, as the Lord's pattern for the family is altered and marriage is redefined or abandoned altogether in many countries, we're starting to see patterns of family instability and decreased child well-being. As the wisdom of the world calls "evil good, and good evil," we would do well to look to the Lord's pattern for preparing for a righteous marriage and strengthening the family as the fundamental unit of society. ■



The age of marriage in the United States has been rising steadily since 1970, and in 1980 women passed the previous historical high, a benchmark reached by men 10 years later.

An expanded version of this material can be found at familyinamerica.org/journals/winter-2016/love-or-money/#.V6NlwusrJD8. For additional information related to this article, see twenty somethingmarriage.org.

NOTES

1. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
2. Between 1970 and 2010, the mean age at marriage increased in 100 of the 114 countries with the required data (see United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Population Facts*, no. 2011/1 [Dec. 2011], 2). For many countries, these changes are the result of "second-order delay," meaning marriage is being delayed from the 20s to the 30s, rather than "first-order delay," where marriage is delayed from the teens to the 20s.
3. See Oxford Living Dictionaries, "paradox," en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/us/paradox.
4. See Scott M. Stanley, Galena Kline Rhoades, and Howard J. Markman, "Sliding versus Deciding: Inertia and the Premarital Cohabitation Effect," *Family Relations*, vol. 55, no. 4 (Oct. 2006), 499–509.
5. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," 129.
6. See Dean M. Busby, Brian J. Willoughby, and Jason S. Carroll, "Sowing Wild Oats: Valuable Experience or a Field Full of Weeds?" *Personal Relationships*, vol. 20, no. 4 (Dec. 2013): 706–18.
7. See Dean M. Busby, Jason S. Carroll, and Brian J. Willoughby, "Compatibility or Restraint? The Effects of Sexual Timing on Marriage Relationships," *Journal of Family Psychology*, vol. 24, no. 6 (Dec. 2010), 766–74; Sharon Sassler, Fenaba R. Addo, and Daniel T. Lichter, "The Tempo of Sexual Activity and Later Relationship Quality," *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol. 74, no. 4 (Aug. 2012), 708–25.
8. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "The Reflection in the Water" (Church Educational System fireside for young adults, Nov. 1, 2009), ldschurchnewsarchive.com/archives.
9. See, for example, Jason S. Carroll, Sarah Badger, and Chongming Yang, "The Ability to Negotiate or the Ability to Love? Evaluating the Developmental Domains of Marital Competence," *Journal of Family Issues*, vol. 27, no. 7 (July 2006), 1001–32.
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- Mindy Raye Friedman, "Your Current Life, Your Future Family," *New Era*, June 2012, 42–45.
- Thomas B. Holman, "Choosing and Being the Right Spouse," *Ensign*, Sept. 2002, 62–67.
- Christian Hägglund, "The Courage to Marry," *Ensign*, Jan. 2015, 22–23.

KEY ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGES

Here are some resources for teaching foundational factors—faith, humility, respect, selflessness—that contribute to successful marriages:





**By Elder
Quentin L. Cook**
Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

THE GOSPEL AND THE Good Life

*In the worst of circumstances, when everything else crumbles,
family and the gospel of Jesus Christ are the essentials.*

Many talks stress the pursuit of dreams and passions. I acknowledge those goals, but I desire to have you contemplate a greater purpose in your life.

Gratitude for Blessings

To begin, I hope you will be grateful for your blessings—especially your heritage. Gratitude and humility are closely intertwined. We live in a self-centered age. Social media, in particular, can easily be used for self-promotion. It has never been more important to be grateful and humble. Those who possess these attributes express appreciation for their blessings as they follow the Savior's example.

My friend Harvard professor Roger B. Porter, who is a faithful member of the Church, noted at one of the commencement proceedings at Harvard in May 2015 that gratitude “requires that we acknowledge our debt to others,” and “it often involves a humble response for unearned or unmerited gifts.” He concluded: “If you choose to embrace gratitude as a central element of your life, it will serve you well. It will help you resist the temptation to succumb to pride and to fall into a sense of entitlement. It will help you to see the good and to acknowledge the positive. It will help you to put in context the bumps in the road and the adversity you will from time to time encounter. It will help you focus attention on those less fortunate than you whose lives you can bless.”¹



An old Chinese proverb reads, "When you drink the water, don't forget the well from whence it came."

I would suggest that we need to be especially grateful for our heritage. When we are blessed with goodly parents, we should be grateful. This is the debt each of us owes for our heritage. An old Chinese proverb reads, "When you drink the water, don't forget the well from whence it came."

It is clear from the scriptures that we are to honor our parents. Proverbs reads, "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother" (Proverbs 6:20). Ephesians teaches us to "honour thy father and mother" (see Ephesians 6:2–3; see also Exodus 20:12). The great German philosopher Goethe put it this way: "What from your fathers' heritage is lent, earn it anew, to really possess it!"² It is clear that we need to be grateful for our parents and take positive action to acquire that which they would hope to bestow upon us.

Eternal Principles vs. Worldly Philosophies

In addition to encouraging you to have gratitude, I wish to share some practical advice that may help you to be both happy and successful in achieving a meaningful life, which is often referred to as "the good life."

In a recent essay, Lord Jonathan Sacks, the former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth, articulated the concern I have about the diminished role of faith, moral values, and meaning in modern life. He stated:

"If there is one thing the great institutions of the modern world do not do, it is to provide meaning. . . .

"Science, technology, the free market and the . . . democratic state have enabled us to reach unprecedented achievements in knowledge, freedom, life expectancy and affluence. They are among the greatest achievements of human civilization and are to be defended and cherished.

"But they do not answer the three questions that every reflective individual will ask at some time in his or her life: Who am I?

Why am I here? How then shall I live? The result is that the 21st century has left us with a maximum of choice and a minimum of meaning.”³

This quote expresses in an elegant fashion the essence of my message. I am deeply concerned that the good life based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ is now secondary to a worldly view of the good life.

For those of us who are members of the Church, the gospel of Jesus Christ and His Resurrection and Atonement are the foundation for all that is essential, and they also bring meaning to this life. The Savior has inspired beliefs and established standards of conduct as to what is moral, righteous, and desirable and that results in the good life. However, the principles and basic morality the Savior taught are under serious attack in today’s world. Christianity itself is under attack.

This is not new. The recipe for the good life has been debated for centuries. When the Apostle Paul was in Athens, he encountered “philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks” (Acts 17:18). The Stoics believed that the highest good was virtue, and the Epicureans believed the highest good was pleasure. Many Stoics had become proud and used their philosophy as “a cloak for . . . ambition and iniquity.” Many Epicureans had become hedonists who took as their motto, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.”⁴ Many in the academic world have long pointed to Aristotle’s advocacy of intellectual contemplation as a blueprint for the good life. It is interesting that many of these same worldly philosophies that conflicted with early Christianity are still present in slightly different forms today.

In addition, many new philosophies conflict directly with the gospel of Jesus Christ. This has happened quickly. Using Book of Mormon language, “in the space of not many years” (Helaman 7:6), much of the world now calls “evil good, and good evil” (2 Nephi 15:20). In fact, these two scriptural phrases reflect what is happening in our day. What is considered moral has swiftly changed. There has been an incredible movement away from moral conduct as the basis

of the good life. Some diminish Christianity by accepting the myth that in Christianity, happiness is not about this life but only about heaven.⁵ I assure you that following the Savior brings happiness in this life *and* in heaven.

Eulogy Virtues vs. Résumé Virtues

Some challenges are not just about good and evil. Some require us to make choices based on what is best, not just what is good.⁶

David Brooks, in an editorial titled “The Moral Bucket List,” developed the concept that there are “two sets of virtues, the résumé virtues and the eulogy virtues. The résumé virtues are the skills you bring to the marketplace. The eulogy virtues are the ones that are talked about at your funeral.”⁷ Brooks correctly concluded that the eulogy virtues are much more important. This hit home for me personally because I had an experience when I was in my



mid-20s that had a profound impact on me. It involved the funerals of two good men that took place only a few days apart. The account is true, but I have changed the names and have purposely been vague about a few of the facts.

I was 25 years old, had graduated from Stanford Law School, and had just started employment with a law firm. I spent my workday world with highly educated people who had amassed significant material possessions. They were kind and on the whole gracious and attractive people.

The Church members I associated with were much more diverse. Most of them had little material wealth. They were wonderful people, and most had meaning in their lives. It was at this juncture that two older, retired men I had known for many years passed away. Their funerals were held only a few days apart, and I traveled to both funerals. I have decided to call one of the men Rich and the other man Faithful. Those two funerals are cemented in my mind

because they clarified the significance of the choices all people have before them, especially the young. They also demonstrate the complexity of the distinction between the résumé virtues and the eulogy virtues.

Both Rich and Faithful served missions as young men. By all accounts, they were both dedicated missionaries. After they attended college, their lives began to diverge. Rich married a beautiful woman who over time became less active in the Church. Faithful married an equally beautiful woman who was completely active in the Church. More than any other factor, this decision framed the remaining decisions of their lives. In my experience, when couples remain true and faithful to the Savior and the eternal significance of the family, the eulogy virtues are almost always preserved.

I will now share more about Rich. He had wonderful people skills and cared a great deal about people. He began employment with a major U.S. corporation and ultimately became president of that company. He had a large income and lived in a large, beautiful home set on spacious grounds. That is why I have decided to call him Rich. It would be fair to say that his career choices were not just good or better but were the best.

His family and Church choices, however, were not so good. He was a good man and did not engage in personal choices that were in and of themselves evil, but his family choices and influence on his children focused almost exclusively on education and employment, essentially the résumé virtues that are so valued in the marketplace. His sons also embarked on excellent careers. They did not, however, remain active in the Church, and they married young women who were not members. I am not aware of all the facts about his sons, but in each case these marriages ended in divorce.

Rich and his wife also became less active. They were primarily involved in high-profile social and community activities. He always considered himself LDS and was proud of his mission, but he did not attend church. He would, from time to time, contribute to Church building





projects and assist LDS members in their careers. Furthermore, he was an influence for honesty, integrity, and goodwill in all the positions he held.

His funeral was held at a nondenominational chapel at the cemetery. Many top executives and dignitaries attended the funeral, including the governor of the state where he lived. Except for his children, grandchildren, and me, everyone attending was over the age of 50. It was, on the whole, a somber funeral. Basic principles of the plan of happiness were not taught, and little was said of Jesus Christ. Rich's life was based almost exclusively on résumé virtues.

Faithful's employment decisions were far less successful. His initial effort at a small independent business was thwarted when the business burned and he lost everything. He subsequently created a small business but could barely make his required payments. He had a small but adequate home. He enjoyed

his work and his interaction with people. His career was good and certainly satisfactory but not distinguished or what might be called best. It was not a résumé-virtues career.

His family and Church choices, on the other hand, were absolutely the best. He and his wife were completely active in the Church. He served as called, often as a teacher, attended the temple frequently, and was a faithful priesthood holder. He had wonderful relationships, especially with his large family and his many grandchildren. They were all well educated, but his main emphasis to them was on living a Christlike life. In his retirement, he and his wife served a mission together. Though he faced trials, including the death of a son in World War II, he achieved satisfaction and joy throughout his life because of the purpose and meaning provided by his family and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

His funeral in the ward meetinghouse was large and joyful. People of all ages attended,

When goals relating to education and occupation are elevated to a position superior to the family and the Church and a testimony of the Savior, the unintended consequences of over-emphasizing the résumé virtues can be significantly adverse.



The most significant choices can be made by everyone, regardless of their talents, abilities, opportunities, or economic circumstances.

including large numbers of grandchildren and young people he had served. The plan of happiness was taught, and the Savior was at the center of the service. It was an exemplary Latter-day Saint funeral. The talks were about his character, kindness, concern for others, and faith in and love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Choices and the Good Life

I have indicated that these two funerals came at a defining time for me. I had served a mission, and I loved the Church. I was just starting my career and was becoming impressed with those having material and occupational success. I realized that the choices I was making would define my happiness in this life and determine the legacy I would leave. I also realized the eternal significance of the choices that were before me. It was clear to me that choices have eternal significance. What was

most important to me about the lives I just described is that I realized that the most significant choices can be made by everyone, regardless of their talents, abilities, opportunities, or economic circumstances. I realized that for me, my future children, and everyone I would have the opportunity to influence, putting the Savior, my family, and the Church first was essential. Doing so would result in the good life.

In the worst of circumstances, when everything else crumbles, family and the gospel of Jesus Christ are the essentials. Think of Father Lehi in the Book of Mormon, where it describes how he “departed into the wilderness. And he left his house, and the land of his inheritance, and his gold, and his silver, and his precious things, and took nothing with him, save it were his family” (1 Nephi 2:4).

This generation has the challenge of protecting faith and family. One researcher

has looked back as far as ancient India and Greece and concluded that every nonreligious population in history has experienced demographic decline.⁸ The news media recently highlighted the declining birthrate in much of the world today. The *Wall Street Journal* proclaimed in a front page article, “The World’s New Population Time Bomb: Too Few People.” The article stated that in 2016, “for the first time since 1950, . . . combined working-age population will decline.”⁹

Lack of faith and population decline are clearly inter-related. The Father’s eternal plan for His children depends upon both faith and families. I am grateful that Latter-day Saints, in survey after survey, are maintaining faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and are continuing to marry and have children.

Some may not have the opportunity to marry or have children. But individuals who righteously follow the Savior and His commandments—and who provide selfless service to our Father’s children—“will receive all promised blessings in the eternities.”¹⁰

As we face the difficulties and trials of life, many events occur over which we have little or no control. But on matters of principle, conduct, religious observance, and righteous living, we are in control. Our faith in and worship of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, is a choice that we make.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, quoting William Law, an 18th-century English clergyman, stated this in a most succinct fashion: “If you have not chosen the kingdom of God first, it will in the end make no difference what you have chosen instead.”¹¹

Please understand that in reciting the true account of the men I called Rich and Faithful, I am not advocating for less interest in goals relating to education or occupation. Quite the contrary, we should do everything we can to advance our accomplishments in these two areas. What I am saying is that when goals relating to education and occupation are elevated to a position superior to the family and the Church and a testimony of the Savior, the unintended

consequences of overemphasizing the résumé virtues can be significantly adverse.

I am confident that you can attain the joy and happiness you desire and that God wants for you if you are:

- Grateful for your blessings—especially your heritage.
- Committed to the eternal principles that will bring meaning to your life.
- Determined that your eulogy virtues prevail over your résumé virtues.
- Prepared to report to the Savior that you have lived a good life.

The most important meeting each of us will have on the other side of the veil is with the Savior, “the keeper of the gate” (2 Nephi 9:41). Regardless of who our ancestors are and whether we are rich or poor, we will report on our adherence to the commandments we have been given. We should live so we can “enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name” (Psalm 100:4).

We will want to joyfully report that we have lived a truly good life. ■

From a devotional address, “The Good Life,” given at Brigham Young University–Idaho on December 18, 2015. For the full address, visit web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches.

NOTES

1. Roger B. Porter, commencement address, Dunster House, Harvard University, May 28, 2015.
2. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*, trans. Bayard Taylor (1912), 1:28.
3. Jonathan Sacks, “How to Defeat Religious Violence,” *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 2, 2015, C2; see also Jonathan Sacks, *Not in God’s Name: Confronting Religious Violence* (2015), 13.
4. See Frederic W. Farrar, *The Life and Work of St. Paul* (1895), 304.
5. See Carl Cederstrom, “The Dangers of Happiness,” *New York Times*, July 18, 2015, 8.
6. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Good, Better, Best,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 104–8.
7. David Brooks, “Moral Bucket List,” *New York Times*, Apr. 11, 2015, SR1, nytimes.com; see also David Brooks, *The Road to Character* (2015), xi.
8. See Michael Blume, in David Brooks, “Finding Peace within the Holy Texts,” *New York Times*, Nov. 17, 2015, A23, nytimes.com.
9. Greg Ip, “The World’s New Population Time Bomb: Too Few People,” *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 24, 2015, 1.
10. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 1.3.3.
11. Neal A. Maxwell, “Response to a Call,” *Ensign*, May 1974, 112; see also William Law, in *The Quotable Lewis*, ed. Wayne Martindale and Jerry Root (1989), 172.



On

March 17, 1842,

minutes after she became president of the new Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, Emma Smith spoke on the purpose of that society. “To seek out and relieve the distressed,” she said. To “be ambitious to do good” and “watch over the morals.”¹

“The Society is not only to relieve the poor, but to save souls.”²

—Joseph Smith



An Outpouring of the Spirit

Speaking with tenderness and power on this 175th anniversary of Relief Society, the General Presidency shares their feelings, insights, and testimonies with us as Relief Society sisters.

We love the sisters throughout the Church,” says Linda K. Burton, General President of the Relief Society, speaking for herself and her counselors—Carole M. Stephens, First Counselor, and Linda S. Reeves, Second Counselor. “What more could we want than to help each other along the covenant path toward eternal life? God revealed His purpose in Moses 1:39: ‘For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man [and woman].’ In Relief Society we help prepare women for the blessings of eternal life. We do this through increasing faith in Heavenly Father and in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, strengthening individuals, families, and homes through ordinances and covenants, and working in unity to help those in need.”³

“As we remember and live the purpose of Relief Society, we as Latter-day Saint women will become ‘distinct and different—in happy ways,’⁴ yielding a significant influence for good throughout the world. *That is what we want for our sisters in Relief Society.*”

Here, in an interview with Church magazines staff, the members of the Relief Society General Presidency answer questions of concern for today and share their vision for the future.



Nauvoo Relief Society
established in the
Red Brick Store.



First Utah Relief Societies
formed to make clothing
for Native American women
and children.

1840

1842

1844

Martyrdom
of Joseph
and Hyrum
Smith.

1850

1854



EMMA H. SMITH
1842



DETAIL FROM MARTYRDOM OF JOSEPH
AND HYRUM, BY GARY ERNEST SMITH



In

Utah

Relief Societies continued working to save souls and attend to needs. Relief Societies also ministered to arriving immigrants, including the survivors of the Willie and Martin handcart companies, providing supplies, food, and medical care. Beginning in 1868, local ward Relief Societies began to construct halls in which to meet, care for the poor, conduct business, and sell goods. The construction of ward Relief Society halls ended in 1924.

1. What is it about Relief Society that unifies women from different cultures and diverse situations?

Sister Burton: Knowing and living our purpose unites us across cultures. I met a woman in Uruguay last year who told me how she had been called to be Relief Society president at the darkest time of her life. She was tempted to say, “I can’t do it right now.” But because she had made sacred covenants, she said, “I will do what I’ve been asked to do. I have faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. I know through His Atonement I can do it.” Then she said to me, “My calling brought light into my life as I served my sisters. I relied upon the Lord, and He blessed me.”

I recognized the purpose of Relief Society in her story. Her faith in Heavenly Father and in Jesus Christ and His Atonement helped her. She had made sacred covenants and wanted to keep them. As she worked in unity with the bishop, she fulfilled her calling. Now she

has a testimony that the Lord blesses us when we trust Him. I add my testimony to hers that our Savior Jesus Christ will help us through every mortal challenge and everything that seems unfair in this life.

Sister Stephens: Our faith in the power of the Savior’s atoning sacrifice is the great unifier. Our love for our Heavenly Father and knowledge of His great plan of happiness bind us together as we seek eternal life. Our sisters are single, married with children, or married without children. There are widows and those who are divorced. Our hope is that we can all work in unity and be one as we come to understand our identity, our work, and our purpose.

Sister Reeves: Unity brings us happiness because there is no contention and the love of God dwells in our hearts (see 4 Nephi 1:15). Unity crosses every line. Oh, how we want our sisters to



Eliza R. Snow called by Brigham Young to oversee the establishment of Relief Society throughout the Church.

Woman's Exponent newspaper began publication and became the voice of the Relief Society for 50 years.

1860

The first Relief Society meeting hall was constructed by the Salt Lake 15th Ward Relief Society. Over 120 halls were constructed in the next 50 years.



1868

1870

Utah women were among the first in the United States to vote.

1872



ELIZA R. SNOW
1866



feel that love for the Savior. Oh, how we want to be one in helping accomplish His purposes.

2. What can women do if they don't feel part of Relief Society?

Sister Stephens: The desire of our hearts as a presidency is that sisters understand their eternal identity.

We've always been part of God's work. As women we have been endowed with special gifts to profit everyone. We were taught and trained in the premortal life what our work would be. We were in that great Council in Heaven where we chose Heavenly Father's plan, which included the Atonement of Jesus Christ. We shouted for joy at the prospect of having a mortal body.

On earth, beginning with Mother Eve, women continue to be part of God's work. The Prophet Joseph Smith organized women after the pattern of the priesthood—a pattern that has always existed—when he organized the Relief Society in 1842 in Nauvoo, Illinois.

President Russell M. Nelson, President



Zina D. H. Young elected president of the new Deseret Silk Association.

Primary organization began.

1875



1876

Emmeline B. Wells led the new grain storage program.

1878



1880

Second Relief Society General Presidency set apart.

The

most long-lived

economic enterprise of the Relief Society was the grain storage program: 1876–1918. During a wheat shortage near the end of World War I, they sold it at the unrefusable request of the U.S. government. The interest from this wheat money was used to decrease maternal and infant mortality, fund clinics for pregnant women and young children, sponsor health-care education classes, and stockpile supplies for childbirth.

of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has counseled us: “Learn *for yourselves* who you really are. Ask your Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ how He feels about you and your mission here on earth. If you ask with real intent, over time the Spirit will whisper the life-changing truths to you. Record those impressions, review them often, and follow through with exactness.

“I promise you that when you catch even a glimpse of how your Heavenly Father sees you and what He is counting on you to do for Him, your life will never be the same!”⁵ Go to the temple and listen! Listen for who you are and what you will do.

3. How can women whose lives are terribly busy still enjoy the blessings of Relief Society?

Sister Stephens: It comes down to priorities. I recently spent time in West Africa, and I saw women carrying water from the

well on their head daily and then go to work to help provide for their families. At times I was overwhelmed with the poverty. Then I spent time with the members of the Church at the training meetings in their bright white shirts and homemade colorful dresses.

I was taught that they are rich in the things money can’t buy. I learned that they put the most important things first. The gospel means everything



The Relief Society established the Deseret Hospital.

1882



1887

Relief Society women organized Utah and Idaho chapters of the Woman Suffrage Organization in 1889.⁷



ZINA D. H. YOUNG
1888

1889

President Zina D. H. Young organized the first Relief Society general conference.

1890

1891

Relief Society was a charter member of the National Council of Women in the United States.



to them. They told me, “I don’t need anything. I have everything I need—I have the gospel and my family.” When we put the most important things first, other things will naturally drop out of our lives.

4. What does Relief Society have to offer young women?

Sister Burton: Young women have the opportunity to help fulfill prophecy when they progress into Relief Society. In 1979, President Spencer W.

Kimball (1895–1985) prophesied that good women of the world “will be drawn to the Church in large numbers . . . to the degree that the women of the Church are seen as distinct and different—in happy ways—from the women of the world.”⁶ We need the unique gifts, perspective, and talents that young women bring to help fulfill this prophecy.

Of President Kimball’s prophecy, President Russell M. Nelson said in 2015 to women of all ages—including young



First single sisters set apart to serve as proselyting missionaries.



The Relief Society Magazine contained discourses, inspirational fiction and poetry, biographies, and informational articles, including monthly lesson plans.

1896

Utah achieved statehood.

1898



1900

1902

First Relief Society handbook published, with a history, speeches, and instructions.



BATHSHEBA W. SMITH
1901

First editor, Susa Young Gates.



EMMELINE B. WELLS
1910

1914

Relief Society Magazine began publication. Woman's Exponent came to an end.

The

Social Services

Department was established by Amy Brown Lyman in 1918 at the request of Church President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918). Sister Lyman also organized courses to train Relief Society members in the professional methods of social work. During the early years of the Great Depression, the department managed an enormous caseload and coordinated with local and federal government officials to distribute aid to the needy.

women: “You are the women [President Kimball] foresaw! . . .

“ . . . We need women who have a bedrock understanding of the doctrine of Christ. . . . We need women who know how to access the power that God makes available to covenant keepers. . . . We need women who have the courage and vision of our Mother Eve. . . .

“ . . . I plead with you to fulfill President Kimball’s prophecy. . . . As you do so, the Holy Ghost will magnify your influence in an unprecedented way!”⁹

Sister Reeves: We are all “daughters of our Heavenly Father, who loves us, and we love Him.”¹⁰ In Relief Society, you will find we are more alike than different. For example, we’re all in a world with social media, advertising, and worldly role models. The value of women is being defined by the world. Comparing ourselves to what we see and hear in the world can make us feel like this is how we need to be. Now more than ever, we all need to remember

our value comes from being a daughter of God—not from what the world portrays we should be. Our strength comes from our relationship with our Father in Heaven, our Savior, and each other as sisters in the gospel. Draw upon that.

Sister Stephens: Young women, God needs you and we need you. You are the rising generation born with strength to stand strong against the challenges in these latter days. Join us as we become women who understand Jesus Christ and His Atonement, women who will make and keep sacred covenants, and women who will work in unity with each other and with priesthood leaders. It’s a blessing to be a woman of any age in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints today. Let’s share our testimonies of who we are and who we are becoming. Let’s share our messages of joy, rejoicing with each other!

The Church Social Services Department was the precursor to today's LDS Family Services and LDS Humanitarian Services.

Church welfare program established in 1936.

Clothing, food, bandages, and thousands of quilts made by sisters in North America and Europe were sent to aid the Saints in postwar Europe.

1918

Relief Society wheat sold to United States government.

1921

Relief Society focused on improving infant and maternal mortality rates.



To help Utah benefit from the Sheppard-Towner Act of 1921, Amy Brown Lyman ran for the state House of Representatives and won in 1923. The goal of the Sheppard-Towner Act was to reduce maternal and infant mortality. Sister Lyman coordinated government and Relief Society programs. By 1928 these efforts had improved infant death rates by 19 percent and maternal death rates by 8 percent.

1930



1936



1940

Relief Society members engaged in war-relief work.

CLARISSA S. WILLIAMS
1921



LOUISE Y. ROBISON
1928



AMY B. LYMAN
1940



5. Why is it important for priesthood holders and Relief Society sisters to work together in unity?

Sister Burton: Men and women have complementary roles. Each of us brings with us our unique gifts and talents to contribute to the work of the kingdom and to strengthen one another. Women are half of the Lord's storehouse, vital to the work. We bring a perspective and a desire to contribute to building the kingdom that began with Eve, continued with Sarah, Rebekah, Esther, Mary, Elisabeth, Emma, Eliza, and other valiant sisters of this last dispensation and anciently.

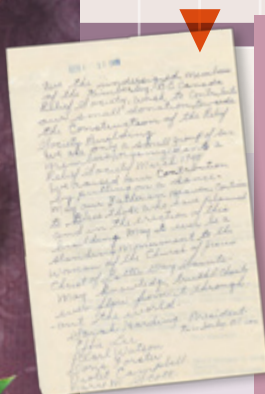
As we think about power and influence, power is usually associated with priesthood power. But the influence of a righteous woman carries tremendous power as well. The same virtues mentioned in Doctrine and Covenants 121:41 that invite priesthood power are the same virtues that invite the power of a woman's influence—"persuasion," "long-suffering," "gentleness and meekness," and "love unfeigned." These things are inherent in our divine nature, and therein lies our opportunity to influence for good in a powerful way.





The six-member Relief Society in Kimberley, British Columbia, organized a dance to raise funds to help construct the Relief Society Building in Salt Lake City.

Dedicated in 1956, the Relief Society Building provided work and meeting space for members of the board and General Presidency, editors of the Relief Society Magazine, and seamstresses who made temple clothing.



BELLE S. SPAFFORD
1945



1949

First Relief Societies organized in Japan.



PHOTOGRAPH OF RELIEF SOCIETY
COMMEMORATIVE PLATE COURTESY
OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

1956



1960



Relief Society Building
open house.

During

the long administration of Relief Society General President Belle S. Spafford, the Relief Society and other Church auxiliaries joined in a larger Church process of correlation, aimed to eliminate redundant efforts, reduce waste, and foster stability in a rapidly growing worldwide church. Changes included the reorganization of Church magazines and the end of independent auxiliary bank accounts.

As we work in unity with our priesthood brothers, we become little by little a more Zion-like people (see Moses 7:18).

Sister Reeves: When we read “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” we see that our Heavenly Father uses the strengths of men and women according to the roles and responsibilities that will bring the optimum number of His children back to Him.¹¹ *The purpose of Relief Society helps us do that.*

6. What is it like for your presidency to work with the prophets?

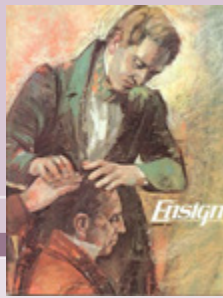
Sister Burton: Just as Jesus Christ was a champion for women in His day, so are His Apostles in our day. Our prophets are thorough in their deliberations, always seeking input and the perspective of the sisters in the Church. I wish every sister in the Church could see and hear and feel what we get to experience in our association with prophets, seers, and

revelators on a regular basis. They are true disciples, selflessly and cheerfully giving their lives to the Lord as they seek to do His will and trust in His timing. They often testify that this Church belongs to Jesus Christ and that He leads and guides it.

Sister Reeves: When we have the ear of our leaders, which we have often, they petition us at an ever-increasing rate. The Brethren in these councils listen to and value what we say, and they work with us toward our common goals.

Sister Stephens: The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles are special witnesses of Jesus Christ. They know Him. They are becoming like Him. So if you want to understand the relationship that women leaders have with these witnesses of Jesus Christ, look at His example in the scriptures. Jesus Christ championed women, included women, and ennobled women. In councils with the Brethren, I have often looked at them

Belle S. Spafford was appointed president of the National Council of Women while serving as Relief Society General President.



General President Barbara B. Smith presented to the First Presidency a scroll representing 226,291 bushels of Relief Society wheat with a net worth of U.S. \$1,651,157 plus fund assets of over three-quarters of a million dollars.



1966

Relief Society Magazine began publication in Spanish.

1968



1970

Final issue of Relief Society Magazine.

Ensign magazine began publication in January 1971.

All female Church members age 18 and older were enrolled automatically in Relief Society.

1978

As women's traditional roles were being questioned, Relief Society leaders advocated for the importance of women's contributions to family and to society.

1980

1982

140th anniversary of Relief Society.

Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary co-sponsored events under the theme "Tribute to Women."

BARBARA B. SMITH
1974



BARBARA W. WINDER
1984



and thought, "This is a small portion of what it may feel like to be in the presence of the Savior."

7. What is the relationship between spiritual power and our covenants?

Sister Stephens: Spiritual power comes to us through the ordinances we receive and the covenants we make. There's also spiritual power that comes from keeping our covenants.

Spiritual power comes when we worthily partake of the sacrament on Sunday. This is when we can renew all the covenants that we have made with the Lord. We take His name upon us, "remember him," keep His commandments, and strive to always "have his Spirit to be with [us]" (D&C 20:77, 79).

Sister Burton: Of this spiritual power, Nephi said, "I, Nephi, beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb" (1 Nephi 14:14). Isn't that term *saints* inclusive?

Nephi continues in the same verse to say that the power of the Lamb of God descended "upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory." We as "covenant



Relief Society initiated the Gospel Literacy Effort to teach basic literacy skills to Church members who could not read or write.

Relief Society collected 350,000 quilts in response to a need for 30,000 quilts for Kosovo refugees.



PHOTOGRAPH OF MARY ELLEN W. SMOOT
BY STUART JOHNSON, DESERET NEWS



ELAINE L. JACK
1990

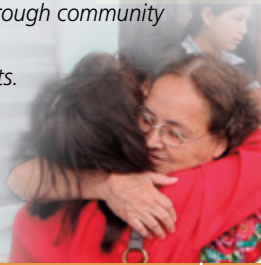


1992

150th anniversary of Relief Society.

Relief Society General President Elaine L. Jack asked Relief Societies around the world to celebrate through community service and other projects.

PHOTOGRAPH BY
JASON SWENSEN,
DESERET NEWS

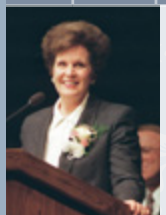


MARY ELLEN W. SMOOT
1997

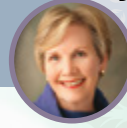


1999

General President Mary Ellen W. Smoot spoke at the second World Congress of Families, in Rome, Italy.



BONNIE D. PARKIN
2002



Today,

thanks to the leadership of faithful Relief Society sisters over the past 175 years, Relief Societies throughout the world help those in need. For instance, Relief Society leaders in Caracas, Venezuela, wanted to find ways for the sisters to serve. They visited a facility for the elderly and were shown to a room of women who were lying curled up on the floor and not wearing any clothing. The Relief Society sisters wept as they bathed, dressed, and fed the women and cut their hair.

people”—both men and women—can be “armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory.” This is the divine destiny for all of God’s children who are covenant keepers.

Sister Stephens: Understanding the reach of our divine destiny is found in the answers to two questions: (1) Do you know who you are? (2) Do you know what you have? If we understood what we have, we’d understand that we have all that we need. Through the ordinances and covenants we make in the temple, we have the blessings, the power, and the authority of all things pertaining to priesthood. We’re not ordained. We don’t know why. Being ordained to the priesthood from father to son has been the order of God since the days of Adam and Eve.

Sister Reeves: I have a testimony that covenant-keeping women recognize that our Father has given us all we need to return to His presence through making and keeping covenants.

8. What is the most important thing you would like Relief Society sisters to remember?

Sister Burton: In Doctrine and Covenants 45:3 it says: “Listen to him who is the advocate with the Father, who is pleading your cause before him.”

“Wherefore, Father, spare these my brethren [and sisters] that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life” (verse 5). I love Christ’s tenderness toward us. He is pleading our cause because He loves us! He wants us to come unto Him! Let us love and increase our faith in Jesus Christ and in our Heavenly Father.

As covenant daughters of God scattered upon all the face of the earth today, we are armed in great glory with righteousness and with the power of God. As we remember our purpose, rejoice in and keep our covenants, we will be seen as “distinct and different—in happy ways—from the women of the world,” and we can help prepare the world for the return of our Savior Jesus Christ. ■



New release of history of Relief Society announced in the October 2010 general conference by General President Julie B. Beck.

General President Linda K. Burton invited Church members worldwide to come to the aid of refugees (see IWasAStranger.lds.org).

2004

First world-wide leadership training meeting for women's auxiliaries.



JULIE B. BECK
2007

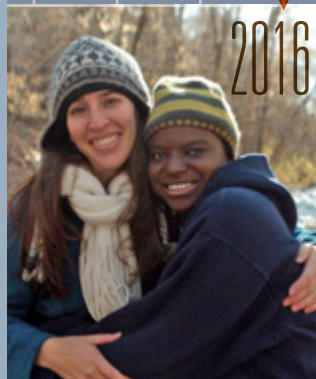


2010

"Studying and applying the history of Relief Society gives definition and expression to who we are as . . . followers of our Savior, Jesus Christ."¹² —Julie B. Beck

2011

Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society released by the Church.



2016

2017

175th anniversary of Relief Society.



2020

For more Relief Society history, go to history.lds.org/women.

LINDA K. BURTON
2012



NOTES

1. Emma Smith, in Relief Society Minute Book, Mar. 17, 1842, 13, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
2. Joseph Smith, in Relief Society Minute Book, June 9, 1842, 63.
3. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 9.1.1.
4. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 223.
5. Russell M. Nelson, "Stand as True Millennials," *Ensign*, Oct. 2016, 27.
6. *Teachings of Presidents: Spencer W. Kimball*, 223.
7. See Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant: The Story of Relief Society* (1992), 138.
8. Zina D. H. Young, "First General Conference of the Relief Society," *Women's Exponent*, Apr. 15, 1889, 172.
9. Russell M. Nelson, "A Plea to My Sisters," *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 96, 97.
10. *Young Women Personal Progress* (booklet, 2009), 3.
11. See "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
12. Julie B. Beck, "Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 114.

This interview was conducted by LaRene Porter Gaunt, Church Magazines. Time line and sidebar information by Kate Holbrook, Church History Department.

PURPOSE OF RELIEF SOCIETY

Relief Society helps prepare women for the blessings of eternal life as they

- increase faith in Heavenly Father and in Jesus Christ and His Atonement;
- strengthen individuals, families, and homes through ordinances and covenants; and
- work in unity to help those in need.



By Elder
Walter F.
González
Of the Seventy

STILL IN FORCE TODAY





At the end of His ministry in ancient America, just before He returned to His Father, the Savior told His disciples, *“For the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do”* (3 Nephi 27:21).

These words echo down the corridors of time to us as His latter-day disciples. This ancient commandment is still in force, and we should ponder how to fulfill it. How can we do “the works which ye have seen me do”?

Two examples will suffice for us to ponder how to better fulfill the challenge. These examples come from the Savior’s own efforts in teaching the “good news”¹—they are what we would call missionary efforts. He showed us (1) how to talk to people about the gospel and (2) how to invite them to take action.

Talking about the Gospel

The Savior excelled at finding people to teach. While it is true that many sought Him out, we can learn a lot by considering the instances when He was the one who went looking. Sometimes, in fact, He went out of His way to find specific people to teach. Here’s an example:

The Savior came to a town in Samaria called Sychar. “Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well,” when a woman of Samaria came to draw water. (See John 4:5–7.) The Savior was tired and could have simply nodded in acknowledgment to the woman or said something about the weather. Instead, He started a meaningful conversation.

This, on its own, would have surprised the woman. She was a Samaritan and He was a Jew, and “the Jews [had] no dealings with the Samaritans” (John 4:9). But this did not keep Jesus from opening His mouth. He started with a simple request: “Give me to drink” (John 4:7). The woman was puzzled by this encounter with a Jewish man, and even more so when He said, “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14). This promise, which she



When people begin to exercise faith, that faith is tested and grows. Those who choose to act will be blessed.

The Savior offered the rich young man an opportunity, but he chose not to act and “went away sorrowful.”



clearly did not fully understand at first, was enough to persuade her to learn more. She said: “Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw” (John 4:15).

What do we “see” the Savior do in Sychar? First of all, He seeks to get the woman interested in His message. He sets aside His fatigue. He doesn’t worry that the woman is a Samaritan. He wants her to never thirst spiritually, and moved by that genuine interest in her, He invites her to learn more.

How can we do what the Savior did? There are many ways to draw out people’s interest in the well of everlasting life, but one tool in particular stands above the rest. “Combined with the Spirit of the Lord,” President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) said, “the Book of Mormon is the greatest tool which God has given us to convert the world.”²

Do you have neighbors or relatives who could be blessed by knowing how a prophet of God dealt with his own obedient and wayward children? Would your family or friends be blessed by spiritual counsel about how to deal with economic stress, death, or other major concerns? Life makes us ask hard questions, and many of these are answered in the Book of Mormon. When such questions

come up, we can invite people to see how people in the Book of Mormon dealt with challenging situations by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. We can also create interest by inviting people to learn about the visit of our Savior to the ancient American continent.

If we do as Christ did, we will have the boldness to speak. When we open our mouths to create interest in the restored gospel, the scriptures promise that we will “become even as Nephi of old” (D&C 33:8). We can do what the Savior did by engaging in conversations about gospel topics that may awaken in another person a desire to know more.

Inviting People to Act

The Savior didn’t just discuss the gospel. He did more than that, as shown by His interaction with the woman at the well. When she expressed interest in receiving what the Savior had to offer, He challenged her to bring another to hear the message (see John 4:15–16). The woman “left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

“Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?” (John 4:28–29).

There are, in fact, many examples of the Lord inviting



Because of the blind man’s willingness to act on his faith, he was, despite the world’s rejection, blessed with a testimony of Jesus Christ.

people to take specific action. For example, after He anointed a blind man's eyes with clay, Christ said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (John 9:7). The man washed as instructed and came back seeing.

When ten lepers asked for Christ's help, He asked them to perform a specific task: "Go shew yourselves unto the priests" (Luke 17:14). As an evidence of their faith, they accepted the assignment, and "as they went, they were cleansed" (Luke 17:14). One returned to express gratitude to the Savior. The Lord's response is meaningful: "Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole" (Luke 17:19).

Through the scriptures we can "see" how the Savior uses this principle of inviting people to take action. We can also observe that when people fulfill a divine assignment, their faith in the Father and in the Savior is increased. This pattern of inviting people to take action is consistent with revealed doctrine. When people begin to exercise faith, that faith is then tested and grows. Those who wish to never thirst again, those who wish to be made whole, must develop faith by being "doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22). As we exercise faith, our faith is strengthened and we are in a position to do more, and thus eventually we become more and more like Christ.

We know that full-time missionaries are always inviting people to take action. Inviting people to do something is in essence a way to help individuals grow in faith. Church leaders apply this same principle when they ask members to fulfill an assignment. So do parents when they ask their children to be obedient.

While serving as a mission president, I interviewed a missionary who was overcome with the blues. I felt impressed to invite him to go out and open his mouth. I promised that if he did so with the intent of helping others, he would be filled with the Spirit. A few days later I learned that he was again full of enthusiasm. In his case, a simple invitation to act made the difference.

When we ask others to take action, we help them in their own conversion process. When the Savior asked the woman at the well to act, she did, and she was blessed for it. What's more, others grew in their faith as she invited them to come and meet the Christ. This was a blessing both for them and for her. (See John 4:29–30, 39–42.)

Rejecting or Accepting the Invitation

In some cases, those we invite to act upon the word will reject our invitation. Even the Savior experienced such rejection. In a well-known example, a wealthy man approached Jesus. He was obeying all of the commandments and wondered what he was missing. The Lord extended a specific invitation to him: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me" (Matthew 19:21). The young man "went away sorrowful" (Matthew 19:22). He chose not to act and he missed a chance to grow in faith.

Those who choose to act, however, will be blessed. An example of this is found in the story of the blind man who was healed. The most important part of this story for the blind man was not what happened to his physical eyes but rather to his spiritual eyes.

Questioned by the Pharisees and religious leaders of the Jews, he said, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." For what he said, they "reviled him" and "cast him out."

But then Jesus came to him and invited him to act on his faith by asking, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The man asked who the Son of God was, that he might believe on Him. When Jesus identified himself as the Son of God, the man said, "Lord, I believe," and worshipped Him. Because of the blind man's willingness to act on his faith, he was, despite the world's rejection, blessed with a testimony of Jesus Christ. (See John 9:25–38.) We will also strengthen our testimony of Christ when we act according to our covenants.

Fulfilling the Commandment

Sharing the gospel and inviting others to act are simply two ways of fulfilling the commandment, still in force today, to do the things we see Him do. I know that as we do what we have seen Him do, we will continue in the process of becoming even as He is. I testify that He lives and wants the best for all of us. ■

NOTES

1. "The word *gospel* means 'good news'" (Bible Dictionary, "Gospels").
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* (2014), 282.

Anxiety

and ANXIETY DISORDERS

It's normal to feel anxious, but anxiety disorders can interfere with a person's life. The better we understand these disorders, the better we can help each other.

By Lyle J. Burrup
LDS Family Services

Imagine that a member of the bishopric telephones two ward members to ask them to say the opening and closing prayers in sacrament meeting. Both members feel nervous. One has butterflies in their stomach about saying the prayer but thinks through what to say and goes through with it. The other has an overwhelming sense of dread accompanied by an elevated heart rate and hyperventilation and does not go to church that Sunday. One feels relief at being able to do something difficult. The other has other similar panic episodes over the next few months out of fear of being called on to pray and avoids going to church for quite a while.

This contrast highlights the fundamental difference between most people's experience of anxiety and the experiences of people with anxiety disorders.

DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES

Anxiety is a normal human emotion. Everyone experiences it. It is part of the “opposition in all things,” without which there would be no “happiness nor misery, neither sense nor insensibility” (2 Nephi 2:11).¹ As such, this emotion serves us well. It is part of

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION AND TEXTURED BACKGROUND FROM GETTY IMAGES



On the other hand, there are also *anxiety disorders*. These interfere with our alarm system and its many benefits and are characterized by persistent, overwhelming, uncontrollable anxiety that impedes normal functioning. They include social anxiety; phobias; panic attacks; repetitive, intrusive, objectionable thoughts, impulses, and images; and are often accompanied by a host of physical symptoms and extreme avoidance behavior.

HOW ANXIETY DISORDERS DEVELOP

In addition to extreme avoidance of anxiety-filled situations, several human traits come together in a “perfect storm” to create debilitating anxiety: biological vulnerability to anxiety, coupled with stress; worry; distorted perception and thinking; perfectionism; excessive niceness; and unresolved regrets.

A	+	B	=	C
Life's events and experiences	... pass through	... our belief system	... and cause	... our emotions.

The diagram illustrates the cognitive-behavioral model, showing the flow from events to emotions through thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions. The model is represented by a sequence of five circular nodes connected by a horizontal bar. The nodes are labeled: EVENTS, THOUGHTS, BELIEFS, ATTITUDES, PERCEPTIONS, and EMOTIONS. The connections are represented by plus signs (+) and equals signs (=). The diagram is color-coded with blue and yellow rings around the nodes.

A	+	B	=	C
Life's events and experiences	... pass through	... our belief system	... and cause	... our emotions.

A	+	B	=	C
Events cannot be easily controlled,	... but	... thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions can be,	... so	... emotions can be changed if beliefs and perceptions are changed.



Biological Vulnerability to Anxiety, Coupled with Excessive Stress

We inherit from our parents our physical and emotional makeup, including vulnerability to certain illnesses. Just as some families are vulnerable to high blood pressure or diabetes, some are also vulnerable to certain emotional disorders.

Vulnerability by itself will not cause an anxiety disorder. However, when it is coupled with long-term, unresolved stress, a person may develop such a disorder. Understanding this can help us know, for instance, that some people may need to take medication to manage body chemistry when they have high levels of constant anxiety.

Excessive Worry

Worry comes when we feel we are highly vulnerable to some threat and also feel we have little power to do anything about it. Like anxiety, worry can be very helpful.

However, when it is excessive, persistent, and unchecked over a long period of time, it can evolve into an anxiety disorder.

Distorted Perception and Thinking

People who suffer from anxiety disorders have distorted perceptions and thoughts. Perception begins with what we experience through our five senses and then includes the meaning we give to our experience. This filtered perception accumulates over time. However, it is often false when not guided by the truth.

Anxiety disorders distort thinking. For instance, fear that a dog might bite you could be very rational in a given situation. However, thinking that you should not go outside because a dog might attack you is irrational.

A theory that counselors use to teach people how to change distorted perception and thinking states that our emotions are the result of events and experiences filtered

through how we perceive and think. The simple formula of this theory is $A+B=C$: The key to our emotions (C) is perception (B) of an event (A) rather than the event itself (see chart, page 56). We know this because two people can experience the same thing but feel very differently about it.

READ MORE

For more on perfectionism, read President Russell M. Nelson, “Perfection Pending,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 86; Elder Cecil O. Samuelson, “Perfectionism,” *New Era*, Jan. 2006, 10; and Elder Gerrit W. Gong, “Becoming Perfect in Christ,” *Ensign*, July 2014, 14.

If you can replace irrational thoughts and beliefs with more rational, comforting ones, your anxiety will drop and become more normal.

Excessive Perfectionism

Perfectionism can be functional and helpful when used as a tool to improve and grow. However, two common irrational beliefs that create anxiety are “People will look down on me if I make a mistake” and “I’m less worthwhile when I fail.” These beliefs limit our use of mistakes to teach us (see Ether 12:27; D&C 1:25, 27) and ignore the fact that we have great worth as sons and daughters of God (see D&C 18:10).

Unhealthy perfectionism causes people to hold

NORMAL ANXIETY vs. ANXIETY DISORDERS

NORMAL ANXIETY	ANXIETY DISORDER
MILD	INTENSE
Brief; easily resolved	Lasts several months; very difficult to resolve
Related to a specific event	Extends beyond a specific event
Caused by rational fear or worry	Irrational; distorts the truth; causes false perceptions
Motivates to action; facilitates choice and growth	Causes feeling of loss of control; limits functioning and action; causes avoidance, indecisiveness; hinders making choices; limits growth
Person has low biological vulnerability to anxiety; manages stress, worry, “niceness,” perception, perfectionism in positive ways; has no unresolved internal conflict or regret	Person has high biological vulnerability to anxiety; challenged by stress, worry, “niceness,” perception, perfectionism; may have unresolved internal conflict and regret
No physical, behavioral, social, mental, or spiritual symptoms	Symptoms include fatigue; headaches; muscle tension; nausea; loss of appetite; panic attacks; avoiding people, situations, places; difficulty concentrating, reading, learning; difficulty feeling the Spirit and having faith



themselves to standards they don't hold others to. It causes procrastination. It takes the joy out of trying new things. For example, if people's friends invite them to go bowling, they may fear what their friends will think if they bowl poorly. Of course, they themselves would not look down on friends who bowl poorly, but they do not see how irrational their thinking has become.

The Lord commanded us to be perfect (see Matthew 5:48), but He also said that if we draw close to Him, He will show us our weakness (see Ether 12:27). There appears to be a conflict between these two concepts unless you understand that perfection (completeness, wholeness) is an eternal condition that comes through the Savior's Atonement "on conditions of repentance" (Alma 42:13). We don't make ourselves perfect; Jesus Christ does. We just do our best and keep repenting when we fall short, relying on His grace to make weak things strong.

If we don't resolve the distorted thinking common to perfectionism, we become the slaves rather than the masters of our high standards, and we become vulnerable to extreme anxiety.

Excessive Niceness

Another positive trait that can nevertheless leave us vulnerable to anxiety is niceness. The Savior said, "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9), and the world could surely use more of them. However, almost everyone with an anxiety disorder is *excessively* nice. They feel guilty and

HOW TO HELP PEOPLE WITH ANXIETY

Often people with anxiety are afraid of what others will think of them. They don't want people to see them have a panic attack or other manifestation of their problem. They try to hide it. They may avoid social gatherings or skip church. Here's how you can help them.

- **Help them understand that we're all alike.** People who struggle with an anxiety disorder are normal human beings responding in a predictable way to a certain set of beliefs, thoughts, and fears.
- **Try not to be judgmental.** Anxiety is not a weakness in the person. Experiencing normal anxiety shows we care. A positive way of looking at people who struggle with anxiety is this: they just care too much.
- **Empathize with them.** Be genuine. Listen in order to understand their feelings, appreciate why they struggle, and communicate what you understand. Empathy is the most effective quality of counseling.
- **Don't tell them not to worry.** Telling them "Don't worry" isn't going to give them any relief. It also shows that you don't understand how change occurs or that you're minimizing the problem. Help them identify what they can realistically do about what worries them.
- **Don't tell them they're being irrational.** Telling them they're being irrational won't help them feel better or be rational. They've got to learn how to recognize this for themselves. If you tell them they're being irrational, they may stop confiding in you, thinking, "I can't talk to you. You think I'm an idiot."
- **Give them support.** Encourage them to get help. Through their bishop, they can find a good counselor. In a crisis or on a difficult day, offer to help with a difficult demand or task, such as teaching a lesson, fixing a meal, doing laundry, mowing the lawn, tending children, and so on.

feel like failures when they're unable to create peace and tranquility in everyone's life, solve everyone's problems, or make everyone happy. It's an unreasonable and unhealthy standard to hold ourselves to.

A Specific Unresolved Regret or Guilt

Everybody has regrets. We've all failed or let someone down. People with anxiety disorders, however, hold on to intense regret and guilt. These feelings, coupled with excessive niceness, cause them to avoid situations where they might repeat the "offending" behavior so as to not upset or disappoint anyone ever again. This is often the root of their anxiety. Bringing the problem to conscious awareness, dealing with it directly, and taking action to resolve it and let it go usually bring rapid recovery.

ANXIETY DISORDERS AND THE SPIRIT

The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Peace. The Spirit works quietly (see 1 Nephi 17:45). Anxiety is loud and obnoxious, so to speak, making it difficult to feel the Spirit and depend on your faith. Faith is trust in God.² The opposite of faith is uncertainty and mistrust. Is it any wonder that anxiety disorders often undermine faith?

One manifestation of the Spirit of Truth is that we are able to think clearly and rationally. Jacob says: "The Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not. Wherefore, it speaketh of things as they really are, and of things as they really will be" (Jacob 4:13). As we listen to the Spirit, we will know the truth, and the truth will make us free (see John 8:32). In doing so, we can avoid the common error of "looking beyond the mark" (Jacob 4:14). One way we look beyond the mark is to set expectations for ourselves beyond what

the Lord has set, tormenting ourselves unnecessarily. By listening to the Spirit of Truth, we can accept the reality of things that we may believe are unacceptable, such as imperfection and weakness.

Faith in the Savior's Atonement and Resurrection, combined with hope and charity, should anchor our lives (see Moroni 7:40–48).

LET US BE ONE

Anxiety disorders may be a lifelong struggle for some, but with training in how to change distorted perceptions, thoughts, and feelings, they can become manageable. We can all benefit from understanding anxiety better. If family members, friends, or ward members are struggling, we can offer them support and empathy. Alma taught that we need to be "willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light; . . . willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort" (Mosiah 18:8–11). At the end of His mortal ministry, the Savior's heartfelt prayer was that we be one as He and the Father are one (see John 17:9–10, 20–23; see also 3 Nephi 19:20–23, 27–29). One of the ways we can do this is to support and comfort those in anguish.

If you are struggling, you can find comfort through the gospel of Jesus Christ, assisted by professional counseling if needed. And in His Church you can find support and acceptance as we all strive together to become one and strengthen one another. ■

NOTES

1. Sensibility is "the capacity of feeling or perceiving" (Noah Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language* [1828], "sensibility"). If it weren't for the Fall, we would have no joy, for we would know no misery (see 2 Nephi 2:22–23).
2. See Bible Dictionary, "Faith."

Advice for

People Who Suffer from Anxiety Disorders



Seek out help

- If you feel you may have an anxiety disorder, find a good counselor with the help of your bishop. Learn how to work with traits that drive your anxiety.

Calm your body

- In moments of low anxiety, practice breathing and relaxation exercises so that when anxiety is high, you can calm yourself a little bit.
- Exercise, especially when highly anxious.
- Eat a healthy diet.

Calm your mind

- Practice meditation when you are not anxious.
- Develop and practice positive, rational self-talk. Find specific things to say to yourself that help you calm down (scriptures, quotes, pictures).
- Learn to challenge negative thinking—"Is what I believe about myself also true of other people?"

Calm your emotions

- Do not try to control anxiety. That will cause it to increase. Rather, control what you do when you experience anxiety.
- Instead of avoiding situations that trigger anxiety, engage them. Learn to face it. Invite anxiety to stay rather than fighting it. When you do, you become the master of it. It may even leave.

- Listen to hymns, Tabernacle Choir recordings, and other uplifting music.

Calm your sense of identity and worth

- Focus on your identity and worth as a child of God. Accept that your worth is constant rather than measured by performance or what people think of you.
- Read, ponder, have faith in, and take comfort from your patriarchal blessing.
- Develop and write out a positive, accurate script about yourself—using scriptures, hymns, quotes, or your patriarchal blessing—which you can repeat back to yourself when you feel anxious or worried.
- Accept that you will make mistakes and that they do not define you. We all make mistakes. Remember: a key to a peaceful life is learning from mistakes. When you make a mistake, ask, "What good things can I learn from this?"

Get medication if necessary

- Medication may be necessary to get high anxiety under control if it goes unchecked for too long, though it should supplement and not replace counseling, self-talk, and relaxation techniques.

Just as my dad was relentless in trying to stop the missionaries from teaching us, my sister Thelma was twice as determined to learn about the gospel.



Blessed

BY MY FAITHFUL SISTER

*I wouldn't be the man I am today without the
righteous influence of my older sister.*

By Rafael Antillon

I am fortunate to have had good women in my life: a nurturing and courageous mother, wise and faithful sisters, and a loving and supportive wife. I wish to honor one of these influential women, my older sister, Thelma, for her impact in my life through her continuous good example.

When I was young, my father taught me to follow Thelma's lead when he and my mom were not around, and I am eternally grateful for this counsel.

Having a Determination to Learn

Three of my eight siblings joined the Church in El Salvador the same time I did. Thelma was 14 years old and my oldest sibling when we got baptized. I was 8 years old at the time and the youngest of the family, so she was our leader.

We were introduced to the Church by our neighbor who sang songs that we later learned were hymns. Our neighbor told us about a wonderful place called Primary, where children learned to sing. The missionaries were contacted, and they started visiting our home to teach us.

However, my dad had strong feelings against the Church and about his children being taught by the missionaries. Being a small boy, I never understood what those two elders went through to bring the gospel into

our lives. Dad would kick them out if he found them at our home, and he would deliberately turn off the lights if the elders stopped by in the evening. Just as my dad was relentless in trying to stop the missionaries from teaching, Thelma was twice as determined to learn about the gospel and read the Book of Mormon. Thelma and the elders never gave up, and for this I am thankful.

Going to church was a struggle because Dad tried to stop us by using a variety of tactics, such as requiring that we do chores before we could leave for church.

One Sunday morning was particularly hard. He did not want to let us go, but we refused to be stopped. He kicked a garbage can and spilled its contents all over the floor we had just cleaned. Thelma quietly began picking up the garbage without complaining. After she had cleaned the floor again, she asked if we could go to church. We had finished all the chores and more, but he still did not want to give his permission. Finally he asked pointedly, "Why do you insist on going to this church anyway?" Thelma then bore a powerful testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel and of the message of the Restoration of the gospel. As she concluded, my dad waved his hand and gave his permission.

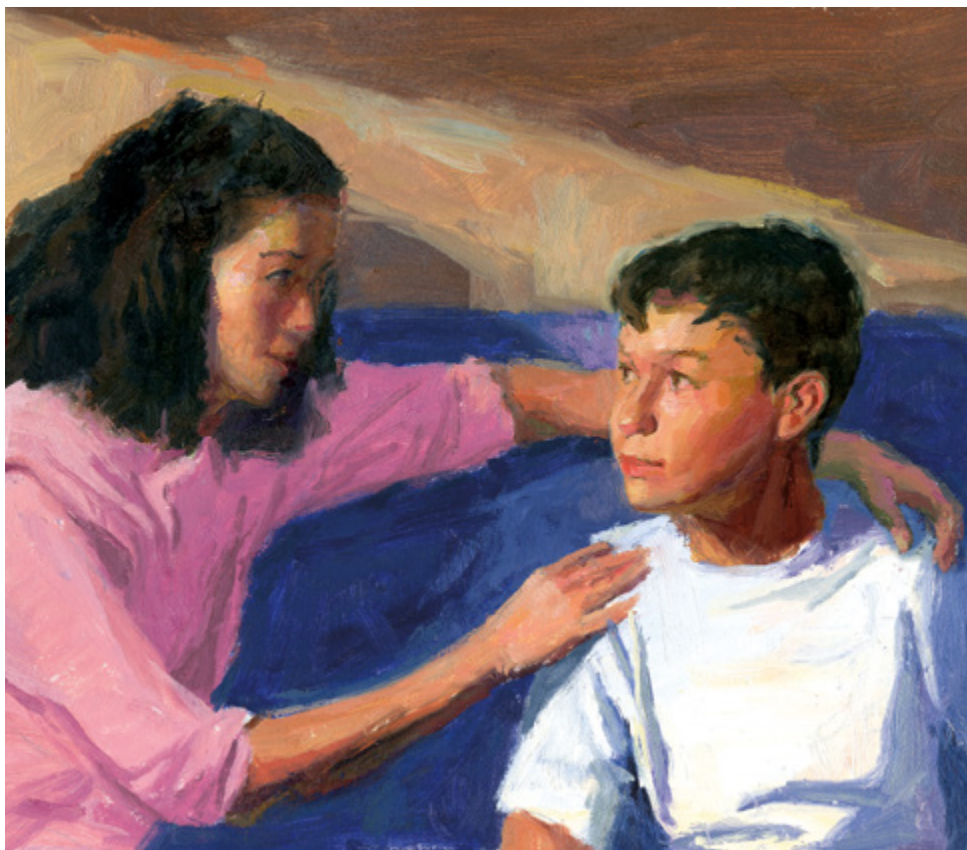
Dad never tried to stop us again after this incident and eventually, even though he did not like it, gave his consent for us to join the Church.

Serving from the Start

I had no problem attending church on Sunday, but I was not as enthusiastic about attending Primary because it was on Saturday morning at that time. When I was 10, Thelma came home one Saturday and told my other siblings about a great soccer game between the deacons and the Blazers (11-year-old Scouts). She pointed out how unfortunate it was that I had missed the game because I had not attended Primary. Needless to say, I went the following Saturday (with my soccer cleats on) and never missed it again.

When Thelma was 16, she was called to be the Primary president. Our bishop had been trying to find someone to handle the many challenges the Primary organization was facing. The ward covered a large area, and it was difficult and expensive for many families with small children to travel by bus to the church both on Saturdays for Primary and on Sundays. Many of those children were not attending Primary, and no solution had been found. The bishop had been prompted to call Thelma but could not bring himself to do it because she was so young. The prompting continued, and after receiving approval from the stake president, the bishop extended the call to my sister.

This proved to be an inspired decision, and it blessed many children—including me. Thelma magnified her calling by following inspiration, using common sense, and implementing innovative ideas to develop training programs to bring the gospel to the children. She asked her counselors and teachers to hold Primary meetings at several places closer to their homes, and she provided ongoing training for those teachers. This solution allowed members to save time and money and enabled children who were previously not attending Primary to receive the blessings of this wonderful organization.



Setting an Example of Faith

My siblings and I continued to follow Thelma's lead as time progressed. We held family home evenings and attended all of our Church meetings. Shortly after I was ordained a deacon, Thelma turned to me during one family home evening and recognized me as the priesthood holder in the family. This event taught me a valuable lesson about respect for the priesthood.

She also made sure I never lacked the proper encouragement and extra incentive to attend my priesthood meetings or to fulfill my responsibilities. For instance, Thelma used every noisy and energetic way to get me out of bed on Sunday mornings so I could attend priesthood meeting. She also taught me to look forward to my advancements in the Aaronic Priesthood.

At Mutual and seminary I didn't mind that I was always known as "Thelma's brother." Some of my friends had the support of their parents in the Church, but I had my bishop, Young Men leaders, and Thelma.

Thelma continued to be an example to me as she held a variety of callings until she left for her mission. She served honorably in the Guatemala Quetzaltenango Mission, and the fruits of her labors included the baptism

When I was young, Thelma encouraged me to attend Primary and other Church activities. As the years go by, her example and enthusiasm for the gospel continue to be a source of inspiration to me.

of our mother two days after Thelma returned home. Our joy was full as I, then a priest, performed this sacred ordinance. Following Thelma's example, I began to earnestly prepare to serve a mission.

After her mission, Thelma moved to the United States to attend Brigham Young University, despite our meager economic circumstances. She remained a strong influence on me regardless of the distance.

After I returned home from serving in the Guatemala Guatemala City Mission, I also traveled to Provo, Utah, to attend BYU. I was grateful for the kindness and support of so many people to help get me there. However, money was still going to be short.

Soon after I arrived in Provo, Thelma and I reviewed our financial situation. We both concluded that even with my working part-time, we did not have enough money to pay my rent and hers for the entire school year. Thelma never doubted that we would make it through that trial though. She trusted that the Lord would provide a way. Less than a week later, Thelma received a letter from BYU's Spanish department. As she opened it, she turned to me and exclaimed, "This! This is how we are going to pay your rent!" The letter informed her that she had been accepted as a teacher's assistant, which would increase her income.

Handling a Health Challenge

As the years go by, Thelma continues to be a source of inspiration. She handles adversity better than anybody else I know. She takes care of her wonderful son who has Down syndrome, our elderly mother, and a husband with a serious health condition. Also, if those things weren't enough, she has health issues of her own.

A few years ago, Thelma underwent brain surgery to relieve pressure from a brain cyst. Given the needs of her loved ones, the prospect of any complications was intimidating. She prayed for help and inspiration and visited the temple. Through it all, her faith did not waver, but she had reservations about putting her life in the hands of the doctor who would perform the delicate surgery.

Thelma was visiting with a dear friend during this time and confided her concerns about the surgery. Thelma's friend asked for the doctor's name and upon learning the name, Thelma's friend said that the doctor was a member of her ward. She told Thelma that he was a faithful member of the Church and a worthy priesthood holder. He often played Church hymns while he performed surgeries. Although a simple piece of information, this was a tender answer to Thelma's prayers. Thelma's life and spiritual experiences are a source of continuous strength and testimony in my own life.

I think of young boys who may be experiencing an upbringing similar to mine. I think of those who have no male role model at home, who can only find refuge at Church, and those growing up in troubled countries. To them I say: Never give up; stay close to the Lord and to His servants. I am grateful that the Lord provided the support I needed to encourage me to accomplish my goals and become the person I am today. ■

The author lives in New York, USA.



THE FAITH AND DEVOTION OF WOMEN

"I express my gratitude to you faithful Latter-day Saint women, now numbered in the millions and found across the earth. Great is your power for good. Marvelous are your talents and devotion. Tremendous is your faith and your love for the Lord, for His work, and for His sons and daughters. Continue to live the gospel. Magnify it before all of your associates."

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Gordon B. Hinckley* (2016), 104.



HELPING CHILDREN Delight IN THE Sabbath

By Lani Hilton

A son of one of my friends told his mother that he hated Sunday because he was not allowed to do anything. His mom was sad because she realized that in their home, Sunday had become a day of saying, “Don’t!”

Does this situation sound familiar? If we as parents focus on telling

Matching Sabbath activities to the ages of our children has worked for our family.

our children what they cannot do on Sunday, we may miss valuable opportunities to help them engage in meaningful activities. What can we do so children look forward to Sunday? How

can we make Sunday a day of delight for them? (see Isaiah 58:13).

Analyzing and planning how to improve the Sabbath day experience of our families can foster success. After pondering how our own family could better honor the Sabbath, my husband and I came up with some ideas that have worked for us. These



ideas are presented here for other families to pick and choose from, if they so desire. The list of suggestions is not meant to be exhaustive (or exhausting!).

Gospel Games

The expression “the family that plays together stays together” can be true even on Sundays. Toys and games can be turned into more Sabbath-appropriate activities by tying in gospel themes.

Toy blocks can be used to build any type of structure from the scriptures, such as King Benjamin’s tower (see Mosiah 2), the walls of Jerusalem (see Nehemiah 4–6),

or the lions’ den (see Daniel 6). Encouraging children to build scriptural objects directs them to meaningful and uplifting play and piques their interest while family members read and discuss the related scriptural accounts.

Dress-up is another simple quiet game and is easily adapted by encouraging children to dress up as people in the scriptures. It can be a great opportunity for scriptural discussions and role-plays.

Playing dolls and house can set the stage for sweet teaching moments. We can remind our children of the essential role of mothers and fathers, teach them how important love is in

a family, and thank them for all they do to help the family be happy. A short statement of testimony like “I know God gave us families to help us become who He wants us to be” can invite the Spirit during casual playtime. Identify some faithful mothers (such as Hannah in 1 Samuel 1–2; the Shunammite woman in 2 Kings 4; Elisabeth in Luke 1) or faithful fathers (such as Abraham in Genesis 22; Lehi in 1 Nephi 1–5; Alma in Alma 26–42) and read their scriptural accounts with your children.

Puppets are ideal for acting out scenarios like sharing, obeying, helping with chores, forgiving, being kind, including others, practicing good



manners, and respecting family members. Parents and older siblings can play along and can demonstrate the stark contrast between choosing right and choosing wrong.

The game “**20 Questions**” can be turned into a gospel game by using a character, place, or object in the scriptures. Choose one of these things without telling anyone, and then have family members ask yes-or-no questions about what you chose so they can try and guess what it is. Whoever guesses the correct answer in fewer than 20 questions can choose the next person, place, or thing for others to ask questions about. Before going on to the next person, consider sharing a lesson you have learned from what you chose.

Drawing pictures spans all ages. One idea is to give everyone one minute to draw a scripture story,

person, place, or thing. Starting with the youngest, every family member holds up the picture he or she drew and gives the others a chance to guess what it is. After the answer is guessed, the illustrator can share a lesson learned from the chosen scripture story or what applications the story may have.

Field Trips

With energetic children, it may be helpful to have a meaningful field trip or Sunday-appropriate outing for a different teaching venue.

For example, particular settings can help us visualize and understand more about the plan of salvation. Visiting a cemetery or a family with a newborn baby can remind us of how our mortal life begins and ends. Peaceful gardens can help us ponder the Creation and the Atonement. On temple grounds we can reflect on


eternity and the ordinances and covenants needed for exaltation.

Of course, paying a visit to grandparents or other relatives, where possible, can also enrich our Sabbath experience and can help to strengthen family ties.

In addition, you might consider inviting someone to come visit you. We have enjoyed inviting recently returned missionaries to come to our home and tell us experiences from their missions.

Family History Activities

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has observed, “In addition to time with family, you can experience true delight on the Sabbath from family history work.”¹ As children participate in family history, they will look forward to and have delight in the Sabbath.



One idea is to hold a **family tree gathering**, in which relatives gather to work on and celebrate their shared family history. Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that such gatherings “should be a recurring effort. Everyone [can] bring existing family histories, stories, and photos.”² To do this, it may be helpful to have family tree gatherings in conjunction with an event that is already scheduled, like a monthly Sunday dinner with extended family.

Children can also become active participants in family history by conducting **interviews** with family members, both those who live close by and those who can be contacted by phone or through the internet. FamilySearch.org contains a list of possible interview questions (see [familysearch.org/wiki/en/Creating_Oral_Histories](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Creating_Oral_Histories)). You may choose to upload to the “Memories” section of [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org) the answers you receive so that they will be available for other family members.

Another family history activity is **reading journals** out loud. Parents reading about events and feelings when they were younger can foster family closeness. Reading accounts from mission journals teaches the joys and challenges of mission life.

You could also try **creating a quiz**. Invite children to interview a relative or find a book with stories and facts about an ancestor and come up with quiz questions they could ask other

family members. You could also use journal entries, letters, and scrapbooks as resources.

Children may enjoy **memory games** using pictures of ancestors. After becoming familiar with the photos and names, you can flip them over and then take turns turning two photos over at a time to try to find a match. You could try matching two of the same pictures or matching pictures to names.

Gospel-Learning Plan

Gospel instruction can happen any day of the week, but there is a power that accompanies gospel learning on the Sabbath. President Nelson taught: “We make the Sabbath a delight when we teach the gospel to our children. Our responsibility as parents is abundantly clear.”³

Creative ideas of things we can do to help our children focus on the Savior and His gospel are limitless. We can encourage them to draw gospel art, listen to or create music that is centered on the Savior, or visit those who are sick or lonely. Additionally, we can direct children to spiritually strengthening activities found online at [friend.lds.org](https://www.friend.lds.org) and [youth.lds.org](https://www.youth.lds.org) and watch with them uplifting videos from *Mormon Messages* or *The Life of Jesus Christ Bible Videos*.

Creating a routine has helped our family set consistent habits and made the ideal situation more likely to happen. Having a routine has simplified

planning and ensured that we have a variety of quality activities. For example, you might take a field trip on the first Sunday of the month, focus on gospel games on the second Sunday, concentrate on videos and Church websites on the third Sunday, and make family history a priority on the fourth Sunday.

Truly a good plan can help ensure a delightful Sabbath. Family members will be blessed as you direct them to a variety of simple, gospel-centered activities. Prayerfully decide what specific plan is best for your family.

Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled:

“Let your family be filled with love as you honor the Sabbath all day long and experience its spiritual blessings throughout the week. . . .

“ . . . Let us prepare and conduct ourselves on the Sabbath in a manner that will call down the blessings promised us upon ourselves and our families.”⁴

I know the Sabbath can be a day of delight for our children and for us as we do those things that will draw us close to the Lord and to each other. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “The Sabbath Is a Delight,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 131.
2. Quentin L. Cook, “Roots and Branches,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 47; see also Sally Johnson Odekirk, “What’s a Family Tree Gathering?” *Ensign*, Oct. 2014, 36–39.
3. Russell M. Nelson, “The Sabbath Is a Delight,” 130.
4. L. Tom Perry, “The Sabbath and the Sacrament,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 9.



Learn how the *Friend* magazine can help your family understand a different sensitive topic each month.

GENDER MATTERS

Is an elephant more like a rope or a tree? In this month's *Friend*, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, tells the tale of six blind travelers who try to answer this question. But no one agrees, since each traveler can only base his opinion on the part of the elephant he happens to touch. So it's all pretty confusing.

Some of the most confusing questions our children face today have to do with gender. What makes us male or female? Is gender an innate part of who we are, or is it more changeable? Why does gender even matter?

"We know some things but not everything," President Uchtdorf explains. "But there is someone who sees all things clearly. There is a source of truth that is complete and correct. That source is our wise and all-knowing Heavenly Father."

This month's *Friend* has stories and activities to start a fun and natural family discussion about being a girl or being a boy:

- "What Is the Truth?" (page 2)—President Uchtdorf's message about the six travelers and the elephant could help you talk with your children about issues they may be confused about.

- "Love-Your-Neighbor Adventure" (page 24)—In this game, family members learn what prophets and apostles have taught about gospel principles

and standards—and role-play ways to show courage and compassion when neighbors act and believe differently.

- "I Want to Play the Flute" (page 36)—Jacob learns that certain talents aren't just for girls or just for boys.
- "What Are Your Spiritual Gifts?" (page 34)—Heavenly Father gives all His children spiritual gifts, whether they are boys or girls.

THREE Cs

We can make sure our children aren't like the blind travelers by teaching them three Cs:

Clarity: Eternal truths from the scriptures and words of living prophets can give children the sure guide of doctrinal clarity. Family discussions can help them learn to articulate their beliefs. Even when we don't know everything, we can choose to trust God.

Courage: Arm children with courage through role-playing, stories, and your own example. Articulating beliefs takes courage. So does standing up for a friend who believes differently from the rest of the crowd.

Compassion: Children quickly learn by watching us whether a difference of opinion justifies rudeness or excluding others. As we teach clarity and courage, we also need to help our children show kindness to all. After all, Jesus taught that love of God and love of our fellowman are the first great commandments (see Matthew 22:36–39).



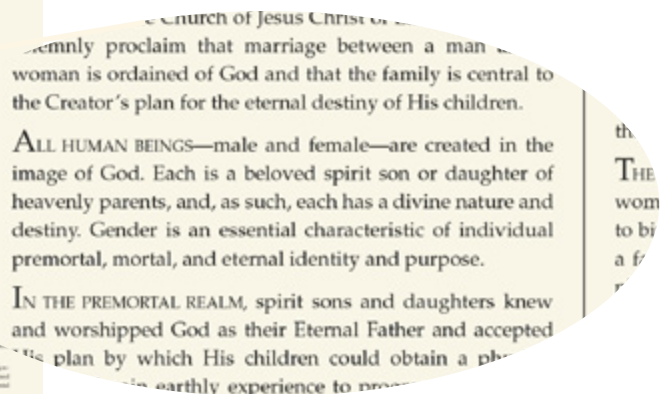
Find past pages in this series at FriendConnection.lds.org.

TEACHING THE PROCLAMATION TO CHILDREN

*Each month, we'll give you tips for talking with your children about a portion of "The Family: A Proclamation to the World."*¹

This Month's Selection

"All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose."



How to Explain This to Children

Every single person on earth is an important child of Heavenly Parents. We can grow up to be like Them! Each person here on earth was created as a girl or a boy even before they were born. They are here as a girl or a boy for a reason. And after this life, they will continue to be a girl or a boy.

Activity Idea

Give each child a piece of paper and invite them to fill it with a collage of pictures and words showing what makes them unique. They could cut pictures out of magazines, draw their own, or print pictures from online. Talk about how wonderful it is that people have different talents and interests. Point to two different tools that were used to create your collages—a pair of scissors and a bottle of glue, for example. Although these tools look different and do different things, they worked together to create something beautiful. Explain that boys and girls are created to be different, but neither one is better than the other. Men and women work together to create beautiful families. ■

NOTE

1. See "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.



Find other teaching tips and a copy of the family proclamation at ProclamationKids.lds.org.

TWELFTH-BIRTHDAY TRADITION BRINGS PEACE AND FAMILY CLOSENESS

By Pam Mueller, as told to Emma Young

Our family learned firsthand about the peace and closeness that come from attending the temple together.

Years ago, my son Aaron was being bullied at school. “It was awful, made me feel worthless, and made me feel as if I couldn’t be happy,” he remembers. Thankfully, when tough times came, he already knew a place of deliverance from the torment: the temple. He used to ask us to drive him to the temple, “even if just to sit in the parking lot to feel the Spirit. . . . It was my escape,” he says. “I felt close to the Lord and far from the world when I was at the temple.”

When our oldest daughter, Rachel, turned 12, my husband, Eric, and I felt impressed to start a family tradition of introducing our four children to the blessings of temple attendance: a special trip to the temple for each child’s 12th birthday to perform vicarious baptisms for our ancestors. For this occasion we attended a temple of their choice, within a reasonable distance from our home, and sometimes stayed the night at a hotel near the temple.

Over the years, we have held family home evening lessons on the temple, prepared family names to take to the

temple, reviewed the process of the baptismal ordinance, and taught our children how to prepare to enter the temple.

We learned that the time and the extra expense to take each child at 12 years of age to the temple were all worth it when they felt the Spirit there. They now know where to turn for peace. Our son Jakob says, “I still remember feeling the peace and love in the temple and the wonderful experience I had. I remember feeling

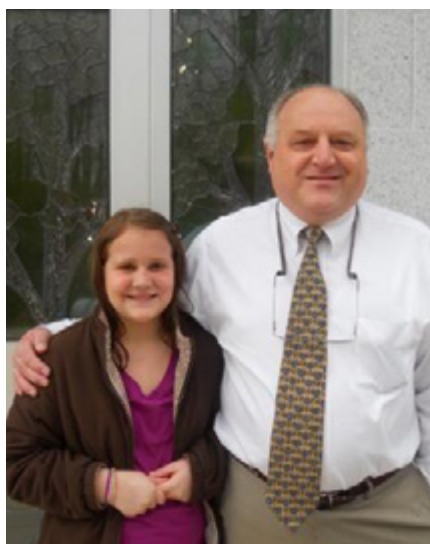
a longing to return to the temple.”

The tradition encouraged our children to attend the temple often and brought our family closer together. Our daughter Rebecca says, “The tradition has helped me see that we are a forever family. We are linked to each other and need to help each other make our way back to Heavenly Father.”

As they grew older, our children started attending the temple together whenever possible. “I loved this. It was a special time with my older siblings,” Aaron says. “I have a firm testimony that regular temple attendance can bring you closer to those you love and help you see a new appreciation for the things they do.”

When we began the tradition, we couldn’t have predicted how the peace of the temple would bless all our lives. I often felt the quiet effects throughout our home. As we prepare to attend the temple, we are happier and our family has a different feeling—a more reverent attitude that can be felt in our home. ■

The author lives in New York, USA.



Rebecca and Eric Mueller at the Palmyra New York Temple

TAKE YOUR FAMILY TO THE TEMPLE

As the number of temples around the world increases and family history work accelerates, attending the temple as a family is becoming easier.

"Temples have a family-priority time enabling families to schedule a time to perform ordinances together without a long wait" ("Changes to Family History and Temple Service," *Ensign*, May 2016, 144).

Consider scheduling some time for your family to serve your ancestors in the temple ([lds.org/church/temples/find-a-temple](https://www.lds.org/church/temples/find-a-temple)).



Go to [lds.org/church/temples/find-a-temple](https://www.lds.org/church/temples/find-a-temple).



Find your local temple.

NAME ▲	LOCATION
Logan Utah	United States, Logan, Utah
London England	United Kingdom, Newchapel, Surrey
Los Angeles California	United States, Los Angeles, California



Schedule some time to take your family to the temple.



THE TEMPLE PROVIDES REST FOR OUR SOULS

"As I think of temples, my thoughts turn to the many blessings we receive therein. As we enter through the doors of the temple, we leave behind us the distractions and confusion of the world. Inside this sacred sanctuary, we find beauty and order. There is rest for our souls and a respite from the cares of our lives."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Blessings of the Temple," *Ensign*, May 2015, 91.





PORTRAITS OF FAITH

In 1989, Markus, Karen, and their three-year-old son were granted permission to leave their home in East Germany to go on a holiday to Hungary. While they were there, Hungary opened its border to Austria, providing thousands of East German refugees a way to freedom. Markus and Karen recognized their unique opportunity. They could also leave.

LESLIE NILSSON, PHOTOGRAPHER

Markus Tilgner

Saxony Anhalt, Germany

I said, "Let's leave for Austria."

"Oh no, you can't," Karen said. "Your parents are left in Germany and my parents as well."

"They will understand," I replied.

"We've already started to build a house," Karen told me. "Let's finish that."

"No, let's start again," I said, "somewhere else, in western Germany."

Again I tried to tell her we should leave. She said, "No, because you have just been called as bishop and you said yes, you would serve."

This is why we did not leave Germany. Some weeks later the Berlin Wall was falling. We were blessed for staying. This was Heavenly Father's way for us.

For more photos of the Tilgners, go to lds.org/go/PortraitsE317.

Learn more about the blessings of religious freedom and how to protect them at religiousfreedom.lds.org.

VISITING TEACHING, FAMILY HISTORY, AND MOTHERS

I joined the Church when I was 20. Shortly thereafter I married a man from the ward, and we moved because of work. When I was 22, our first son was born. At that time, my visiting teachers started visiting me regularly, even though we lived at the edge of the ward boundary.

Since I was a new mother at that time, my conscience told me that I needed to get in contact with my own mother. But I had broken off all contact with her eight years earlier

when my parents divorced. Each time my visiting teachers came over, we spoke about it, and I felt that the Spirit was urging me to take this difficult step.

We discussed how I could begin rebuilding our relationship since my mother does not belong to the Church. So much had changed in my life in the eight years that had passed since our falling out. Because of the strong promptings of the Spirit, I decided to contact my mother's mother first. My grandmother was blind, so her mail was sent to my aunt who cared for her.

I received a wonderful letter back, and we went to stay for a visit with my grandmother and my aunt. My grandmother was pleasantly surprised

and asked only that I stop by to see her daughter—my mother—on our way home. She was very happy.

My grandmother was a Lutheran, and she loved the Savior. While we stayed with them, my husband would read to her each morning from the Book of Mormon. She really enjoyed it. After a few mornings, my husband and my grandmother felt so full of the Spirit that my grandmother went to her desk and pulled out a genealogy book that had belonged to my deceased grandfather and showed it to him. There were eight generations listed neatly, including even their occupations. My grandmother was very happy while we were staying with her, and I promised her that I would visit my mother on the way home, which I did.

Five weeks after our visit to my grandmother's, she had a stroke and passed away. Two years later I performed the temple work for my ancestors from my grandmother's information.

I now have a good relationship with my mother. We live in the same town, and she helps me with my children at times.

Without the regular visits from my visiting teachers, who encouraged and supported me through this time, I would never have dared take this step to repair my relationship with my mother. Not only I but also many generations were blessed. ■

Heike Baake, Frankfurt, Germany



I felt the Spirit urging me to take this difficult step.

MY VISITING TEACHERS FOUND ME

When I was a young mother with a two-year-old son, I lived for a short time in Santa Catarina, Brazil, and knew very few members of the Church there. I lived in a growing but remote neighborhood, so there weren't many neighbors close to my house.

One day I began to feel ill and quickly became dehydrated. Soon I couldn't even get up to take care of my son or go to the nearest telephone on the street to call my husband. I began to pray, but with each attempt to get up, I felt weaker.

It wasn't long before my visiting teachers knocked at my door. They recognized immediately that they had been guided by Heavenly Father to find me. They prepared a remedy for me, helped me with my son, and washed the dishes. Then they told me that they had walked for quite a while to find my house and had thought about giving up, but the Spirit had told them not to.

By the time they left, I was already feeling better. Before they left, we said a prayer together.

They probably don't know how much they helped me and nurtured me spiritually with their example of kindness and promptness in listening to and heeding the voice of the Spirit. ■

Enilze do Rocio Ferreira da Silva,
Curitiba, Brazil



It wasn't long before my visiting teachers knocked at my door. They recognized immediately that they had been guided by Heavenly Father to find me.

THE STRANGER'S SMILE

I normally would have avoided him—a worn-down man playing a game of cards at a table in the play area of a local fast-food restaurant. He had a soft smile on his sad countenance as he watched the children play. “He must be warming himself from the cold,” I thought as I passed his table to throw away my daughter’s half-eaten meal. As I noticed his table, bare of any food wrappers or paper cups, the still, small voice whispered to me, “Buy him some food.”

I returned to my table with some cash still in my pocket. “I’ll embarrass him,” I told myself. Then a feeling of peace came, and the Spirit’s sweet whispering stilled me: “Buy him some food.”

I didn’t tell my children what I was doing; I just picked up some trash and went to throw it away so I could get near the man’s table without letting my friend who I was eating with know.

I leaned in and asked, “Can I buy you some lunch?”

He looked startled and softly replied, “If you want to.”

I pulled out the small amount of cash I had left—just enough for a meal and a drink—and gave it to the man. I returned to my seat, undiscovered by the busy moms around me, and watched the man get up to buy his meal.

As I loaded my children into the car to go home, I looked through the window and saw the man carrying a tray of food back to his empty table. On his once-solemn face was a smile.

The winter breeze blowing against my face didn’t feel quite so cold. I basked in the warm, joyful Spirit that filled me from my boots to my frozen ponytail. I remembered the teaching of the Savior:

“For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink . . .

“Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? . . .

“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:35, 37, 40).

I am thankful for the smile of a stranger that helped me find the courage to do what is right. ■

Jenner Porter, Texas, USA



HELPING MIRTA RETURN

I was called to serve as a counselor in the Relief Society in my family's new ward. During our presidency meetings, we would go over a list of names of Relief Society sisters in our ward and consider how to help them and their families.

I was drawn to a sister in the ward named Mirta. She had been a member of the Church for many years, but for some reason, Mirta had not been attending for several years.

I noticed that her husband was the elders quorum president but that their children, who were members, did not attend church either. Each Sunday I would see her husband attend alone.

I felt that we needed to help this

family return to church together and enjoy the blessings that the Lord wanted to give them. During the following presidency meetings, I shared my hopes of helping Mirta return to church. We planned activities in which we could include her in a special way, and we identified a few assignments we could give her.

When we visited her, she accepted each one of the assignments and afterward fulfilled them perfectly. We noted that she would eagerly wait to be picked up by one of us for Relief Society activities.

When we organized the visiting teaching companionships as a presidency, I asked the others to consider

the possibility of Mirta and I becoming companions. Each month, without fail, Mirta and I would go visiting teaching. Every time we went out to visit the sisters was an opportunity to talk and get to know each other more.

Each time I invited her to attend church, she would merely say, "When I feel like I'm ready, I'll go." I didn't understand, but I respected her decision. Eventually her answers became, "Maybe I'll go on Sunday."

I would wait for her anxiously every Sunday. She never came, but I continued to keep her in my prayers. A sudden move caused my family to return to where we had previously lived, and I didn't have a chance to say good-bye to Mirta. When we left the ward, she still had not returned to church.

Some months later I was told that Mirta had returned to church and was a counselor in the Relief Society.

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) taught, "You may never know how much good you accomplish. Someone's life will be blessed by your effort" ("To the Women of the Church," *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 115).

Many times the results are not what one expects and don't come when anticipated. Let us not cease to labor; this is the Lord's work, and we are His instruments chosen to change the lives of many people. ■

Raquel Elizabeth Pedraza de Brosio,
Buenos Aires, Argentina

The Spirit's sweet
whispering stilled me:
"Buy him some food."



**By President
David O. McKay
(1873–1970)**

Ninth President of
the Church

A LESSON FROM DANDY

*Like some young people, my horse
Dandy resented restraint.*



I once owned and had great pleasure in training [a well-bred colt named Dandy]. He had a good disposition, a clean, well-rounded eye, was well proportioned, and all in all, a choice [animal]. Under the saddle he was as willing, responsive, and cooperative as a horse could be. He and my dog Scotty were real companions. I liked the way he would go up to something of which he was afraid. He had confidence that if he would do as I bade him, he would not be injured.

But Dandy resented restraint. He was ill-contented when tied and would nibble at the tie rope until he was free. He would not run away; he just wanted to be free. Thinking other horses felt the same, he would proceed to untie their ropes. He hated to be confined in the pasture, and if he could find a place in the fence where there was only smooth wire,

he would paw the wire carefully with his feet until he could step over to freedom. More than once my neighbors were kind enough to put him back in the field. He learned even to push open the gate. Though [he often did damage that was] provoking and sometimes expensive, I admired his intelligence and ingenuity.

But his curiosity and desire to explore the neighborhood led him and me into trouble. Once on the highway he was hit by an automobile, resulting in a demolished machine, injury to the horse, and slight, though not serious, injury to the driver.

Recovering from that, and still impelled with a feeling of wanderlust, he inspected the fence throughout the entire boundary. He found even the gates wired. So for a while we thought we had Dandy secure in the pasture.

One day, however, somebody left the gate unwired. Detecting this, Dandy unlatched it, took [another horse] with him, and together they visited the neighbor's field. They went to an old house used for storage. Dandy's curiosity prompted him to push open the door. Just as he had surmised, there was a sack of grain. What a find! Yes, and what a tragedy! The grain was poison bait for rodents! In a few minutes Dandy and his companion were in spasmodic pain, and shortly both were dead.

How like Dandy are many of our youth! They are not bad; they do not even intend to do wrong; but they are impulsive, full of life, full of curiosity, and they long to do something. They too are [restless] under restraint, but if they are kept busy, guided carefully and rightly, they prove to be responsive and capable; if left to wander unguided, they all too frequently violate principles of right, which often leads to snares of evil, disaster, and even death. ■

From Conference Report, Oct. 1968, 87; punctuation and capitalization modernized.



THE RAISING OF THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS,
BY JEREMY WINBORG

"He . . . took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise" (Luke 8:54).



In Church Magazines

Ensign: How do we stand firm in the gospel and teach others the truth without causing contention and anger? See “Be an Example of the Believers” (page 18). Plus, learn about the differences between normal anxiety and anxiety disorders, including ways to give appropriate support and help (see page 54).

New Era: This month, Elder Robert D. Hales teaches youth about principles of choosing right from wrong (page 2). Also, youth learn how to overcome fear of repentance and motivate themselves to repent (pages 24–33). And they discover a little about the how and why of honoring their parents (pages 20–23).

Friend: Do your kids understand that repentance can be a joyful process? Use the message on page 18 to talk about how repentance can give us a fresh start every day! With the Savior’s help, we can keep moving forward (see page 12).

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

