

Ensign

A photograph of a woman and a young girl playing in a backyard. The woman, wearing a dark blue patterned jacket, is kneeling on the grass. The girl, wearing a yellow cardigan and leopard print leggings, is holding a blue and orange water hose and spraying water towards the woman. They are both smiling and laughing. The background shows a wooden fence and a house.

**How to Establish a
Shared Vision That
Will Lift Your Family,
p. 54**

**Seeing through Satan's
Strategy of Making Evil Look
Good, p. 30**

Paintings of the Savior, p. 40



GOD IS NOT SILENT!
HE LOVES HIS CHILDREN.
**HE HAS NOT LEFT
US TO WANDER IN
DARKNESS.**

PRESIDENT DIETER F. UCHTDORF

From the First Presidency Message, page 4.



4

MESSAGES

FIRST PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

4 **The Word of God to His Children**
By President Dieter F. Uchtdorf

VISITING TEACHING PRINCIPLES

7 **Pray for Each Sister by Name**

YOUNG ADULT FEATURES

18 **Planting Gospel Seeds in My Mother's Heart**
By Sonia Padilla-Romero
I thought I had used every missionary tactic to teach my mother the gospel, but one thing finally touched her heart.

20 **Unendowed but Not Unimportant**
By Jacqueline N. Smith
Learn how to make your time in the temple meaningful as you prepare for the day when you receive your own endowment.

24 **Capturing a Vision in the Temple**
By Heather J. Johnson
I wanted to help my friend come back to church; in the temple I learned that God desired that for my friend and much more.

26 **From Coast to Coast: Our Journey to the Temple**

By Efraín Rodríguez
Through political turmoil and across thousands of miles, we saw God's hand opening all the doors necessary for us to make it to the temple.

FEATURES

30 **When Evil Appears Good and Good Appears Evil**
By Elder Quentin L. Cook
One of the adversary's most effective weapons of deception is to create a paradigm shift that mischaracterizes the blessings of living the gospel.

38 **My Moment in the Garden Tomb**
By Claudia Waite Richards
A visit to the Savior's burial place heightened my gratitude for gospel blessings.

40 **He Lives! All Glory to His Name!**
Enjoy this engaging collection of paintings that depict moments from the Savior's ministry.



ON THE COVER
Photograph by Christina Smith



66



10

DEPARTMENTS

8 **October 2017 Conference Notebook**

10 **What We Believe: The Reason for Our Hope**

12 **Reflections: Sunrise**
By Don Jensen

14 **Serving in the Church: Where We Find Relief**
By Nettie H. Francis

16 **At the Pulpit: Visiting Teachers Are God's Emissaries**
By Alice C. Smith

70 **Turning Hearts: Sharing Your Family History**
By Douglas Parks

72 **Friend Connection: Coping with Grief**

73 **New Era Connection**

74 **Portraits of Faith: Christian Karlsson—Buskerud, Norway**

76 **Latter-day Saint Voices**

80 **Until We Meet Again: He Will Make Our Burdens Light**
By Elder Robert D. Hales

46 **Israel's Exodus and Deliverance—Then and Now**
By Kerry Muhlestein
The Israelites' 40 years of wandering provide lessons for our own spiritual development.

52 **Journey through the Ancient Tabernacle**
The symbolism in the tabernacle can teach us about our journey back to God's presence.

54 **Family: The Fountain of Happiness**
By Elder Erich W. Kopischke
We can build a vision for our families and achieve lasting happiness.

60 **I Still Have Something to Give**
By Jual Daniels
I realized that as an elderly woman I still have a lot to offer to others and to the Lord.

62 **Saints: The Story of the Church—Chapter 2: Hear Him**
"It was on the morning of a beautiful, clear day, early in the spring . . ."

66 **When 1 Family + 1 Family = 1 Family**
By Brenda Thompson Engeler
Focusing on three key principles helped us merge two families into one.



62

SUBMISSIONS

To submit a manuscript or your comments, go to ensign.lds.org and click "Submit an Article or Feedback."

Ensign

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More Online



KEEPING CONFERENCE WITH US

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf shares ideas for preparing to receive answers during general conference (see page 4). Here are five ways we can keep conference part of our lives long after the sessions end: [lds.org/go/conferenceE318](https://www.lds.org/go/conferenceE318).

THINGS AS THEY REALLY ARE

Elder Quentin L. Cook reminds us that Satan works hard to make evil appear good and good evil, especially when it comes to truths about our families (see page 30). Ponder some related scriptures at [lds.org/go/scripturesE318](https://www.lds.org/go/scripturesE318), and find a family home evening lesson on discerning right from wrong at [lds.org/go/lessonE318](https://www.lds.org/go/lessonE318).



THE BLESSINGS OF SERVICE

Sometimes we're in a position to serve those around us; other times we may be in need of such service ourselves. Either way, blessings come to us—that's the wonder of service. See page 14 for one sister's experience with these blessings. Read another sister's story at [lds.org/go/serviceE318](https://www.lds.org/go/serviceE318).

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**By President
Dieter F. Uchtdorf**

Second Counselor in
the First Presidency

THE WORD OF GOD TO HIS CHILDREN

The scriptures tell us that the first thing God did after creating man and woman was speak to them.¹ He had vital information and precious instructions to give them. His purpose was not to burden or worry them but to guide them to happiness and eternal glory.

And that was just the beginning. From that day to this, God has continued to communicate with His children. His words have been preserved, treasured, and studied by disciples of every generation. They are revered by those who seek to know the will of God, and they bear witness to the truth that “the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.”²

This has been the pattern since the beginning of time, and the pattern continues today. It is not just a nice Bible story; it is God’s established way of communicating essential messages to His children. He raises up individuals from our midst, calls them to be prophets, and gives them words to say, which we are invited to “receive, as if from [His] own mouth.”³ He has declared, “Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.”⁴

This is one of the most glorious, encouraging, and hopeful messages of the Restoration—God is not silent! He loves His children. He has not left us to wander in darkness.

Twice each year, in April and October, we have the opportunity to hear the voice of the Lord through His servants in our wonderful general conferences.

I give you my personal witness that long before a speaker in general conference makes that long walk to the podium, he or she has invested immense effort, prayer, and study in response to the assignment to speak. Every conference message represents countless hours of preparation and heartfelt pleading to understand what the Lord wishes His Saints to hear.

What might happen if we as listeners matched the speakers’ preparation with our own? How might our approach to general conference be different if we saw conference as an opportunity to receive messages from the Lord Himself? Through the words and music of general conference, we can expect to receive personalized answers to whatever questions or problems we might be facing.

If you ever wonder whether Heavenly Father will truly speak to you, I would remind you of the simple yet profound words that our Primary children sing: “[You are] a child of God, and he has sent [you] here.” His purpose is to help you return “to live with him someday.”

If you approach Heavenly Father as His child, you can ask Him with a sincere heart, “Lead me, guide me, walk



beside me, help me find the way. Teach me all that I must do.” He will speak to you through His Holy Spirit, and it is then up to you “to do his will.” I promise that if you do, “rich blessings are in store.”⁵

The Lord’s guidance is needed today as much as it ever has been in the world’s history. As we prepare to hear the word of the Lord, may we diligently seek the Spirit of truth so that when the Lord speaks through His servants, we can understand, become edified, and rejoice together.⁶

I testify that “by doing these things the gates of hell shall not prevail against [us]; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before [us], and cause the heavens to shake for [our] good, and his name’s glory.”⁷ ■

NOTES

1. See Genesis 1:28.
2. Amos 3:7.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 21:5.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 1:38.
5. “I Am a Child of God,” *Hymns*, no. 301; *Children’s Songbook*, 2–3.
6. See Doctrine and Covenants 50:21–22.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 21:6.

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

During general conference we can receive personalized answers to our questions and problems as we listen to God’s appointed servants. Consider discussing the following with those you teach: How can you prepare to receive such answers during general conference? President Uchtdorf encourages us to “diligently seek the Spirit of truth.” What do you think that means, and how can you incorporate this into your preparation? In addition to the blessings mentioned in Doctrine and Covenants 21:6, what other blessings come as you prepare to hear the words of the Lord through His servants? You could invite those you teach to write in a journal what the Spirit teaches them in this general conference.

This message was prepared before the First Presidency was reorganized.

Preparing to Hear God’s Voice



President Uchtdorf explains how the first thing God did after creating man and woman was speak to them and give them precious information and instructions. We get that same blessing in April and October during general conference, when Church leaders address us and give us counsel that the Lord wants us to hear.

Have you ever heard God’s voice through His servants during general conference? Have you ever felt like one specific message gave you an

answer you’d been searching for? In a journal, you could write down that experience and how it helped you. Then prepare to hear the Lord’s voice this upcoming conference by writing down questions you have and studying them during your scripture study. Pray to Heavenly Father, asking to receive answers and insights during conference. As you listen to the servants of the Lord, focus on individual promptings. What have you learned? How did you feel inspired to change? Write

down those promptings because that’s the Spirit speaking to you!

Always remember that Heavenly Father loves you and will guide you in the right direction. As you strive to hear His voice through His servants, you will be blessed and edified.

CHILDREN

Get Ready for Conference!

Use this card to prepare for general conference. Keep the card with you during conference so you can write down what you learn.



- **Write down your questions.**
I am wondering about . . .

- **Pray to Heavenly Father.**
I would like help learning about . . .

- **Listen to general conference.**
I learned . . .



Faith, Family, Relief

Pray for Each Sister by Name

Our love for and inspiration concerning those we visit will increase when we humbly pray for each sister by name.

One sister related that during a difficult period in her life, a phone call or simple text message often came from her visiting teachers on “particularly dark days.” They seemed to know just when she needed a lift. She knew that they prayed for her, both during their visits and on their own.

The scriptures share many examples of men and women who prayed for others by name. Among the most dramatic is the father of Alma the Younger. An angel spoke to Alma the Younger, telling him that his father “ha[d] prayed with much faith concerning thee . . . ; therefore, for this purpose have I come to convince thee of the power and authority of God, that the prayers of his servants might be answered according to their faith” (Mosiah 27:14).

Praying for others not only invokes Heavenly Father’s

blessings upon them but also helps us know how we can bless them too. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, “Praying for others with all of the energy of our souls increases our capacity to hear and to heed the voice of the Lord.”¹

“Think of our combined strength if every sister had sincere prayer every morning and night or, better yet, prayed unceasingly as the Lord has commanded,” said Julie B. Beck, former General Relief Society President.² Praying for those we visit strengthens us as individuals and as Latter-day Saint women.

President Henry B. Eyring, then First Counselor in the First Presidency, said: “Pray for the

way to know their hearts. . . . You will need to know what God would have you do to help them and to do it all, as nearly as you can, feeling God’s love for them.”³

NOTES

1. David A. Bednar, “Pray Always,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 43.
2. Julie B. Beck, “What Latter-day Saint Women Do Best: Stand Strong and Immovable,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 110.
3. Henry B. Eyring, “Priesthood and Personal Prayer,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 85.



Consider This

What recent inspiration and ideas have come to you as you have prayed for the individual sisters you visit?

Ministering

Rather than provide a specific message, this page will feature a different principle each month to help us minister more effectively to each other. As you pray and seek inspiration, you will know the spiritual message and service each sister needs.

OCTOBER 2017 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 2017 general conference, you can use these pages (and Conference Notebooks in past and future issues) to help you study and apply the recent teachings of the living prophets and apostles and other Church leaders.



DOCTRINAL HIGHLIGHT

Sacred Time and Space

The Sabbath day and the temple, respectively, are a *sacred time* and a *sacred space* specifically set apart for worshipping God and for receiving and remembering His exceeding great and precious promises to His children. As instituted by God, the principle purposes of these two divine sources of help are exactly the same: to powerfully and repeatedly focus our attention upon our Heavenly Father, His Only Begotten Son, the Holy Ghost, and the promises associated with the ordinances and covenants of the Savior’s restored gospel.

“Importantly, a home should be the ultimate combination of time and space wherein individuals and families remember most effectively God’s great and precious promises.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Exceeding Great and Precious Promises,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2017, 92–93.



OUR DIVINE WORTH

“The Spirit will confirm to each of us individually our divine worth. . . .

“Let me point out the need to differentiate between two critical words: *worth* and *worthiness*. They are not the same. Spiritual *worth* means to value ourselves the way Heavenly Father values us, not as the world values us. Our worth was determined before we ever came to this earth. . . .

“On the other hand, *worthiness* is achieved through obedience. If we sin, we are less worthy, but we are never worth less! We continue to repent and strive to be like Jesus with our worth intact. . . . No matter what, we always have worth in the eyes of our Heavenly Father. . . .

“. . . If the love we feel for the Savior and what He did for us is greater than the energy we give to weaknesses, self-doubts, or bad habits, then He will help us overcome the things which cause suffering in our lives. He saves us from ourselves.”

Joy D. Jones, Primary General President, “Value beyond Measure,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2017, 14, 15.

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

PROPHETIC PROMISE



REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE

"Remember that you are of the royal house of the kingdom of God, [sons and] daughters of Heavenly Parents, who reign throughout the universe.

"You have the spiritual DNA of God. You have unique gifts that originated in your spiritual creation and that were developed during the vast span of your premortal life. You are the child of our merciful and everlasting Father in Heaven, the Lord of Hosts, the One who created the universe, spread the spinning stars across the vast expanse of space, and placed the planets in their appointed orbits.

"You are in His hands.

"Very good hands.

"Loving hands.

"Caring hands.

"And nothing anyone ever says about you can change that. Their words are meaningless compared to what God has said about you.

"You are His precious child.

"He loves you.

"Even when you stumble, even when you turn away from Him, God loves you. If you are feeling lost, abandoned, or forgotten—fear not. The Good Shepherd will find you. He will lift you upon His shoulders. And He will carry you home."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "Three Sisters," *Ensign*, Nov. 2017, 17.



SISTERS, TURN ON YOUR LIGHT

"When you keep [God's] commandments, He can use you in His work. His work and glory is the exaltation and eternal life of women and men.

"The prophets are calling on us, my sisters. Will you be righteous? Will you articulate your faith? Can you bear being distinct and different? Will your happiness in spite of your trials draw others who are good and noble and who need your friendship? Will you turn on your light? I testify the Lord Jesus Christ will go before us and be in our midst."

Sharon Eubank, First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, "Turn On Your Light," *Ensign*, Nov. 2017, 9.

FILL IN THE BLANK

Use the November 2017 issue or visit conference.lds.org to read more of what these speakers said.

1. "Heavenly Father will help us love even those we may think are unlovable, if we ____ for His aid." —Neill F. Marriott, "Abiding in God and Repairing the Breach."
2. "Many of us are on amazing journeys of _____. . . . Please ask yourself: What is your final destination? . . . Is your journey leading you to that 'multiplicity of blessings' the Savior has promised?" —M. Russell Ballard, "The Trek Continues!"
3. "The Book of Mormon is one of God's priceless gifts to us. It is both sword and shield—it sends the word of God into battle to fight for the hearts of the just and serves as an arch ____ of the truth." —Tad R. Callister, "God's Compelling Witness: The Book of Mormon."

Answers: 1. plea; 2. discovery; 3. defender

THE REASON FOR OUR HOPE

Heavenly Father has an eternal plan to bring you home to Him. His Son, Jesus Christ, has been with you and will continue to be with you each step of the way.



LIFE BEFORE BIRTH

In our premortal life, Heavenly Father presented to all of His spirit children His plan for helping us become like Him. The plan required a Savior to help us overcome physical and spiritual death. Jesus Christ offered to be our Savior and give our Heavenly Father the glory (see Moses 4:1–2).



CREATION

Under His Father's direction, Jesus Christ created a beautiful world for us (see Colossians 1:15–16; 3 Nephi 9:15). "The vast expanse of eternity, the glories and mysteries of infinite space and time are all built for the benefit of ordinary mortals like you and me" (Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "You Matter to Him," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 20).



LIFE ON EARTH

On earth we are no longer in God's presence, but the gospel of Jesus Christ can guide us. Although we sin from time to time, the Savior can heal and forgive us when we repent. He suffered "even more than man can suffer" (Mosiah 3:7) so we could overcome our sins without being condemned by them! (See Mosiah 4:2; Alma 42:14–15.)



LIFE AFTER DEATH

At death, our spirits and bodies separate, awaiting the Resurrection in the spirit world. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ overcame death for all of us, allowing us, if we are faithful, to be reunited with our families and Heavenly Father. “The spirit and body shall be reunited again in its perfect form” (Alma 11:43) and live forever. (See 1 Corinthians 15:22; 2 Nephi 9:4–13.)



JUDGMENT DAY

Jesus Christ will be our judge. He who has been our advocate with Heavenly Father will deliver a perfect, loving, merciful, and just judgment. He will judge us not only for what we did, said, and thought but also for who we became—how Christlike we are. (See 2 Nephi 9:15; Mosiah 4:30; D&C 45:3–5.)



ETERNAL LIFE

Those who come unto Christ and receive all necessary ordinances, such as baptism and temple ordinances, and are faithful to the commandments will inherit eternal life in God’s presence. This blessing comes “through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah” (2 Nephi 2:8; see also Mosiah 15:23).

SUNRISE

By Don Jensen

This life is not the end; there is much beauty and happiness and joy to come.

The winter morning was clear and cold in the predawn hours as I began the morning chores on my dairy farm. My mind was heavy as I reflected on the events of the past week. Tragedy had struck our small valley. An old high school friend of mine, along with his young son, his teenage daughter, and three of her friends, had been killed in a terrible car crash. My children had been friends with the girls in the accident. Our family, and many others, had spent the week grieving this tragedy along with the families involved. We had attended three funerals already that week and would be attending the

final funeral, for the father and his two children, today.

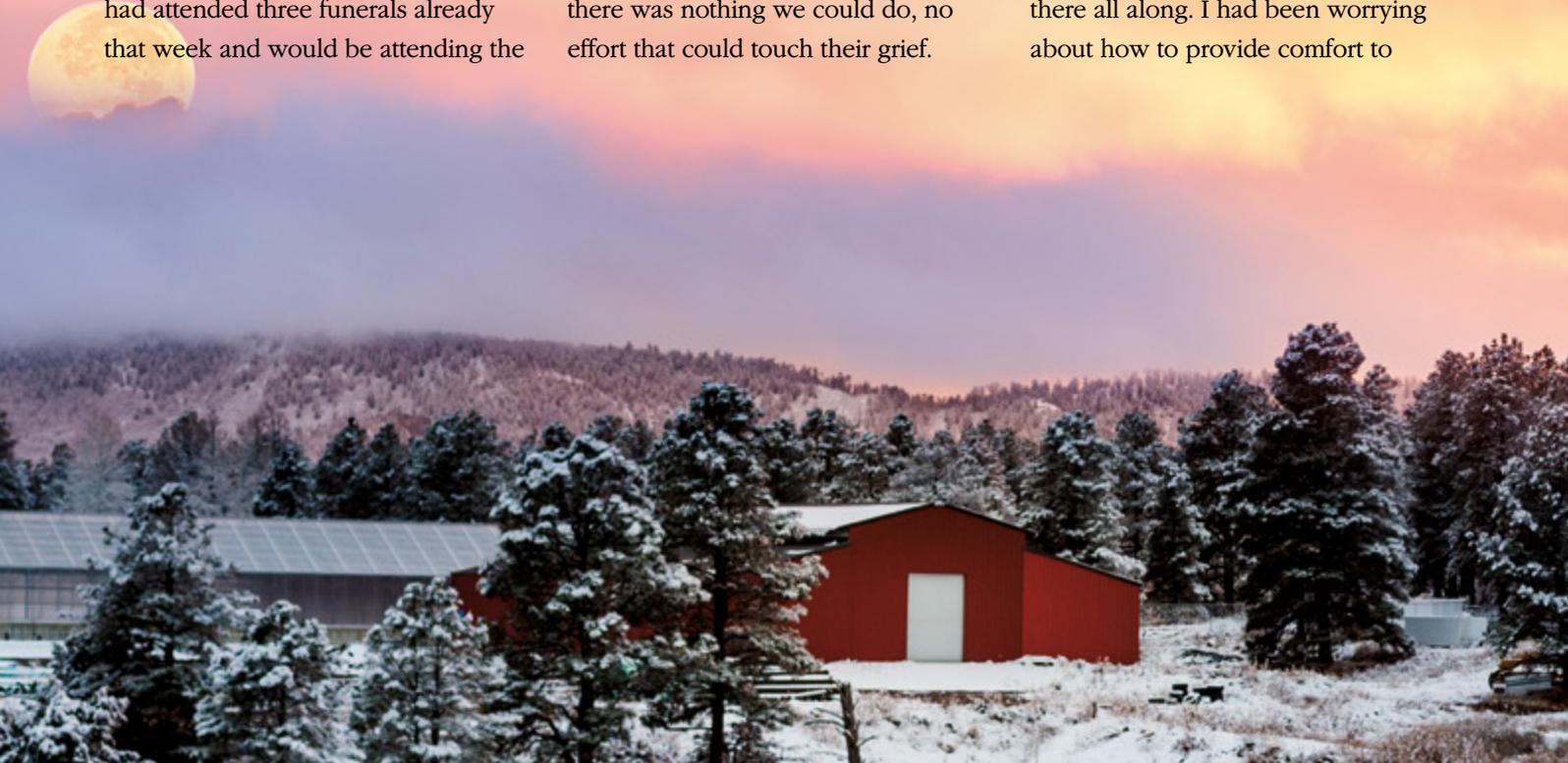
I was struggling with two main questions as I came to terms with what had happened.

First, I grieved for and wondered why these young children would be taken before they got to experience so much that life has to offer. They would not grow up, marry, serve missions, have children, and experience so many other joys of mortal life.

Secondly, although I felt that we as a community wanted so much to offer comfort to the families, it seemed that there was nothing we could do, no effort that could touch their grief.

As I worked, I was surprised by a visit from the father-in-law of my friend who had died. As a fellow rancher, where the work never stops, he needed to buy a calf immediately. After the transaction was made, we talked for a while about how he and his family were doing. I voiced to him my wish that I could do something more for them. I felt so helpless to ease their pain. But I was impressed at how calm and peaceful he seemed in spite of what his family was going through.

Suddenly I realized that the answer to one of my questions had been there all along. I had been worrying about how to provide comfort to



my grieving friends, forgetting that true comfort and peace comes from the Holy Ghost. These families were blessed with an added measure of that comfort from Heavenly Father that only He can provide. I knew that they were receiving the Lord's comfort, spoken of in the Book of Mormon:

“He will console you in your afflictions, and he will plead your cause. . . .

“O all ye that are pure in heart, lift up your heads and receive the pleasing word of God, and feast upon his love; for ye may, if your minds are firm, forever” (Jacob 3:1–2).

After we said goodbye, I stepped out of the barn and noticed the full

moon setting in the western sky. It was a beautiful sight. Then I turned around and saw the sun rising in the east. It was as if the whole sky was alive with color. The setting moon had been lovely; the rising sun was breathtaking. As I paused to think about this contrast, it came to me that no matter how beautiful and happy we think our mortal lives are, they pale in comparison to the beauty and happiness that lies ahead if we are faithful and obedient. I realized that those who had died had not really lost anything. They had been valiant in their life on earth and would be going on to greater experiences and joys.

Later that day, I attended the final funeral with my family. We met that day in an overflowing tabernacle, literally bursting at the seams with the support of an entire community. That day and for some time after, the people of our valley experienced a special peace. Parents held their children a bit closer, and we realized that our earth lives are short and we must express our love to family and friends more often. I was reminded of the Lord's love for us and the beauty of the plan of salvation. This life is not the end; there is much beauty and happiness and joy to come. ■

The author lives in Idaho, USA.

WHERE WE FIND RELIEF

By Nettie H. Francis

Relief Society is a place where sisters of all situations can and should find relief as they care for, serve, and love one another.

When my family and I lived in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, I served for a time as ward Relief Society president. I thrived on the wonderful associations I had with the good sisters in our ward. I loved planning uplifting activities, conducting Relief Society, attending meetings with ward leaders, and serving families.

I spent a significant amount of time going into homes to visit with sisters. I also ministered to mothers who were exhausted, sick, or simply overwhelmed—sisters who needed comfort, both spiritual and physical. I felt fulfilled and needed outside of my responsibilities as a young mother of six children.

Then my life suddenly changed.

My husband accepted a job promotion in another state. Within a month we packed up and left our home in sunny Las Vegas for a small rental house in cold Casper, Wyoming. The

same week that we moved, I found out I was pregnant—with twins!

The night we arrived at our rental home, I became violently ill. I remember lying in bed hardly able to move while I watched my husband manage our children and unload our moving van. That was the beginning of the worst physical challenge of my life. For the next four months, I couldn't keep a meal down and barely had enough energy to serve my family, care for our children, and—sometimes—make meals.

As my husband adjusted to his new job, I adjusted to our new town and enrolled four of our children in school. Our tiny rental home was cramped, and for several weeks we lived out of boxes. I would send our school children out the door every morning and then spend the day on the couch while my two toddlers played nearby.



One morning after the children had left for school, the doorbell rang. One of my toddlers opened the door, and there stood a sister from our new ward's Relief Society presidency. She was holding a basket of items and had her own daughter with her. She had come to welcome me to the ward.

I was mortified.

There I was, still in my pajamas, lying on the couch with a bucket beside me. My two partially dressed toddlers were playing on the cluttered floor amidst boxes that still needed to be unpacked.



BE THERE FOR EACH OTHER

“To be sisters implies that there is an unbreakable bond

between us. Sisters take care of each other, watch out for each other, comfort each other, and are there for each other through thick and thin.”

Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women General President, “Sisterhood: Oh, How We Need Each Other,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 119.

family. My difficult pregnancy ended with the birth of two beautiful children. And the kind Relief Society sister became my close friend and continues to strengthen and uplift me with her testimony and example. I often reflect on the difficult morning of her first visit and feel grateful that she fulfilled her calling.

I testify that we are “all beggars” before God (see Mosiah 4:19). Our circumstances may change at any moment, bringing us to a new realization of how much we depend upon our Father—and upon those who serve us for Him. I know now more than ever that Relief Society is a place where sisters of all situations can and should find relief as they care for, serve, and love one another. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

This wonderful sister came in and set her basket down on a corner of the table. Then she sat in our cluttered living room and visited with me—asking all about me and our family.

As we talked, I felt humbled. Just a month earlier, I had been in her position, visiting people and offering aid. Now the tables had turned. I was flat on my back in a messy house in desperate need of relief. I was lonely, overwhelmed, and dealing with a situation larger than my abilities. I was one of those sisters who needed help. The Lord had quickly and successfully

reminded me that I needed Him and the help offered through His servants.

After she left, the sight of her welcome basket on my table gave me relief and light. During the next few weeks, I savored the contents of the basket and was grateful for our budding friendship as she visited again and again, offering help and support during those difficult months. I gained a new appreciation for the hope and relief that one sister can bring to another.

A few months later we bought a home big enough for our growing



**ABOUT
SISTER SMITH**

Alice Colton Smith (1913–2006) graduated from Columbia University in 1934. She

and her husband, Whitney, relocated to Logan, Utah, USA, in 1946 to attend Utah State University, where Alice earned a master's degree in sociology and subsequently joined the faculty. As an assistant professor, she taught until the mid-1970s, when she resigned so she could focus more on her service with the Relief Society general board. Sister Smith was called to serve on the Relief Society general board in 1964, serving for 14 years. She brought a cosmopolitan and scholarly perspective to the board.

From 1960 to 1963, the Smiths lived in Vienna, Austria, where they had been called to establish the first Latter-day Saint mission headquartered in Austria.

Alice Smith gave this talk in the October 1969 officers' session of Relief Society general conference. Punctuation and capitalization have been standardized.

VISITING TEACHERS ARE GOD'S EMISSARIES

By Alice C. Smith

This new series highlights the lives of devoted women and their messages, excerpted from the book *At the Pulpit: 185 Years of Discourses by Latter-day Saint Women* (2017). Selected chapters are available at churchhistorianspress.org/at-the-pulpit.

As Jesus climbed the dry hills of Galilee or trod the dusty roads of Judea, he met poverty, disease, afflictions of every kind. He found the sinner repentant and unrepentant. He met the suffering. And out of these experiences and His vast understanding came His compassionate solicitation, “Come unto me.”

In 1830, the Prophet Joseph Smith declared that God is “the same unchangeable God” [D&C 20:17]. So, it is no surprise that on July 28, 1843, 16 women were appointed “to search out the poor and suffering . . . to relieve the wants of all.”¹ Sixteen in a world of millions. But there had to be a beginning. In 1843, 16 visiting teachers; today [1969], well over 100,000; tomorrow 200,000; the day after tomorrow two million.

A few weeks ago, I met a wonderful friend of mine. She has been active in Relief Society for many years. . . . I asked her what she was doing in the Church now. There was a noticeable pause. Then, she answered, “Oh, I’m just a visiting teacher.” Just a visiting teacher! After we parted, I thought,

how would she feel if the Savior . . . said to her, “I want you to be my emissary. I want you to tell the women [you visit teach] that I love them, that I am concerned about what happens to them and their families. I want you to be my helper, to watch over these sisters, to care for them so that all will be well in my kingdom.” If we met after such a meeting, wouldn’t her reply be different? Hasn’t He already called her through His priesthood as surely as if He stood in her presence?

How many of our visiting teachers think of themselves as “just visiting teachers”?

To the visiting teacher is given the great responsibility of searching out those in need. More, she tells all sisters by her visit that someone cares and that God cares.

. . . She should not be someone who rushes in the last day of the month and says, “I’ve just a few minutes—I know you’ve read the message and know it better than I do, and you don’t need it anyway. How are you, and I’ll see you at Relief Society next week.” The visiting

teacher should leave behind her a love that blesses both the visited sister and her home. . . .

. . . Each year as the Church grows, the need for visiting teachers will grow greater. . . . They will help combat the loneliness which plagues our world and impersonality of the big cities. They will look after the stranger, the widow, the orphan, the wounded, and distressed, after all sisters with concerned, loving care. . . . They will help

relieve physical, emotional, and mental suffering. They will aid the sinner and comfort the sorrowing. They will carry a message of gospel love to all our sisters throughout the world. . . .

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” [Matthew 11:28–30].

God bless the visiting teachers. For when all work together, the yoke is easy and the burden is light.

. . . May it ever be so, I pray.

Amen. ■

NOTE

1. Former Relief Society Handbook, p. 29. See *Handbook of the Relief Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (1931), 29.



PHOTOGRAPH OF SISTER SMITH COURTESY OF HER FAMILY, FRAME FROM GETTY IMAGES

Planting Gospel Seeds in My Mother's Heart

By Sonia Padilla-Romero

I joined the Church when I was 14 years old. My parents granted me permission to be baptized, but neither of them was interested in joining or even learning about the Church.

For more than 10 years, I yearned for my family to know the happiness I felt in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. I invited the missionaries and members to come over for dinner. My family was taught the missionary lessons multiple times, but nothing changed. During that decade, I attended church, received my endowment, and served a full-time mission without any family support.

When I returned home to Mexico following my mission at Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, I lived with my mother. (My parents had divorced while I was in high school.) I started working at the Mexico Missionary Training Center, so I cleverly invited her to come meet

the elders and sisters I was teaching. I subtly (and sometimes not so subtly) invited the missionaries serving in my ward to join my mother and me for dinner. I did everything I could to get her around missionaries, hoping that she might ask more about the gospel, but my efforts all seemed in vain.

I think she met every single set of missionaries I associated with during that three-year period, and still nothing happened.

In 2008, I moved to the United States to pursue a degree in nursing. Toward the end of the year, following extensive renovation, the Mexico City Mexico Temple held an open house. I urged my mother to go see what the temple was all about while she had this opportunity. After much prodding on my part, she agreed to make the 70-mile (113 km) drive to attend the open house.

When I spoke to her next, she gushed about what an amazing

I did everything I could think of to teach my mom about the Church, but a temple open house made all the difference.

experience she had had. She talked about how, in the celestial room, she felt something beautiful but indescribable. She told me that she had plans to return again. In fact, she was able to go many more times during the remaining weeks of the open house. She even attended the cultural celebration prior to the temple's rededication.*

IMAGE FROM GETTY IMAGES

The next time we talked on the phone, Mom told me she was going to invite the missionaries to teach her. Seemingly out of nowhere, she was asking questions and paying attention in ways that I had so long been hoping for. When I went home at Christmastime during my school break, I noticed that she was different. While she had always been kind and compassionate, there was a deep change in her—a conversion.

I returned to school amazed at what was taking place. A week later, Mom called and said, “Sonia, I just wanted to know when you’re coming back to Mexico, because I’m getting baptized.”

I was so excited, so happy! I flew home in February for her baptism. It was amazing to me to watch her attend church, to see her accept and serve in a calling, and to grow in the gospel. I knew that she knew it was true.

It was also powerful to hear her pray. I was especially touched to hear her pray for me and my safety just before I returned to the United States. There is nothing like a parent’s prayer for a child.

Why didn’t things happen sooner? I don’t know. Maybe my mother needed to have seeds planted in her life before she could accept the gospel. Maybe the temple touched her in a way and at a time that my earlier efforts couldn’t have. Seeing the Lord work in my mother’s life reminds me of times I have seen His hand in my

own life, and it gives me great hope for what He can unfold in the lives of my other family members.

My mother is now endowed, and every time we go to the temple together, I can tell she feels touched in the temple, just as she did when she attended the open house. I know that the Lord is aware of us and that He guides our lives. When I let Him lead my life, I end up in the right places. When I follow my own will, it takes longer and is generally harder. I prefer to let the Lord surprise me and show me what great things He has in store. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

* The Mexico City Mexico Temple was rededicated on November 16, 2008, by President Thomas S. Monson and, following a second renovation, was again rededicated on September 15, 2015, by President Henry B. Eyring.



THE BLESSINGS OF THE HOLY TEMPLE

“I invite you to make the blessings of the holy temple the beginning and the end of each missionary’s experience, including your own. By and through you, the temple will become a place of gathering for all those who join the fold of Christ.”

Bishop Gérald Caussé, Presiding Bishop, seminar for new mission presidents, June 27, 2015.



Unendowed but Not Unimportant

By Jacqueline N. Smith

Being baptized for those who died without being baptized for themselves is a new and exciting experience for a young woman or a young man. But for those of us in our early twenties, it's easy to wonder if there's a place for us in the temple. We don't fit in with the teenagers in the baptistry, but we aren't endowed like many of our peers who have served missions or gotten married.

In the Temple as a Teen

I was blessed to live near the Idaho Falls Idaho Temple. During my last year of high school, I noticed that one of my friends arrived at school every Thursday wearing church clothes, her hair dripping wet. When I asked her why, she said, "I do temple baptisms every Thursday morning before school. You should come with me!"

I spent the next several months

enjoying going to the temple regularly. It was wonderful. Over spring break that year, some friends and I took a road trip to Salt Lake City. We stayed in different cities along the way and visited the temple baptistry in each one. Among all the activities that weekend, our temple visits were the highlight.

The next fall, I found myself at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah . . . all alone. Most of my high school friends stayed in Idaho for college, then departed one by one on full-time missions while I stayed in school—feeling that a full-time mission was not the Lord's intention for me.

Young Adults and the Temple

One day I came to a startling realization: it had been over a year since I had been to the temple. But when I went back, everything was different. I

**I'm not endowed.
Is there still a
place for me in
the temple?**

was alone, though I was surrounded by teenagers. Even if my friends had been there, they were endowed. When they went to the temple, they would be going somewhere I could not yet go.

Looking around the temple baptistry, I wondered, "Is there still a place here for me?" I wasn't going on



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY KRISTIN ANNE JONES

a mission, I wasn't getting married, and I felt like it wasn't time for me to receive my own endowment yet. How could I still participate in the blessings of the temple?

Former Relief Society General President Julie B. Beck told young adults who are not yet endowed, "You can help keep temples busy. Temple and family history work is *your* work. Much depends on you!"¹

Therefore, young adults who are not yet endowed: if you want to serve in the temple, don't feel like the baptism is just for 12- to 18-year-olds. And I can testify that there is nothing wrong with going alone. Sometimes sitting in the baptism by myself has been more peaceful and spiritually enlightening than it was when I went with friends.

Making the Temple More Meaningful

The following ideas have helped me make my time in the baptism more meaningful as I prepare for the day when I receive my own endowment.

1. Go to Learn

Attend the temple with the intention to learn; choose a question or gospel topic to ponder during quiet moments. You can also prepare for your visit by learning more about the significance of temple work in God's plan for our happiness. The Church offers several helpful resources, including manuals,

scripture reference guides, and classes. For example, I attend a temple preparation class every Sunday in order to learn more about the temple's significance to the Church as a whole and to me personally.

2. Make the Work a Family Effort

Try incorporating family history into your temple experience. Take family names and do the temple work with your other family members. Learn about the lives of those ancestors whose names you take. Involve everyone, children and adults, in the process and use the time you spend together to strengthen your family relationships. President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) declared, "In my own family, some of our most sacred and treasured experiences have occurred when we have joined

together in the temple to perform sealing ordinances for our deceased ancestors."²

3. Make the Temple a Priority

Commit to making the temple a priority in your life and consider setting some personal goals. Your goals might include attending regularly, ensuring that you always have a current temple recommend, or researching family names to take to the temple. Or your goals might be to visit the grounds of the nearest temple while you work with your bishop to be ready to go inside. I have started consciously preparing to receive my own endowment, just to help me focus on how I must live my life in order to achieve my goal. Planning for that time, whenever it may be, makes the temple a regular part of my life.

4. Actively Appreciate the Blessings

Remember to look back to identify blessings you received, both before and after going to the temple. This intentional appreciation can cultivate an "attitude of gratitude" for the temple and for the individuals whose work you are doing, even if they aren't your own ancestors.

Furthermore, be aware that performing ordinances is not the only thing that allows us to receive temple blessings. President Russell M. Nelson said: "To each young adult I emphasize that the temple can bless you—even before you enter it.

DISCOVER MORE

- Read about one young adult's experience preparing for her endowment in "Saying Yes to the Temple," *Ensign*, Sept. 2014, 26–27.

- Learn more about the temple by reading the following:

Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple (2002)

Endowed from on High: Temple Preparation Seminar Teacher's Manual (2003)

Temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (special issue of the *Ensign*, Oct. 2010)

By maintaining a standard of moral conduct high enough to qualify for a temple recommend, you will find inner peace and spiritual strength.”³ During the time when I was feeling like I didn’t belong in the temple baptism because of my age, I allowed my temple attendance to lapse. However, I will always be grateful that I never allowed my limited-use recommend to expire. Maintaining a temple-worthy life has protected me and surrounded me with people who bring me happiness and peace.

“There Is Much to Be Done”

We cannot take the temple for granted. For those with access to

temples: Go often. Go with friends. Go alone. No matter your age or circumstance, live worthily and make the temple part of your life—for your own “inner peace and spiritual strength,” as well as for the service of others. As President Monson reminded us, “There is much to be done in our temples in behalf of those who wait beyond the veil.”⁴ *All* worthy members are needed to do this work—endowed or not. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. Julie B. Beck, “This Is *Your* Work,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2012, 43.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 93.
3. Russell M. Nelson, “Young Adults and the Temple,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2006, 17.
4. Thomas S. Monson, “The Holy Temple,” 92.



A SACRED SANCTUARY

“As we attend the temple, there can come to us a dimension of spirituality and a feeling of peace which will transcend any other feeling which could come into the human heart. We will grasp the true meaning of the words of the Savior when He said: ‘Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid’ [John 14:27].

“Such peace can permeate any heart—hearts that are troubled, hearts that are burdened down with grief, hearts that feel confusion, hearts that plead for help.”

President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018),
“Blessings of the Temple,” *Ensign*, May 2015,
91–92.



Capturing a Vision IN THE TEMPLE

By Heather J. Johnson

Whenever I schedule a time to attend the temple, I always look forward to going. But one week I had an unusual, overwhelming sense of anticipation for the evening I was planning on spending in the temple.

When the evening arrived, I was still puzzled by why I was so eager to go. As I walked to the dressing room, I stopped to put a friend's name on the temple prayer roll. Then it clicked.

The reason I was so happy to be in the temple that day was that I had a specific purpose in mind. I'd been looking forward all week to putting Brad's name (name has been changed) on the temple prayer roll. I was there because I wanted to help my friend.

The Sunday before, I'd been talking on the phone with Brad, a man I had taught on my mission. He had been baptized, but he admitted to me that

now he wasn't attending church or reading the scriptures and praying like he knew he should.

We didn't have long to talk, and after our conversation I wondered what I could do to help him. I felt a little helpless—we live on opposite sides of the country, and our communication with each other is fairly sporadic. I decided that when I went to the temple that week, I would go with this question in mind: "What can I do to help Brad get back to church?"

In the temple, I started to imagine what it would be like to see Brad receive his own endowment. I realized that I needed to broaden my vision. I didn't simply want to get Brad back to church. I wanted to know what I could do to help Brad prepare to attend the temple and enjoy all of the blessings available there.

As I sat in the celestial room, praying that I would know how to help

I went to the temple wanting to know how to help my friend, but what I learned gave me a broader perspective.

Brad, I opened the Book of Mormon to where I had left off the night before. I read the chapter heading of 3 Nephi 6. I doubted that this chapter about the pride cycle could help me with this issue, but I began to read.

In verse 7, Mormon talks about the Nephites building and repairing cities. I began to see how it applied to Brad. There were many "cities" or patterns

PHOTOGRAPH OF TWIN FALLS IDAHO TEMPLE BY AARON BARKER

in his life that he needed to rebuild. He needed to begin to attend church again. He needed to start praying and reading the scriptures again. He needed to live the commandments.

But not all was lost for the Nephites. There were the cities in this verse that only needed to be repaired. I was reminded of all the progress Brad had made. He is generous. He loves people. He makes people feel welcome. He loves to be involved. All of these

qualities are like the old cities that were repaired—these qualities will be magnified and made even better as Brad returns to Christ. I was amazed and grateful that a seemingly random chapter in the Book of Mormon could help me understand more about my friend.

As I left the temple that day, I had an expanded vision of what was possible. I had just wanted Brad to go back to church. I found out that God

wants Brad in the temple receiving saving ordinances and making sacred covenants. I wanted him to get back to living the gospel so he would have a happy life. Turns out that God wants that and more for Brad—God wants a happy and fulfilling life for Brad now and eternal life for him later on.

I also realized I needed to lift my own vision of what my temple experience could be. Going regularly is important, but going with a purpose or a question can make our temple experience more meaningful. I'm grateful for the temple and the clear vision we are given there of who we are and what we have the potential to become. ■

The author lives in Idaho, USA.



ELEVATING OUR VISION

"A principal purpose of the temple is to elevate our vision from the things of the world to the blessings of eternity. Removed for a short time from the worldly settings with which we are familiar, we can 'look to God and live' [Alma 37:47] by receiving and remembering the great and precious promises whereby we become partakers of the divine nature."

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Exceeding Great and Precious Promises," *Ensign*, Nov. 2017, 92.



From Coast to Coast: Our Journey to the Temple

Editors' note: This story is a reminder of what a young couple sacrificed to be sealed for time and all eternity. We hope it will inspire you to make temple marriage a priority in your own life.

By Efraín Rodríguez

In October of 1979, the day after we were married in a civil ceremony, my wife, Maria Ondina, and I left our hometown of Arequipa, Peru, near the shores of the Pacific Ocean, to travel to the São Paulo Brazil Temple, on the Atlantic coast, to be sealed. We were the first couple from Arequipa to travel by land to be sealed in the

newly dedicated temple—the first built in South America. We had planned to make the round-trip journey in 10 days, but in the end, it took us almost 30 due to a dangerous political climate. I didn't know how it would work out—all I knew was that I had made a promise to God that after my mission, I would get sealed to a worthy woman.

Arequipa to Juliaca to Puno

After a nine-hour journey by night, we arrived in Juliaca, Peru. It was Thursday, and we still needed to get stamps in our passports and exit permits so that we could leave the country. The following day was a national

Although we had little money and a perilous journey ahead, my wife and I knew that we had to be sealed in the temple.

holiday, and government offices would be closed for the rest of the weekend, so we arrived in line at the Bank of the



the windows we could see angry people in the streets, throwing rocks and putting up barriers to stop the traffic. Our bus continued moving swiftly to the center of town. That night was the start of a revolution in Bolivia.

We got off the bus and began looking for a hotel. The only one we could find was very expensive, but after repeating my explanation to a good man who worked there, he boarded us in the hotel's cleaning supply room very cheaply. He placed a mattress on the floor and gave us blankets to protect us from the cold and the sounds of gunfire that echoed outside all night.

We left early the next morning, frightened and hurried. On our way to the bus stop, we saw soldiers supported by tanks firing rifles at those protesting the revolution.

Fuel was beginning to run scarce, and instead of three bus departures a day as usual, only one was being

announced. The seats had sold out days in advance. I found the manager and said the words I had used with everyone else: "Sir, we are Mormons, and we are going to the temple to get married. And you can help us." He asked, "Where do you need to go?" "Cochabamba, sir." He opened a drawer and pulled out two tickets. I could see there were no more. "Hurry up," he said, "the bus is about to leave." Our suitcases seemed weightless, and our feet barely touched the ground—in our hands we held that day's blessing.

Cochabamba to Santa Cruz

We arrived in Cochabamba amidst more chaos from the revolution. We found a market filled with tents, where a kind fellow Peruvian let us wash up and then store our suitcases while we went to the bus terminal. Using our same plea, we made it

standby onto another bus and arrived days later in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, near the Brazilian border. For three mornings, I went to the train station to ask if there would be any departures. The answer was always no. But on the fourth day, news spread that a train would be leaving soon for Brazil.

By this point, we were running out of money. I shared my concerns with my wife, who firmly replied, "Even if we have to arrive by foot or on the back of a donkey, we're going to make it." Her reply made me happy. I wasn't unsettled about money for the rest of the trip because our confidence was placed in our faith.

As we talked, an old lady walked toward us. She stopped in front of my wife and said, "Young lady, wouldn't you like two tickets for today?" My wife practically ripped the tickets out of her hand. I paid the old woman, and she vanished among the crowd. It took us



a few seconds to realize that the Lord and His angels were still by our side.

Santa Cruz to São Paulo

When we finally arrived at the São Paulo Temple thanks to one last ride from a friend we made on the train, the temple lodging was closed. Resigned but happy, we made ourselves comfortable on a couple of benches outside the temple. There it was, just as beautiful as we had dreamed it would be, with the statue of the angel Moroni on top. It was now midnight, and we cried as we hugged, tired and wet from the falling rain. We didn't feel the dampness, the hunger, or the cold, just an indescribable sense of happiness for being so close to the house of the Lord. We had been obedient, and there was our reward.

While we were basking in that moment, someone tapped me on the

shoulder. It was one of my former mission companions, who had been sealed in the temple that day and was returning from dinner with his wife. He let us stay in their apartment that night, and the next day he was a witness to our sealing, performed by the temple president himself. How beautiful it was to see my wife in the celestial room, all dressed in white.

With a loan from my missionary friend and help from the temple president, we made the return trip in less than five days, without any delays—and with only \$20 dollars to begin a life with my wife, Maria Ondina, as my eternal companion. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



WORTH EVERY SACRIFICE

“Those who understand the eternal blessings which come from the temple know that no sacrifice is too great, no price too heavy, no struggle too difficult in order to receive those blessings. There are never too many miles to travel, too many obstacles to overcome, or too much discomfort to endure. They understand that the saving ordinances received in the temple that permit us to someday return to our Heavenly Father in an eternal family relationship . . . are worth every sacrifice and every effort.”

President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018), “The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 92.





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

WHEN EVIL APPEARS GOOD AND GOOD APPEARS EVIL

*How the adversary tries to mischaracterize
and undermine the blessings of living
according to the Father's plan.*

One of the most cunning aspects of the adversary's efforts to thwart our Father in Heaven's plan of happiness is his deceitful teaching that there is no evil influence or devil (see 2 Nephi 28:22) and his attempt to redefine evil as good and good as evil, darkness as light and light as darkness, and bitter as sweet and sweet as bitter! (see 2 Nephi 15:20).

This is sometimes called a paradigm shift—"when the usual way of thinking about or doing something is replaced by a new and different way,"¹ thus portraying things to be exactly the opposite of what they really are. In his classic novel *The Screwtape Letters*, C. S. Lewis wrote from a senior devil's point of view. Lewis inverted traditional values using irony and satire to make evil appear good and good appear evil.²



In this vein, I had a provocative meeting with an internationally recognized advertising expert a few months ago. We were discussing the influence of evil and the consequences of bad choices.

He envisioned an interesting hypothetical account of Lucifer meeting with an advertising agency. The adversary described his dilemma: he and his followers had rebelled and rejected the Father's plan and had come to understand that they could not prevail against God. Lucifer understood that while the Father's plan was about joy and happiness, his own plan resulted in grief and misery. The problem, Lucifer explained to the ad executive, was how to attract followers.

It was determined that Lucifer's only hope of success was to achieve a paradigm shift or values inversion—in other words, to characterize the Father's plan as resulting in grief and misery and Lucifer's plan as resulting in joy and happiness.

The Word of Wisdom advocates wholesome health practices with a promise that those acting in obedience to the divine command “shall receive health . . . and shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge.”

This hypothetical meeting serves a useful purpose. The truth is, not only do the enemies of the Father's plan attempt to undermine the doctrine and principles of the plan, but they also attempt to mischaracterize the blessings that flow from the plan. Their basic effort is to make that which is good, righteous, and joyful seem miserable.

I will discuss some of the adversary's efforts to mischaracterize and undermine the blessings of living according to the Father's plan.

Word of Wisdom

Over the course of a lifetime, I have seen the lives of many of my friends blighted and sometimes destroyed by alcohol. An alcohol culture isn't just about Church doctrine; it is also about the health and happiness of everyone. Latter-day Saints can be an important voice in educating society about the consequences of this issue.

In the Father's plan, the Word of Wisdom—given because of “evils and designs . . . of conspiring men”—provides health principles. It is “adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of all saints.” It sets forth particulars, including that “wine or strong drink [alcohol] . . . is not good.” Tobacco and hot drinks (tea and coffee) “are not for the body” (D&C 89:4, 3, 5, 8–9).

This revelation also advocates wholesome health practices with a promise. It promises that those acting in obedience to the divine command “shall receive health . . . and shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge” (D&C 89:18–19).³

The distortion that the adversary utilizes is clearly illustrated by his advocacy for tobacco and alcohol.

Even the hypothetical advertising agency would have a hard time casting tobacco in a favorable light today. The Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44) received the Word of Wisdom by revelation in 1833. In 1921, President Heber J. Grant (1856–1945), inspired by the Lord, called on all Saints to more fully live the Word of Wisdom.⁴ At the time, mass marketing and glamorization in the movies made cigarette smoking appear fashionable, sophisticated, and fun. It wasn't until 1964, 43 years later, that the Surgeon General of the United States concluded, “Cigarette smoking is a health hazard of sufficient importance in the United States to warrant appropriate remedial action.”⁵

The statistics today with respect to cigarette smoking are not in dispute. Smokers are more likely than non-smokers to develop heart disease, stroke, and lung cancer. Smoking is estimated to increase the risk of lung cancer by 25 times.⁶

So what the adversary portrayed as fashionable, sophisticated, and fun has in fact resulted in misery and untimely death for millions of people.



Alcohol is another example. Over many years I have followed a research project that commenced in the 1940s. Initially, 268 men attending Harvard University were periodically studied over their entire lives. Later, others, including women, became part of the study. The goal of the original study was to find out about success and happiness.

This study contains three significant insights. First, adult happiness has a high correlation with childhood family happiness, especially love and affection from parents.⁷ Second is the importance of a healthy, stable marriage to lifelong happiness.⁸ Third is the negative effect of alcohol on marital and lifetime success and happiness. Alcohol abuse touches one-third of families in the United States and is involved in one-fourth of hospital admissions. It plays a major role in death, bad health, and diminished accomplishment.⁹

A recent *Washington Post* front-page article based on U.S. federal health data reported that “women in America are drinking far more, and far more frequently, than their mothers or grandmothers did, and alcohol consumption is killing them in record numbers.” The article concluded that

“the current and emerging science does not support the purported benefits of moderate drinking” and that “the risk of death from cancer appears to go up with any level of alcohol consumption.”¹⁰

In the past few years, many universities across the world have been trying to diminish alcohol use because of its connection to serious antisocial behaviors, including sexual assault and serious health concerns, especially from binge drinking. The terrible impact of alcohol on young brains is now medically established.¹¹

In reciting primarily personal health issues, I have not attempted to categorize other serious consequences of alcohol use such as accidents while driving under the influence, men trying to excuse physical and sexual assaults because of alcohol impairment, and the effects on fetal brains from alcohol use by women during pregnancy.¹²

As if cigarette smoking, alcohol abuse, and an opiate epidemic¹³ were not harmful enough to society, we now see the forces of evil pushing legalization of recreational marijuana.



Family Choices

Family choices follow a similar pattern. In the Father's plan, the role of families is clearly set forth.

In "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," we read: "The family is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ."¹⁴

It is fairly common in today's world, in another paradigm shift, to trumpet alternative choices in a positive way that are in direct conflict with this plan and that are unfavorable to marriage and family:

- The choice for both women and men to put education and careers ahead of marriage and family.
- The choice to purposefully have no or few children¹⁵ or to terminate pregnancy when it is inconvenient.

- The choice to engage in immoral conduct as a substitute for the sacred institution of marriage.

The adversary has targeted women and has painted motherhood as a dead-end road of drudgery. He has targeted men and has painted fatherhood as unimportant and fidelity as "old school." The alienation and objectification created by pornography is an example of immoral conduct being substituted for the sacred institution of marriage. It underscores the horrific turning from truth and righteousness that the adversary seeks.

Inappropriate alternative choices are painted as appropriate in helping to achieve the worldly goals of freedom and equality. As a result of such choices, the average number of children a woman will bear in her lifetime is declining dramatically. It is estimated that 46 percent of the world lives in countries in which the fertility rate is below 2.1 children—the rate necessary for the population to remain stable. Most European and Asian countries are below this level. Italy and Japan are both at about 1.3 births. Japan is expected to decrease in population from 120 million to about 100 million by the year 2050.¹⁶

This worldwide decline in population has been described by some as a “demographic winter.”¹⁷ Many countries are not having enough children to replace the generation that is dying.

Let me share one other reality that is of great concern to me. I had a sobering experience in Jerusalem in 2016 at the Children’s Memorial, which is part of the World Holocaust Remembrance Center. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and I, together with two American Jewish leaders, laid a remembrance wreath. It is believed that more than one million Jewish children were killed during the Holocaust.¹⁸

As I experienced the museum, I was overcome with emotion. Standing outside to regain my composure, I reflected on the horror of the experience and suddenly realized that in the United States alone, there are as many abortions every two years as the number of Jewish children killed in the Holocaust during the Second World War.¹⁹

The Jewish children were killed because they were Jews, and there is no analogue to this in all history, but the intensity of my feeling was about the loss of children. Bringing children into the world is a sacred part of our Father in Heaven’s plan of happiness. We are so numbed and intimidated by the immensity of the practice of abortion that many of us have pushed it to the back of our minds and try to keep it out of our consciousness. Clearly the adversary is attacking the value of children on many levels.

Abortion needs to be approached carefully. This is a problem that will probably not be solved by personal condemnation or judgmental accusations. Some have cautioned not to judge a ship—or men or women—without understanding the length of the voyage and the storms encountered.²⁰ I might add, many who engage in this deplorable conduct do not have a testimony of the Savior or knowledge of the Father’s plan.

However, for those who believe we are accountable to God—and even for many of those not of our faith—this has become a tragedy of monumental proportions. When you combine it with the demographic winter we just explored, it is a serious moral blot on our society.

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught: “Supreme happiness in marriage is governed considerably by a primary factor—that of the bearing and rearing of children. . . . The Church cannot approve nor condone . . . measures which . . . greatly limit the family.”²¹

With respect to the number and spacing of children, the health of the mother must be considered, and the decision should be made prayerfully by husbands and wives.²² Such decisions should never be judged by outsiders. Some faithful Saints are not able to have children or may not have the opportunity to marry. They will receive every blessing at the ultimate banquet of consequences.²³

Nevertheless, Lucifer has supported abortion and in a horrific paradigm shift has convinced many people that children represent lost opportunity and misery instead of joy and happiness.

As Latter-day Saints, we must be at the forefront of changing hearts and minds on the importance of children.

The Father’s plan is established through families. Every family member is important, and their roles are beautiful, glorious, and fulfilling.

The attacks on the family I just described ultimately result in grief and misery.

The Lord has declared that His work and His glory is “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). The plan is established through families. Every family member is important, and their roles are beautiful, glorious, and fulfilling.

The family proclamation could not be more clear about the consequences of choices inconsistent with the Father’s plan. It unequivocally proclaims, “We warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals,

communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.”²⁴

This clearly sets forth the ultimate banquet of consequences and the cumulative impact of choices not in accordance with the Father’s plan of happiness.

In all marriages and in raising children, there are challenges and sacrifices. But the rewards both in this life and in the eternities are breathtakingly beautiful. They emanate from a loving Father in Heaven.

Prospering in the Land

A familiar scripture found throughout the Book of Mormon has two parts. It reads, “Inasmuch as ye shall keep

- Seeking the kingdom of God first.
- Working, planning, and spending wisely.
- Planning for the future.
- Using wealth to build up the kingdom of God.

Lucifer’s Objective

In addition to portraying blessings as misery, Lucifer seeks to undermine the Father’s plan and destroy faith in Jesus Christ and His doctrine. The assault on the Bible and the divinity of Jesus Christ has never been more pronounced in my lifetime than it is today. As the scriptures predicted, Lucifer is using many devices to accomplish this objective.

It is one thing to be misled by the adversary. It is another to be one of his mercenaries. Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said it beautifully: “How tragic it is that so many mortals are mercenaries for the adversary . . . and are . . . bought off at such low prices. A little status, a little money, a little praise, a little fleeting fame, and they are willing to do the bidding of him who can offer all sorts of transitory ‘rewards,’ but who has no celestial currency.”²⁵

There is probably no better example of the impact of mercenaries than Lehi’s vision of the tree of life and the great and spacious building in the Book of Mormon. Those in the building pointed fingers at those who had grasped the rod of iron and even partaken of the fruit of the tree. The partakers became “ashamed, because of those that were scoffing at them; and they fell away into forbidden paths and were lost” (1 Nephi 8:27–28).

Thus, bad choices result in a banquet with bitter, rancid, nasty, and miserable results.

Compare this to the glorious banquet of consequences promised to you who are faithful. You will “be filled with the glory of the Lord” and “sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of” your body, and all that the Father hath will be given to you (D&C 84:32, 33; see also verses 34–38).

In such a banquet of consequences, the spiritual food we feast upon is delicious, savory, sweet, succulent, nourishing, and fulfilling and will allow our hearts to

The assault on the Bible and the divinity of Jesus Christ has never been more pronounced in my lifetime than it is today.

the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land.” The second part reads, “Inasmuch as ye will not keep the commandments of God ye shall be cut off from his presence” (see, for example, Alma 36:30). It is clear that having the blessing of the Holy Spirit through obedience is a principal element of prospering in the land.

In addition, sacred teachings of the Church establish having sufficient for our needs as the best measure of temporal prosperity. Lucifer’s paradigm shift here is to elevate the seeking of great wealth and the acquisition of highly visible luxury products. Some seem absolutely driven to achieve the lifestyle of the rich and famous. Excess wealth is not promised to faithful members, nor does it usually bring happiness.

As a people, Latter-day Saints have indeed prospered. Wise financial principles include:



rejoice. When we “come unto the Holy One of Israel, and feast upon that which perisheth not, neither can be corrupted” (2 Nephi 9:51), we can follow the narrow path and the straight course that will bring us to the Holy One of Israel, “for the Lord God is his name” (2 Nephi 9:41). ■

From a devotional address, “A Banquet of Consequences: The Cumulative Result of All Choices,” given at Brigham Young University on February 7, 2017. For the full address, visit speeches.byu.edu.

NOTES

1. Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed. (2003), “paradigm shift,” merriam-webster.com.
2. See C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (1942).
3. See Jed Woodworth, “The Word of Wisdom,” in *Revelations in Context: The Stories behind the Sections of the Doctrine and Covenants*, Matthew McBride and James Goldberg, eds. (2016), 183–89; “The Word of Wisdom,” June 1, 2013, history.lds.org.
4. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Heber J. Grant* (2002), 188–97.

5. *Smoking and Health: Report of the Advisory Committee to the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service*, PHS publication no. 1103 (1964), 33; see also *The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General* (2014), [surgeongeneral.gov](https://www.surgeongeneral.gov).
6. See “Health Effects of Cigarette Smoking,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 15, 2017, [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).
7. See George E. Vaillant, *Triumphs of Experience: The Men of the Harvard Grant Study* (2012), 108–9.
8. See Alvin Powell, “Decoding Keys to a Healthy Life,” *Harvard Gazette*, Feb. 2, 2012, news.harvard.edu.
9. See Vaillant, *Triumphs of Experience*, 292. By comparison, a separate long-term study of active Church members had positive results (see James E. Enstrom and Lester Breslow, “Lifestyle and Reduced Mortality among Active California Mormons, 1980–2004,” *Preventive Medicine*, vol. 46, no. 2 [Feb. 2008], 133–36).
10. Kimberly Kindy and Dan Keating, “For Women, Heavy Drinking Has Been Normalized. That’s Dangerous,” *Washington Post*, Dec. 23, 2016, [washingtonpost.com](https://www.washingtonpost.com); the conclusion quotes Robert D. Brewer from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention alcohol program.
11. See “Fact Sheets—Underage Drinking,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Oct. 20, 2016, [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).
12. See Anne Schuchat, “The CDC’s Recommendations to Help Prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders,” *American Family Physician*, vol. 95, no. 1 (Jan. 1, 2017), 6–7, [aafp.org](https://www.aafp.org).
13. See “Inside a Killer Drug Epidemic: A Look at America’s Opioid Crisis,” *New York Times*, Jan. 6, 2017, [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com).
14. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
15. “The percentage of 25- to 34-year-olds with no children living with them more than doubled since 1967” (Emily Schondelmeyer, “No Kids in the House: A Historical Look at Adults Living without Children,” U.S. Census Bureau, Dec. 20, 2016, [census.gov](https://www.census.gov)).
16. See *World Fertility Patterns 2015*, United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2015, 6, [un.org](https://www.un.org); “Birth and Fertility of the Resident Population,” Istat (Italian National Institute of Statistics), Nov. 28, 2016, [istat.it](https://www.istat.it); “The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010–2050, Buddhists,” Pew Research Center, Apr. 2, 2015, 6–12, 102–11, [pewresearch.org](https://www.pewresearch.org); Adam Taylor, “It’s Official: Japan’s Population Is Dramatically Shrinking,” *Washington Post*, Feb. 26, 2016, [washingtonpost.com](https://www.washingtonpost.com); and Ana Swanson, “Japan’s Birth Rate Problem Is Way Worse Than Anyone Imagined,” *Washington Post*, Jan. 7, 2015, [washingtonpost.com](https://www.washingtonpost.com).
17. See *The New Economic Reality: Demographic Winter*, BYUtv, [byutv.org](https://www.byutv.org).
18. See “Plight of Jewish Children,” *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, [ushmm.org](https://www.ushmm.org).
19. See Reproductive Health: Data and Statistics: “Abortion,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 10, 2017, [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov). I recognize that the number of abortions has declined in recent years, but the number is still extremely high.
20. Sometimes attributed to Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881); see *Handbook 1: Stake Presidents and Bishops* (2010), 17.3.1. This section provides limited abortion exceptions involving rape, incest, health of the mother, and severe defects of the baby.
21. *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (1982), 328–29; see also *Eternal Marriage Student Manual* (Church Educational System manual, 2003), 14–18, [LDS.org](https://www.lds.org).
22. See Gordon B. Hinckley, *Cornerstones of a Happy Home* (pamphlet, 1984), 6, [LDS.org](https://www.lds.org).
23. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 1.3.3.
24. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 129.
25. Neal A. Maxwell, *Things As They Really Are* (1978), 42.

The image shows the interior of a simple, earthen tomb. The walls and ceiling are made of rough, light-colored earth. A rectangular doorway is cut into the wall, leading to a bright outdoor area. In the foreground, on the left, there is a pile of light-colored fabric, possibly a shroud or a covering. The floor is dirt. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows and bright light coming from the doorway. The text "MY MOMENT IN THE GARDEN TOMB" is overlaid in white, sans-serif font in the lower right quadrant.

MY MOMENT
IN THE
GARDEN TOMB

A visit to this sacred site gave me a new appreciation for the Lord's promises.

By Claudia Waite Richards

My husband called me from work and told me he had been given a new assignment that would take him to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv for a week. He asked if I would like to join him. I quickly replied, “Yes!” since Jerusalem was a place I had always wanted to see.

I was especially excited to visit a place considered by many to be the site of the Garden Tomb, where the Savior's body was placed before He was resurrected. I had heard from a friend that there was a special spirit there.

While my husband was at work, I went to see the Garden Tomb by myself. It was very green, beautiful, and peaceful. Several church groups from around the world were also visiting that day, and two of the congregations were holding religious services at different locations in the garden. I could hear them both reverently singing hymns of praise.

As I stood in line to enter the tomb, I observed a church group just ahead of me that consisted mostly of elderly members. Two men stood on each side of the tomb entrance to assist the others as they entered. As the last of them completed their visit inside the tomb, one of the men turned to me and said, “It's all yours.”

I then stepped over the stone threshold and went inside. It was so moving to be there—to see the tomb, feel the peace, and reflect on the Savior's Resurrection.

Later, as my husband and I visited other sites related to Christ's ministry, the words of the man at the tomb stayed with me and began to take on new meaning. I realized

that “It's all yours” no longer meant only that it was now my turn to go inside the tomb but also that, thanks to Christ's Atonement, I could someday receive “all that [the] Father hath” (D&C 84:38). The blessings of the gospel—baptism and membership in the Savior's Church, covenant promises, priesthood power, eternal families, revelation, the gift of the Holy Ghost, healing through Christ's Atonement, eternal life, and more—can *all* be ours *if* we are true and faithful to the covenants we have made.

One place that the Savior teaches this doctrine is in the context of the oath and covenant of the priesthood, the blessings of which “flow . . . to worthy men, women, and children in all the world”¹:

“He that receiveth my servants receiveth me;
“And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father;

“And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him” (D&C 84:36–38; see also D&C 76:50–70; 78:18–22).

These words—“It's all yours”—continue to remind me of the love our Heavenly Father has for each of us. They foster in me a feeling of deep gratitude and awe at the magnificence of His divine plan. It's overwhelming to comprehend all that He has done and is doing to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of His children. I know that it can be *all ours* if we remain true and faithful to our covenants. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTE

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Covenants,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 88; see also “Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2017, 7.



THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS ATONEMENT

“Jesus and His Atonement represent the most profound expression of Heavenly Father's love for His children. How important the free gift of the Resurrection is for all mankind, and the proffer of the greatest gift which even God can give—eternal life for those willing to so live and to so qualify. . . .

“I so praise Him for the glorious and great Atonement and ask Him to bless all of us that we personally will claim, and in our ministries will help people claim, the blessings of that great Atonement, won at so great a cost.”

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Testifying of the Great and Glorious Atonement,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2001, 14, 15.

HE LIVES! ALL GLORY TO HIS NAME!

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

— *Isaiah 9:6* (see also *2 Nephi 19:6*)





DETAIL FROM ONE SHEPHERD, BY HOWARD LYON, MAY NOT BE COPIED

GO AND FEED THEM, BY JORGE COCCO SANTANGELO



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WONDERFUL



COUNSELLOR

THE MIGHTY GOD





THE EVERLASTING FATHER

WOMAN, WHY WEEPST THOU? BY MARK R. PUGH



THE PRINCE OF PEACE

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GET THEE HENCE, SATAN, BY CARL HEINRICH BLOCH, MAY NOT BE COPIED





ISRAEL'S

EXODUS & DELIVERANCE— THEN & NOW

By Kerry Muhlestein

Professor of Ancient Scripture, Brigham Young University

The book of Deuteronomy begins with a striking verse. In parentheses between verses 1 and 3, verse 2 reads, “(There are eleven days’ journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadesh-barnea)” (Deuteronomy 1:2). Because it is set within parentheses and because it seems to be relaying minutia, this verse is easily passed over. But, at closer examination, it can be one of the most thought-provoking verses in the Old Testament.

Identifying two of the sites in the verse makes this clearer. Horeb is another name for Mount Sinai, and Kadesh-barnea is the place where Moses and the children of Israel camped as they sent men into the promised land as spies. Kadesh-barnea was on the border of the promised land, and it was intended that the children of Israel would go from there and inherit the land.

In other words, it took the children of Israel 40 years to travel the distance they could have traveled in 11 days.

The full import of Israel’s meandering journey comes “when we realize that Israel’s experiences in the wilderness are both literal and allegorical of our own experiences.”¹ In Egypt, Israel was in bondage, as we are in bondage to sin. They left via a baptism-like experience across the Red Sea and undertook their wanderings in the wilderness. Such wilderness journeys are found in various places in the scriptures, and we can liken them to our mortal probation (see, for example, Alma 37:41–45).² Not long after entering the wilderness, Israel made covenants at Sinai. They then wandered for many years. Eventually they were brought to the river Jordan (which can be likened to the veil we pass through at death) and crossed it, entering into the promised land (which can symbolize the celestial kingdom). Reflecting

The Israelites’ 40 years of wandering are a symbol of our own personal journey to believe.

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ISRAEL ENTERING THE PROMISED LAND



on the journey of the children of Israel could cause readers to think, “In what things am I taking 40 years to accomplish an 11-day task?”

Most believers find themselves somewhere in between Sinai (having made sacred covenants with the Lord) and crossing the river Jordan (entering the true promised land, or the celestial kingdom). Let’s turn to this part of our scriptural story in order to better understand what delayed the Israelites on their journey. Consider what we can glean from their mistakes and how we can stay on course to the celestial kingdom.

Lack of Faith

While Israel had a host of problems during their wanderings, two incidents seem to have determined that Israel would wait 40 years before entering the promised land. Israel’s lack of faith in the delivering power of Jehovah was key.

The first incident happened at Mount Sinai. Israel had been promised a marvelous opportunity. They were commanded to prepare themselves, “for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai” (Exodus 19:11). To prepare for this event, Israel undertook three days of sanctification. On the third day the mount was filled with thunderings, lightnings, a thick cloud, and the sound of a trumpet (see Exodus 19:16). Then Moses “brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God” (Exodus 19:17). At that time, Moses ascended and received the Ten Commandments. In Deuteronomy we read that “these words [the Ten Commandments] *the Lord spake unto all your assembly* in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice” (Deuteronomy 5:22; emphasis added). In other words, every member of the house of Israel heard the Lord’s pronouncement.

Apparently the experience was too overwhelming for them. Though the Lord had more in store for them, the Israelites sent their leaders to Moses, telling him to converse with God alone. Moses told them to “fear not”

(Exodus 20:20), but “the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was” (Exodus 20:21).

The children of Israel had heard the voice of the Lord and were afraid they would be consumed by fire if they heard more. This is truly astonishing. By now they had seen evidence of His delivering power time and again:

- They had witnessed the plagues in Egypt, including the slaying of the firstborn, and had been saved from them all.
- They had seen the armies of Pharaoh ready to crush them and had been delivered by the Lord.
- They had nearly starved, and the Lord had sent quail and then manna.
- They had been thirsty and had been delivered by water gushing from a rock.
- They had been saved from destruction at the hands of the Amalekites.

And yet, with all this, they refused the presence of the Lord. In short, *they did not believe* that the Lord had power to bring them safely into His own consuming presence.

Joseph Smith taught that this unbelief was the great downfall of Israel: “When God offers a blessing or knowledge to a man, and he refuses to receive it, he will be damned. The Israelites prayed that God would speak to Moses and not to them; in consequence of which he cursed them with a carnal law.”³ And so the Israelites were left with the lower law because they did not believe that the Lord had the power to bring them to meet with God and ensure they would live.

The problem became compounded and clarified some-time later, when the children of Israel were at Kadesh-barnea. They had finally arrived at the borders of the promised land.

At this time they and the Lord agreed to send 12 spies, one from each of the tribes, in order to perform a reconnaissance mission (see Deuteronomy 1:22 and Numbers 13:1–2). All of the spies reported that the land was full of wonderful



*Will we see only our weaknesses,
or will we remember how those
shortcomings pale in comparison to
Christ's atoning power?*

produce and was extremely fertile. But only Joshua and Caleb felt that the Israelites should go forth and take the land. The other spies were full of dread because of the military strength of the people they saw in the promised land.

Speaking later to the Israelites, Moses told them:

“Ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God:

“And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the Lord hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.

“Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims [giants] there” (Deuteronomy 1:26–28).

Though Israel had seen one of the mightiest armies on earth, that of Egypt, defeated and destroyed by the hand of the Lord, they were afraid that He could not bring them into His rest in the promised land. Again Moses tried to reassure them as he had at the Red Sea. Here he exhorted Israel:

“Dread not, neither be afraid of them.

“The Lord your God which goeth before you, he shall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes” (Deuteronomy 1:29–30).

Furthermore, he reminded them of the things the Lord had done for them “in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the Lord thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place” (Deuteronomy 1:31).

Even with all of this, Israel refused to go, and in the end Moses was forced to lament that “in this thing ye did not believe the Lord your

God” (Deuteronomy 1:32). The Lord asked Moses, “How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?” (Numbers 14:11).

Not Accepting Personal Deliverance

Just as ancient Israel struggled to believe in the Lord’s power to deliver them, there are individuals among latter-day Israel who struggle to accept the true redeeming power of Jesus Christ. We may very well understand that Christ suffered for us all and made it possible for us to repent. But at the same time many members of the Church do not feel that they can be exalted.

Latter-day Saint author Stephen E. Robinson summed it up well while speaking of Christ’s ability to make us clean: “Unfortunately, there are many members of the Church who simply do not believe this. . . . They may believe that the Church is true, that Jesus is the Christ, and that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, while at the same time refusing to accept the possibility of their own complete forgiveness and eventual exaltation in the kingdom of God. They believe *in* Christ, but they do not *believe* Christ.”⁴

We may believe strongly in many things about the gospel while still struggling with its very core—the idea that Christ can deliver us and bring us into His promised land.

The Israelites had already seen the delivering power of Jehovah many times before they refused to go into the promised land. Undoubtedly, we too have felt the redeeming and delivering power of the Savior through His Atonement many times in our lives. Most who have been baptized have felt the deliverance of Christ. Since we have been forgiven in the past, why could not the Lord deliver us from all our sins and bring us into the celestial kingdom? We may as well ask why, after having defeated the Egyptian army, could not the Lord defeat the Amorites and the Anakim in the promised land? The answer is the same: Of course He can.

Will we “fear not” (Exodus 20:20), or will we give in to our own doubts about our future? Will we see only our

weaknesses, or will we remember how those shortcomings pale in comparison to Christ’s atoning power?

Fortunately, the biblical story does not end at Kadesh-barnea. Ancient Israel had entered into a covenant with the Lord, and as a part of that covenant they would inherit the promised land. First, however, they had to be stripped of all unbelievers. Thus, Israel was forced to remain in the wilderness, a place where they would have no chance of survival except through dependence on the Lord.

Brigham Young University professor S. Kent Brown has written of this: “The point of the growing lesson was that the Lord could be trusted and, indeed, had to be trusted. In effect, he left the Israelites without any resource upon which to call except himself. . . . Without being able to trust in the Egyptians and now having only the Lord to rely upon, whether in Egypt or in the desert, the Israelites had to bring themselves to trust God more than man.”⁵

It was this process that took Israel 40 years. But because of the covenantal love of the Lord, He did not give up on Israel. Though the Israelites did not have enough faith to enter the promised land after 11 days, the Lord worked with them until they were faithful enough to receive their inheritance. He purged them in the wilderness until they were ready to fulfill their part of the covenant.

Developing Sufficient Faith

When Israel had been purged of unbelievers and developed sufficient faith, they came again to the borders of the promised land. This time they arrived not at Kadesh-barnea but at the river Jordan.

As their fathers had done at Sinai, Israel spent the day sanctifying themselves. They gathered their tents and belongings and arranged themselves behind the priests who bore the ark of the covenant—another important symbol. The lid of the ark of the covenant was also called the “mercy seat,” or “seat of atonement.” There was no more poignant symbol of Christ and his delivering power than the ark of the covenant. Only by following this symbol would Israel enter the promised land.

As we demonstrate our faith in Christ's delivering power, even to the point of getting our feet wet, the Lord will part the waters and bring about our redemption.

Upon Joshua's command, the priests who carried the ark picked it up and marched toward the river Jordan. The Israelites followed. They had been promised that they would reach the other side, but they first had to demonstrate their faith. They marched up to and then *into* the river. It was not until the feet of the priests bearing the ark were in the waters of the river that the Lord exerted His delivering powers and parted the water. "And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan" (Joshua 3:17). After this demonstration of faith, following squarely behind the seat of atonement and trusting fully in the delivering power of Him whom it symbolized, Israel finally entered into its land of inheritance.

So too it is with us. As we demonstrate our faith in Christ's delivering power, even to the point of getting our feet wet, the Lord will part the waters and bring about our redemption. We see in Israel's journey the pattern which we must follow in order to inherit our promised land. Whether it be 11 days or 40 years that lie ahead of us, we must follow the instructions of the Lord and have faith in His delivering power. As we do this, there is no doubt that He will bring us into the celestial kingdom. Thus He has covenanted, and God cannot lie. We will enter into His rest and dwell with Him. ■

NOTES

1. M. Catherine Thomas, "The Provocation in the Wilderness and the Rejection of Grace," in *Thy People Shall Be My People, and Thy God My God* (1994), 168.
2. See also Thomas, "The Provocation in the Wilderness," 169.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 265.
4. Stephen E. Robinson, *Believing Christ* (1992), 8, 9.
5. S. Kent Brown, "Trust in the Lord: Exodus and Faith," in *The Old Testament and the Latter-day Saints* (1986), 93.

JOURNEY THROUGH THE Ancient Tabernacle

As in modern temples, the symbolism in the tabernacle can teach us about our journey back to God's presence.

For thousands of years, temples have been a place where God uses priesthood ordinances and sacred covenants to teach His children eternal truths about His plan of salvation.

During their travels in the wilderness, the people of Israel were commanded to build a tabernacle so that God could “dwell among them” (Exodus 29:46). “*Tabernacle* literally means ‘place of dwelling’ and was so called in the belief that God literally lived within its sacred confines. When Israel camped, the tabernacle was set up in the precise center of the camp (symbolizing the idea that God was to be the center of his people’s lives).”¹

Consider these items in the tabernacle and what they can teach us about our return to God’s presence.

NOTES

1. *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* (1979), 390.
2. In Paul’s Epistle to the Hebrews (chapters 8–10), the tabernacle is used to teach how the great High Priest, Jesus Christ, “by his own blood . . . entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (9:12). Because of this redemption, we are also able “to enter into the holiest [place] by the blood of Jesus” (10:19).



Tabernacle: The tabernacle consisted of three divisions through which one must pass to reach the presence of God: the outer courtyard, the holy place, and the Holy of Holies (see Exodus 25–30).

Altar: The law of Moses set forth the sacrifices to be offered here, foreshadowing the Savior and His “great and last sacrifice” (Alma 34:10). Sacrifice can also symbolize our repentance—giving up our sins and offering a broken heart and contrite spirit (see 3 Nephi 9:19–20; Guide to the Scriptures, “Sacrifice,” scriptures.lds.org).

Laver of water: Before entering the holy place, priests used the brass laver of water to wash their hands and feet (see Exodus 30:19–21), reminding us of our need to be clean as we prepare to return to the Lord’s presence (see 3 Nephi 27:19–20).

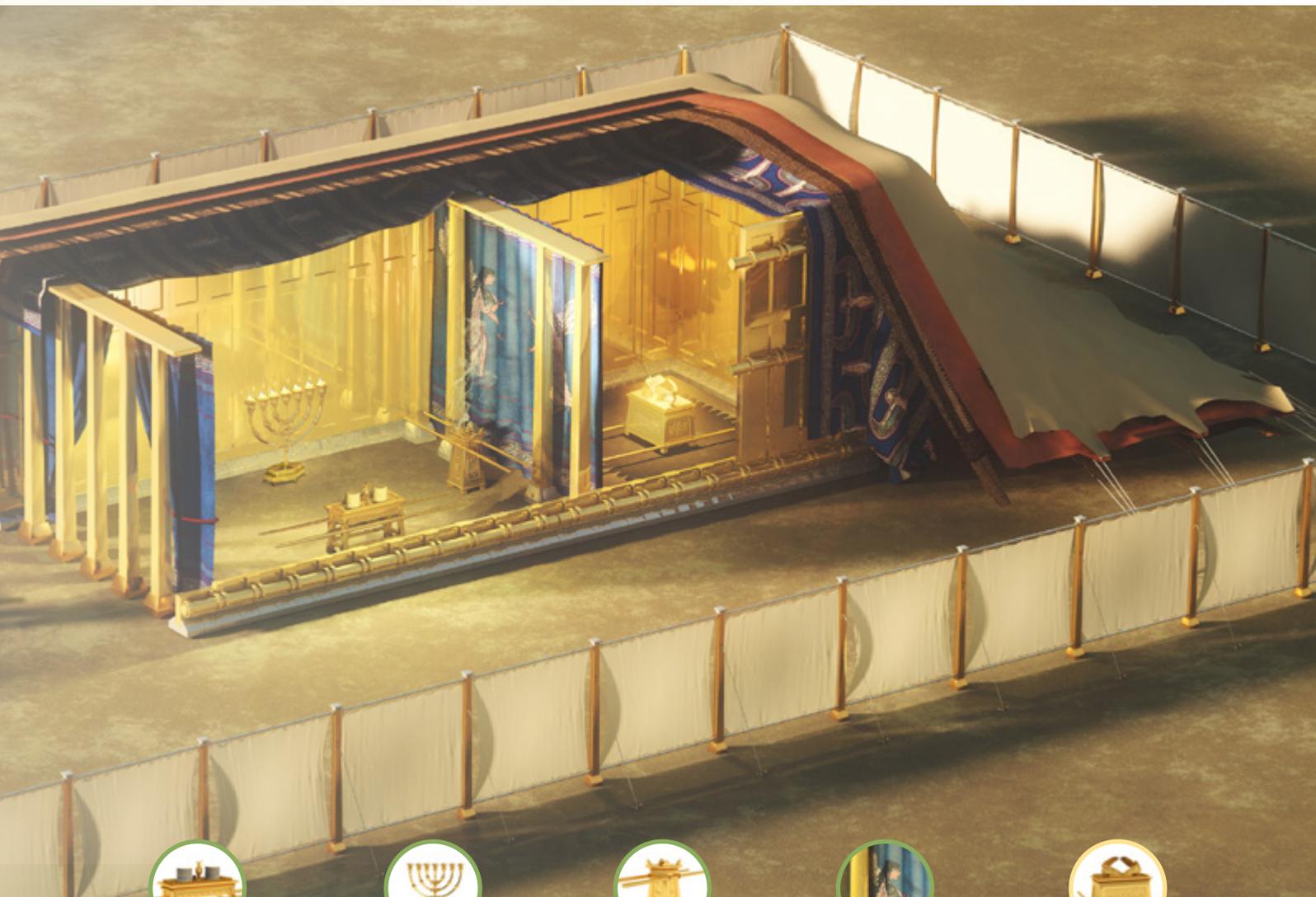


Table of shewbread: Twelve loaves of unleavened bread were placed each Sabbath on the table of shewbread, a word meaning “bread of the presence” in Hebrew (see Exodus 25:30). The loaves were eaten in the holy place every Sabbath as “an everlasting covenant” (see Leviticus 24:5–9).



Candlestick: The seven lamps burned pure olive oil, providing light to the holy place (see Leviticus 24:2–4). This can remind us of the Light of Christ and the Holy Ghost, the sources of spiritual light.



Altar of incense: The priests burned incense each morning and night on an altar placed before the veil. The ascending smoke can represent prayers ascending to heaven (see Revelation 5:8).



Veil: The high priest entered the Holy of Holies through a veil. Cherubim, or angels, were embroidered on the veil (see Exodus 26:31–33; D&C 132:19). The veil can remind us that as we are now veiled from God’s presence, the great High Priest—Jesus Christ—can part the veil.



Holy of Holies: The high priest entered this most sacred part of the tabernacle once a year, on the Day of Atonement. The Holy of Holies represented the presence of God and contained the ark of the covenant, the lid of which was called the mercy seat. “There I will meet with thee,” the Lord told Moses, “and I will commune with thee” (Exodus 25:22; see also Exodus 29:43; 30:36).² ■





By Elder Erich W.
Kopischke
Of the Seventy

Family

THE FOUNTAIN OF HAPPINESS

The concept of family and family life as a true source for happiness has been terribly weakened in recent decades. The traditional family is under attack from many different sources worldwide. (On page 30 of this issue, Elder Quentin L. Cook discusses some of those attacks.) But there are other pitfalls and risks that relate even to some of us who know about the importance, divinity, and eternal destiny of the family.

Influenced by the world and its enticements, the increasing desire for self-centered fulfillment, and the inclination for comfort or for making things easy, we put the family and our happiness under stress. All too often, happiness in our life is defined by the quality of our “all-around carefree package,” which we hope to achieve and retain in a “low-investment, high-return” mode.

*Ponder the doctrine
of eternal families,
and come to know
for yourself what
really matters most.*

But life does not work this way. It was never intended to be easy. The Lord said through the Prophet Joseph Smith: “For after much tribulation come the blessings. Wherefore the day cometh that ye shall be crowned with much glory” (D&C 58:4).

Ordained of God

The Lord has clearly revealed how to develop and retain strong families. We all are invited to study and apply the principles set forth in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.” Additionally, we need to recognize that drawing personal strength and happiness from family life requires sacrifice and faith.

The family proclamation states “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.” It further states “that God’s commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force.”¹

For many people, the image and purpose of the family has drastically changed. Increasingly, society is adopting the so-called “soul mate” model of marriage, which focuses on the needs and feelings of adults as opposed to those of children. As a result, many enter marriage after a long-standing relationship rather than moving forward after an appropriate courtship. Finding the perfect match, testing a relationship by cohabitation without the benefit of marriage, or securing a lavish lifestyle that will be backed by a robust prenuptial agreement have become common practices among many before finally deciding to marry.

Scripture and modern-day prophets teach us otherwise. We build our marriages on the foundation of chastity and fidelity, with the intent to establish and rear a family. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught: “There are many who talk and write against marriage. Even some of our own delay marriage and argue against it. . . . We call upon all people to accept [traditional] marriage as a basis for true happiness. . . . Basically marriage presupposes a family.”²

When my wife, Christiane, and I were young, these were the words of our living prophet, and we trusted and followed his advice. We knelt across the altar of the Bern Switzerland Temple, being only 20 and 22 years of age, respectively. We were worthy of the covenant, we had no

real clue of what to expect, we had no work experience or finished education, and we were quite poor.

All we had in abundance was our love for each other and a lot of naïve enthusiasm. But we began building our world together. We did not postpone having children, and we needed to support each other in getting our education. We strongly believed in the Lord’s promise that “if ye do

keep his commandments he doth bless you and prosper you” (Mosiah 2:22).

And He did. When we married, Christiane was in nursing school. Our vision included having her finish her degree, but at the same time we also made a conscious decision to begin fulfilling our dream of having a family. As

a result, our first child was born about two weeks before Christiane passed her final exam as a certified nurse.

Now, nearly 40 years later, we are grateful that we could build our family together. Our faith in God and our relationship with each other have become unshaken as we have seen the hand of the Lord guiding us through the process of building our kingdom in mortality. This kingdom will continue to grow forever and ever.

Be Willing to Sacrifice

For our vision of happiness, we both were ready and willing to sacrifice. We accepted the divinely appointed roles of the father “to preside” and “to provide” and of the mother to provide “for the nurture of their children.”³ Julie B. Beck, former Relief Society General President, stated: “The priesthood role of fathers is to preside and pass priesthood ordinances to the next generation. The priesthood role of mothers is to influence. These are essential, complimentary, and interdependent responsibilities.”⁴

Helping one another in a marriage and family as equal partners does not mean we always do the same things or do everything together or in equal shares. We understand and accept different roles given to us by divine design as outlined in the proclamation on the family. We are not

We need to recognize that drawing personal strength and happiness from family life requires sacrifice and faith.

following the world in what is described as “emancipation,” in which both husband and wife live only to fulfill their own self-interests. We are living the principles of the gospel; husbands and wives complement one another, and families strive for unity and unselfishness.

Some of you may say: “Well, our situation is different. The world today is not ideal. There must be room for exceptions.” True, but I am attempting to teach the rule or the divine ideal and let you deal with exceptions as you walk the course of your life.

In the vision we had for our family, we wanted Christiane to stay home to rear our children. This meant sacrifice. Shortly after we learned that a baby was on its way, Christiane reminded me of the mutual decision we had made even before our wedding day that she would immediately stop working outside the home as soon as a baby was born. I tried to escape what I knew would be additional responsibility by mentioning that she was contributing one-third of our family income. She answered simply, “I will take care of the children, and you take care of putting food on the table.”

I knew she was right; we had discussed it long before. It was in tune with our vision of family life, it was in tune with the words of the living prophets, and it felt right. So she gave up her well-paying career as a nurse to be close to the children and to meet their daily needs, and I had to get my act together to provide food and shelter. The Lord blessed us to be able to fulfill this aspect of our vision.

Other important matters, such as parenting, teaching, mentoring, cleaning, or even diaper changing, we did together as often as circumstances allowed. This division of labor occurred because it had always been part of how we envisioned our family life.

Christiane and I found that as we have acted in faith and have trusted the Lord, He has helped us to do His will in His way and according to His timing. Now, I have to say that His way did not mean that everything turned out immediately the way we thought it would. Sometimes we had to be patient, sometimes we had to put in extra effort, and sometimes it even seemed that the Lord was testing our seriousness. However, our vision always has inspired us and has been the foundation of our most

important decisions.

One thing Christiane and I always envisioned was to be with our children in the celestial room of a temple as a prelude for the eternal joy and glory we hope one day to experience. Over the past several years we have taken one child after another to receive temple ordinances, symbolically returning them to our Heavenly Father after teaching them the principles of righteousness. We have accompanied three of our children to temple altars as they have married their sweethearts, and we anticipate more temple weddings to come.





Nothing has provided more happiness and satisfaction in our lives than the joy we have found in one another and in our posterity. Once we understood that these are just the beginnings of our eternal progression and therefore only the very first levels of our joy and happiness, we were—and are—willing to sacrifice all we have to live the doctrine of the family and to see our vision fully realized.

I invite you to ponder this doctrine and to come to know for yourself what really matters most. This type of happiness is at the heart of our existence. And the happiness that stems from congenial relationships among husband, wife, and children always grows.

Implement Your Vision

After you have studied the doctrine of the family and have established a vision for your happiness, you have to become serious about implementing your vision.

The initial rejections I received in my courtship with Christiane made me a little discouraged. I had just about

decided to begin a fruitful career as a young single adult in the Church, but one day I had a special spiritual impression. I was participating in an ordinance in the Swiss Temple when I heard a voice in my heart saying something to this effect: “Erich, if you do not seriously strive to marry and enter into the new and everlasting covenant, all these teachings and promised blessings really make no difference for you.” It was a wake-up call that I received at the young age of 21, and from that moment I tried even harder to be worthy of that blessing.

I invite you to set personal goals regarding your vision. In *Preach My Gospel* we read: “Goals reflect the desires of our hearts and our vision of what we can accomplish. Through goals and plans, our hopes are transformed into action. Goal setting and planning are acts of faith.”⁵

Do not trifle with sacred things. Once you reach a marriageable age, don’t just date for fun. Never compromise your eternal birthright by doing anything that would deprive you of making the most important covenants in

the temple. As you treat every date as a potential eternal companion, you will never do inappropriate things that would physically or spiritually harm your date or compromise your own worthiness and darken your vision. As you remain worthy, your spiritual perception will never be dimmed, and you will always be entitled to the whisperings of the Spirit. The Holy Ghost will encourage you and confirm the correctness of these most important decisions in your life, even if at times you are scared to death.

Hold yourself accountable to the Lord with respect to your vision and goals in life. If there is something you need to repent of, don't hesitate a second to do so. Both this life and eternal life are too important to "procrastinate the day of your repentance" (Alma 13:27; 34:33). Follow the invitation of a prophet of God, who encouraged us to "ask the Father in the name of Jesus for what things soever ye shall stand in need. Doubt not, but be believing, and begin as in times of old, and come unto the Lord with all your heart, and work out your own salvation with fear and trembling before him" (Mormon 9:27).

I recognize that some of you, given your circumstances, may need to adapt the ideal vision of a family to fit your personal situation. But I have learned that the Lord will help us as we act in faith and follow the ideal to the extent possible.

The Principle of Finishing

The gospel of Jesus Christ includes a most comforting component. It is the *finishing* or *completing* aspect of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Moroni admonished us to always stay on the right way, "relying alone upon the merits of Christ, who [is] the author and the finisher of [our] faith" (Moroni 6:4).

Because of our faith in Jesus Christ, we can pursue the course in life we need to take. But if we stumble because of weakness or missed opportunities, He will reach out to us, fill in the gap, and become the finisher of our faith. He

stated, "For I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts" (D&C 137:9).

From *Handbook 2* we read, "Faithful members whose circumstances do not allow them to receive the blessings of eternal marriage and parenthood in this life will receive all promised blessings in the eternities, provided they keep the covenants they have made with God."⁶

I testify that the Lord meant what He said when He stated that "it is not good that the man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18) and that His ultimate desire for all of His children is that they receive "a fulness of joy" (Moses 7:67). Therefore, always keep your vision before you and "strive for the ideal of living in an eternal family. This means preparing to become worthy spouses and loving fathers or

mothers. In some cases, these blessings will not be fulfilled until the next life, but the ultimate goal is the same for all."⁷

I know there are as many different life circumstances as there are people in the world. I know there are differences in cultures, traditions, and expectations. However, these doctrines and principles are eternal and true, and they stand independent of our personal life situations.

I have every confidence that as you sincerely ponder and prayerfully consider these doctrines and principles, you will be able to develop a personal vision for your life that will be pleasing to the Lord and lead to your greatest happiness. ■

From a devotional address, "What Do You Envision in Life?" delivered at Brigham Young University on December 2, 2014. For the full text, visit speeches.byu.edu.

NOTES

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6. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 1.3.3.
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I STILL HAVE SOMETHING TO GIVE

*As an elderly woman, I felt that my life
had little purpose—until the words of a song
reminded me otherwise.*

By Jual Daniels

As a member of the Church, I was taught that service was a way of life, and over the years I found many opportunities to serve. Some time each week might be spent preparing the lesson I would give the following Sunday. It was easy to make a large pot of soup so I could share with an older widow that lived across the street. Cookies and banana bread recipes were always doubled so I could pass them around to family and friends. I served my children by babysitting my grandchildren on busy days. We would go on nature walks, enjoy treats together, or wear out our little red wagon giving rides around the block.

Then (and it came about so quickly) I found myself in an elderly arthritic body. Now it was great-grandchildren who came and dragged out Grandma's toy box. How I wished I could get down on the floor and romp with them or pick them up and swing them around. I missed that warm feeling and the thank-yous and hugs that came with serving.

When I was younger, my father would sometimes say, "Well done, my good and faithful servant." I missed that too. Now I didn't feel needed. It seemed as though my life had little purpose.

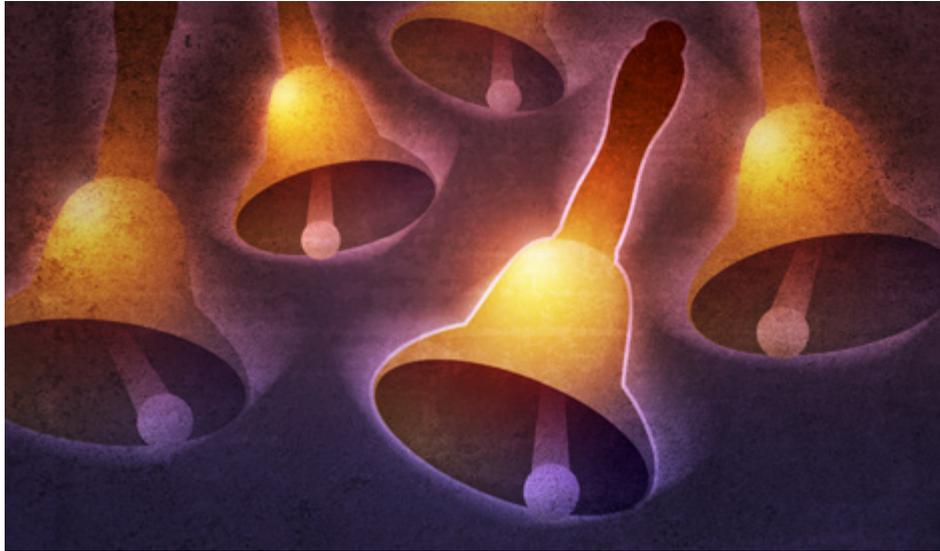
Then one day, while reading a novel, I came across these song lyrics:

Ring the bells that still can ring

Forget your perfect offering

There is a crack in everything

That's how the light gets in¹



I read the words over and over again and then once more. I felt like someone had wrapped me in a warm blanket. I knew my Heavenly Father was telling me He loved me. He knew I couldn't serve the way I used to. It was as if He said to me, "Find some other way. Be a good example and do the best you can. Your offering may not be perfect, but it is enough. You are not a perfect being. My Only Begotten Son was the only perfect one. You have faults that make a crack in your armor. Study the scriptures more, be less judgmental, and be kind and caring. Be the best you can be, and one day the light from the Savior will shine through that crack and touch your heart and you will become perfect like Him."

Speaking at a Brigham Young University devotional in March 2001, President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught: "Every sister who stands for truth and righteousness diminishes the influence of evil. Every sister who strengthens and protects her family is doing the work of God. Every sister who lives as a woman of God becomes a beacon for others to follow and plants seeds of righteous influence that will be harvested for decades to come."²

We all have bells to ring. We are children of God living among children of God. We are all needed. Some bells may be rusty, some out of tune, but to those we love and serve by our example, the music will be beautiful. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

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Chapter 2

Hear Him

This is chapter 2 of the new four-volume narrative history of the Church titled Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days. The book will be available in 14 languages in print, in the Church History section of the Gospel Library app, and at saints.lds.org. The next several chapters will be published in upcoming issues until volume 1 is released later this year. Those chapters will be available in 47 languages in the Gospel Library app and at saints.lds.org.

Joseph rose early on a spring morning in 1820 and set out for the woods near his home. The day was clear and beautiful, and sunlight filtered through the branches overhead. He wanted to be alone when he prayed, and he knew a quiet spot in the woods where he had recently been clearing trees. He had left his ax there, wedged in a stump.¹

Finding the place, Joseph looked around to make sure he was by himself. He was anxious about praying out loud and did not want to be interrupted.

Satisfied he was alone, Joseph knelt on the cool earth and began to share the desires of his heart with God. He asked for mercy and forgiveness and for wisdom to find answers to his questions. “O Lord,” he prayed, “what church shall I join?”²

As he prayed, his tongue seemed to swell until he could not speak. He heard footsteps behind him but saw no one when he turned around. He tried to pray again, but the footsteps grew louder, as if someone was coming for him. He sprang to his feet and spun around, but still he saw no one.³

Suddenly, an unseen power seized him. He tried to speak again, but his tongue was still bound. A thick darkness

closed in around him until he could no longer see the sunlight. Doubts and awful images flashed across his mind, confusing and distracting him. He felt as if some terrible being, real and immensely powerful, wanted to destroy him.⁴

Exerting all his strength, Joseph called once more to God. His tongue loosened, and he pleaded for deliverance. But he found himself sinking into despair, overwhelmed by the unbearable darkness and ready to abandon himself to destruction.⁵

At that moment, a pillar of light appeared over his head. It descended slowly and seemed to set the woods on fire. As the light rested on him, Joseph felt the unseen power release its hold. The Spirit of God took its place, filling him with peace and unspeakable joy.

Peering into the light, Joseph saw God the Father standing above him in the air. His face was brighter and more glorious than anything Joseph had ever seen. God called him by name and pointed to another being who appeared beside Him. “This is My Beloved Son,” He said. “Hear Him!”⁶

Joseph looked into the face of Jesus Christ. It was as bright and glorious as the Father’s.

“Joseph,” the Savior said, “thy sins are forgiven.”⁷

His burden lifted, Joseph repeated his question: “What church shall I join?”⁸

“Join none of them,” the Savior told him. “They teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of

godliness, but they deny the power thereof.”

The Lord told Joseph that the world was steeped in sin. “None doeth good,” He explained. “They have turned aside from the gospel and keep not my commandments.” Sacred truths had been lost or corrupted, but He promised to reveal the fullness of His gospel to Joseph in the future.⁹

As the Savior spoke, Joseph saw hosts of angels, and the light around them blazed brighter than the noonday sun. “Behold, and lo, I come quickly,” the Lord said, “clothed in the glory of My Father.”¹⁰

Joseph expected the woods to be devoured by the brilliance, but the trees burned like Moses’s bush and were not consumed.¹¹

When the light faded, Joseph found himself lying on his back, looking up into heaven. The pillar of light had departed, and his guilt and confusion were gone. Feelings of divine love filled his heart.¹² God the Father and Jesus Christ had spoken to him, and he had learned for himself how to find truth and forgiveness.

Too weak from the vision to move, Joseph lay in the woods until some of his strength returned. He then struggled home and leaned against the fireplace for support. His mother saw him and asked what was wrong.

“All is well,” he assured her. “I am well enough off.”¹³

A few days later, while talking to a preacher, Joseph told him about what he had seen in the woods. The preacher had been active in the recent religious revivals, and Joseph expected him to take his vision seriously.

At first the preacher treated his words lightly. People claimed to have heavenly visions from time to time.¹⁴ But then he became angry and defensive, and he told Joseph that his story was from the devil. The days of visions and revelations had ceased long ago, he said, and they would never return.¹⁵

Joseph was surprised, and he soon found that no one would believe his vision.¹⁶ Why would they? He was only

fourteen years old and had practically no education. He came from a poor family and expected to spend the rest of his life working the land and doing odd jobs to earn a meager living.

And yet his testimony bothered some people enough to ridicule him. How strange, he thought, that a simple boy of no consequence in the world could attract so much bitterness and scorn. “Why persecute me for telling the truth?” he wanted to ask. “Why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen?”

Joseph puzzled over these questions for the rest of his life. “I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two Personages, and they did in reality speak to me,” he later recounted, “and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true.”

“I knew it, and I knew that God knew it,” he testified, “and I could not deny it.”¹⁷

Once Joseph discovered that sharing his vision only turned his neighbors against him, he kept it mostly to

himself, content with the knowledge God had given him.¹⁸ Later, after he moved away from New York, he tried to record his sacred experience in the woods. He described his yearning for forgiveness and the Savior’s warning to a world in need of repentance. He wrote the words out himself, in halting language, trying earnestly to capture the majesty of the moment.

In the years that followed, he recounted the vision more publicly, drawing on scribes who could help him better express what defied all description. He told of his desire to find the true church and described God the Father appearing first to introduce the Son. He wrote less about his own search for forgiveness and more about the Savior’s universal message of truth and the need for a restoration of the gospel.¹⁹

With each effort to record his experience, Joseph testified that the Lord had heard and answered his prayer. As a young man, he learned that the Savior’s church was no longer



Joseph knew he had seen a vision. God the Father and Jesus Christ had appeared to him in a brilliant light.





In this grove that still stands today near the Smith family home, Joseph knelt in prayer to know which church to join.

on the earth. But the Lord had promised to reveal more about His gospel in due time. So Joseph resolved to trust in God, stay true to the commandment he had received in the woods, and wait patiently for further direction.²⁰ ■

A complete list of works cited is available in English at saints.lds.org.

The word *Topic* in the notes indicates additional information online at saints.lds.org.

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15. Joseph Smith—History 1:21; Joseph Smith History, 1838–56, volume A-1, 3, in *JSP*, H1:216 (draft 2); Neibaur, Journal, May 24, 1844, available at josephsmithpapers.org. **Topic:** Christian Churches in Joseph Smith’s Day
16. Joseph Smith—History 1:22, 27; Joseph Smith History, 1838–56, volume A-1, 4, in *JSP*, H1:216–18 (draft 2); Interview, Joseph Smith by David Nye White, Aug. 21, 1843, in [David Nye White], “The Prairies, Nauvoo, Joe Smith, the Temple, the Mormons, &c.,” *Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette*, Sept. 15, 1843, [3], available at josephsmithpapers.org.
17. Joseph Smith—History 1:21–25; Joseph Smith History, 1838–56, volume A-1, 4, in *JSP*, H1:216–18 (draft 2).
18. Joseph Smith History, circa Summer 1832, 3, in *JSP*, H1:13; see also Historical Introduction to Joseph Smith History, circa Summer 1832, in *JSP*, H1:6.
19. Joseph wrote or supervised the writing of four accounts of this experience during his lifetime, the first being in Joseph Smith History, circa Summer 1832, 1–3, in *JSP*, H1:11–13. Five others who heard him speak of the experience wrote down their own accounts. The nine accounts can be found in “Primary Accounts of Joseph Smith’s First Vision of Deity,” Joseph Smith Papers website, josephsmithpapers.org. For an analysis of the similarities and differences between the accounts, see “First Vision Accounts,” Gospel Topics, topics.lds.org. **Topic:** Joseph Smith’s First Vision Accounts
20. Joseph Smith—History 1:26; Joseph Smith History, 1838–56, volume A-1, 4, in *JSP*, H1:218 (draft 2).

WHEN

1 Family + 1 Family



= 1 Family

Although blending two families can be challenging, it can also be rich and rewarding.

By Brenda Thompson Engeler

Both my husband and I had been married before, so when we married each other, we found ourselves trying to merge two families. Marty had a daughter who attended an out-of-state college, and I had two teenage daughters and a son who had just received his mission call. We knew that blending our families would be a challenging task, so we tried to show love, respect, and consideration for all those involved. Focusing on three key areas helped us build a united family together.

COMMUNICATING

Blending our family began long before the wedding day. Early on, we encouraged our children to offer their suggestions for a successful transition. We learned that if we listened, what they said and the feelings behind it gave us clues to know what to do. We took to heart this counsel given by Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–94) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “To be effective, family communication must be an exchange of feelings and information. . . . Differences should not be ignored, but should be weighed and evaluated calmly.”¹

Some of our best talks came in informal settings. On one occasion, we were on a drive with a niece and two of our daughters. I took advantage of the moment and asked, “What advice can you give Marty and me for blending our families?”

My niece suggested we focus on the eternal perspective and not worry about the little things. With this in mind, we tried to find humor, rather than tension, in little annoyances. For example, one of my daughters was excited that Marty had a guitar. The instrument often went missing from its usual spot, appearing “mysteriously” in her bedroom next to some beginner guitar books. Rather than getting

upset, Marty would jokingly ask if he could borrow his guitar. His actions communicated support for her interest rather than frustration with her lack of respect for his belongings.

My daughters said they didn’t want their stepfather to tell them what to do. Marty and I decided that he would refrain from disciplining my children, asking them to do chores, or making decisions about their social activities. If something needed to be done, I would ask my children to take care of it. If they wanted to spend time with friends, they would ask me for permission. If they needed correction, I would be the one to correct them. Marty resisted the urge to interject his opinions during some heated discussions. When I needed his input, we discussed the situation privately.

This arrangement was not easy—and it might not be the best approach for all blended families—but it worked well for us. It provided a tension-free period for my kids to develop a positive relationship with their stepfather. Marty and I anticipated that the kids would eventually warm up to him and accept his direction, and we were right. After about a year, they started talking directly to Marty about their activities. He had earned their trust and respect, and from then on, Marty had an active role in guiding and directing them.

BALANCING TIME

Sometimes our children spoke up without our having to ask them. We tried to give these unsolicited comments the same careful consideration. Prior to the wedding, one of my daughters blurted out that she could never be in a family again because her parents were divorced. She thought her family was destroyed and said that we would only ever be a “group.”

Marty and I realized that she was still healing from my divorce. We decided not to immediately refer to ourselves as a family. Instead, we relied once again on humor to help the situation. We held “group” home evenings, “group” prayers, and “group” dinners. Within a year this daughter started reminding us to hold *family* prayer and *family* home evening and referred to us as a family when talking to her friends.

We tried to keep the lines of communication open along the way by including a time for family business during our weekly family home evenings. Anyone could bring up concerns, and we would work together to resolve problems peacefully before the end of the evening.

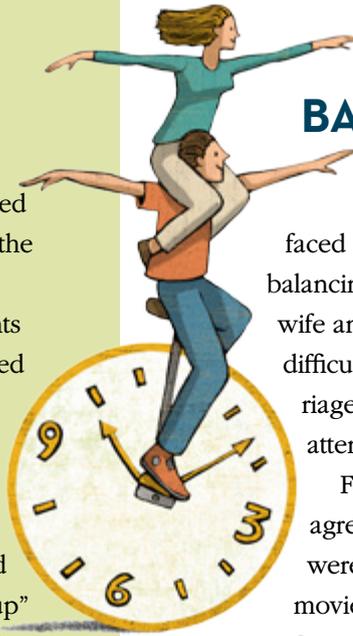
The biggest challenge Marty and I faced in blending our families together was balancing time spent together as husband and wife and time spent with our children. It was difficult to take time to strengthen our marriage and still provide each child with the attention he or she needed and deserved.

For the first year or so, Marty and I agreed to forgo date nights when the kids were at home. If we went to dinner, a movie, or a sporting event, we invited everyone. Our commitment to being home helped my kids feel secure that their new stepfather was not going to take me away from them. They knew they didn't have to compete for my attention. When the children were not with us, Marty and I strengthened our marriage relationship through weekday lunches, temple sessions, day trips, and date nights.

Marty came up with fun activities and service opportunities that gave him one-on-one time with my kids. He and my son enjoyed golfing, snowboarding, playing Ping-Pong, and working on my son's truck together. My daughters enjoyed bonding with Marty when he helped them with their homework or took them on spontaneous ice-cream or shopping trips.

We spent time as a family boating on the lake in the summer and snowboarding in the winter. We often went to the movies or out to dinner or had friends over for barbecues. On Sundays we attended church and spent the whole day together as a family.

Since my stepdaughter was attending college out of state, it was difficult to find time to spend with her. Sometimes Marty went by himself to visit her, and other times I joined him. She had a busy schedule, but when we were with her, our time together was always enjoyable.



TIPS FOR UNITING A BLENDED FAMILY

- Encourage open communication.
- Don't fret over the little things.
- Use humor to defuse tension.
- Build relationships with the children before disciplining.
- Don't compete for attention.
- Make time for one-on-one relationship building.
- Serve together, work together, learn together.

STRENGTHENING TESTIMONIES

Marty was not a member of the Church when we first met on a blind date. But early on he showed interest in learning more about the gospel, and I felt impressed to pursue my relationship with him. Much of our courtship included gospel discussions and missionary lessons in my home. Marty joined my children and me at church on Sundays and came to our home for family home evening.

As my children answered Marty's questions, they became more confident in their knowledge of gospel principles. Conversations about the Church became common and comfortable. He was impressed by their good examples, and they influenced his conversion.

Marty's journey in accepting the gospel touched our hearts and brought us all closer together. As my kids and I witnessed the changes in his life, we developed a deeper love for the gospel and for missionary work. We recognized and appreciated the strong presence of the Spirit in our home. My children developed tender feelings for Marty. One of them told me, "Mom, you better marry him. I just can't imagine not having him in my life." Being a part of Marty's conversion paved the way for us to unite as a blended family.

Marty was baptized after investigating the Church for six months. My children spoke and performed musical numbers at his baptism. All our testimonies were strengthened as we shared that spiritual day together. Six months later, Marty and I were married, and six months after that, we were sealed in the temple.

Both as a family and as a couple, we continue to strengthen our testimonies through temple work, service and missionary opportunities, church attendance, and gospel discussions. We also hold daily scripture study and family prayer with whoever is home.



JOY IN OUR HOME

We found that communicating, spending time together, and focusing on gospel principles were critical elements in bringing our new family together. We have also learned to humbly rely on our Heavenly Father and Church leaders for guidance and direction. With this help, we have found the joy that comes from having peace and love in our home. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTE

1. Marvin J. Ashton, "Family Communications," *Ensign*, May 1976, 52.

LEARN MORE

Heidi Eljarbø Morrell Andersen, "Remarriage: An Adventure in Patience and Love," *Ensign*, Feb. 2016, 62–65.

Barbara Jones Brown, "Growing as a Stepfamily," *Ensign*, July 2005, 61–65.

Robert E. Wells, "Uniting Blended Families," *Ensign*, Aug. 1997, 24–29.

SHARING YOUR FAMILY HISTORY

By Douglas Parks

Sharing our family's stories throughout the year has increased our appreciation for our ancestors and brought us closer as a family.

As members of the Church, we are taught how important families are, and the more we learn about our families, the more we can grow to love them.

Our family has found this to be true as we've employed several different methods of sharing our family's history throughout the year. The following are two ways that have proved particularly successful for us.

Family Calendars

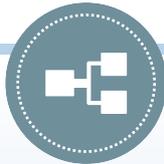
One year we created a calendar for family members. For each month

there was a calendar on the bottom half, and on the top were photos of the individuals (living and dead) who had birthdays or marriages during that specific month. On the calendar portion we noted events on the day they took place. Our family loved it because we could include photos they hadn't seen before and they would see the calendar every day of the year. Seeing photos and important life events on the calendar was a helpful way to remember and appreciate our ancestors and living family members.

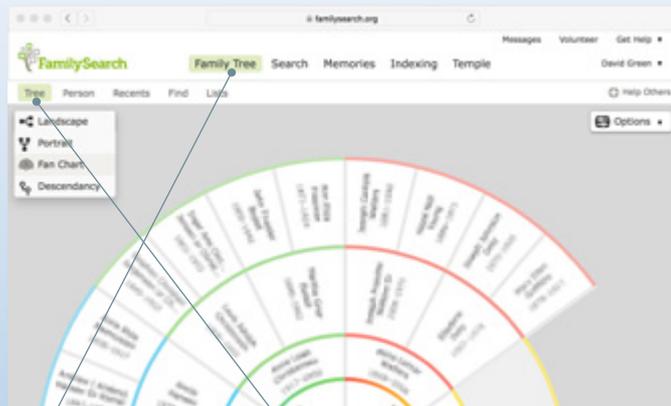


PHOTOGRAPH PROVIDED BY AUTHOR

ANCESTOR INFORMATION I INCLUDED IN EMAILS TO MY FAMILY



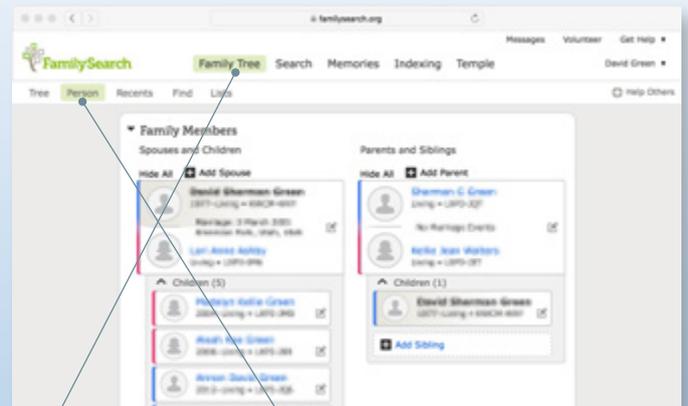
Charts: a pedigree chart and a relationship chart so that we could all see how we were related. (You can find this kind of information on FamilySearch.org and other partner websites.)



Step 1

2

Group sheet: a family group sheet showing the ancestor, the ancestor's spouse and children, and notes to help document the ancestor's story, along with a few of my own personal comments. (Family group sheet templates are available at FamilySearch.org.)



Step 1

2

Group Emails

One year I decided to send to family members a group email about a specific ancestor on the ancestor's birthday. The sidebar below describes the items I included and gives suggestions for doing something similar yourself.

All of this may sound like a lot of work, but it isn't if you do a little at a time. It was great fun to put together as well.

The group emails were a big success because we could share experiences and memories about the birthday ancestor. We also found that some of the stories and experiences of our ancestors touched the hearts of different living family members.

Learning how our ancestors dealt with issues of success and failure, hardships, migration, advanced age, loss, and war was an inspiration. It showed us that we too can overcome the problems we face in our own day, just as they did. The emails gave us a clearer picture of who they were in their specific time and place in history and how their environment helped shape them as people. By taking one ancestor and his or her family at a time, it was almost like visiting with them on a Sunday afternoon.

Sharing our family's stories has brought immeasurable joy. I can truly say our hearts have turned toward each other. ■

The author lives in Pennsylvania, USA.



BINDING HEARTS TOGETHER

"Write down what you already know about your family. . . . If you learn stories about their lives, write them down and keep them. You are not just gathering names. Those you never met in life will become friends you love. Your heart will be bound to theirs forever."

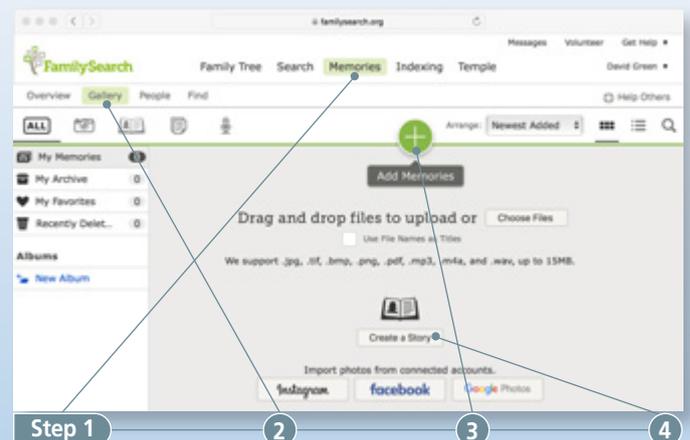
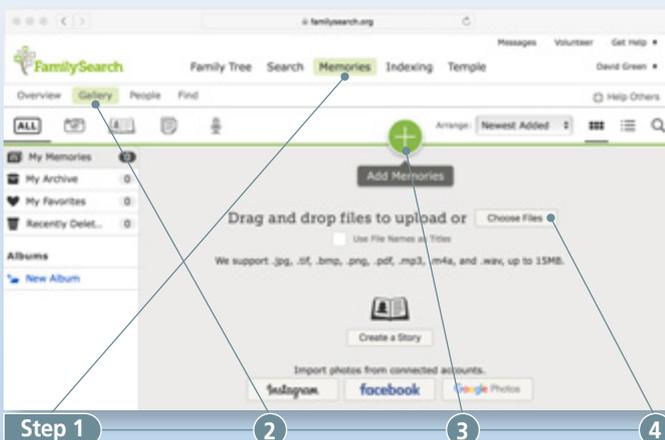
President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency,
"Hearts Bound Together," *Ensign*, May 2005, 79.

Find four more ways to share family history at lds.org/go/shareE318.

Photographs: pictures of the ancestor, if available. (Be sure that you upload your photographs and tag the people in the photos on the Memories page at FamilySearch.org. Photos, stories, documents, and recordings can be sorted by title, event, and place.)



Stories: accounts about the ancestor that were either printed or passed down verbally through the years. (When you add stories to FamilySearch, you can easily find them again, and other family members will be able to have access to them as well.)





Use the Friend magazine to help your family understand a different sensitive topic each month.

COPING WITH GRIEF

When someone we love dies, it can be hard to explain that loss to a child. But children are not too young to grieve or know that their lives will be altered by the death of someone they love. They also aren't too young to feel the peace and comfort provided by the Holy Ghost and God's plan.

Because of Heavenly Father's plan of salvation and the Savior's Atonement, we have hope that we'll see our loved ones again. But that doesn't make us not miss them now.

Some important things to know are that there's no one right way to feel and that the grief will most likely resurface as children grow older. You can use these materials from the *Friend* to help children through the grieving process or to help them understand the grief of a friend or loved one.

"Always Brothers" (page 26)



Luis learns that his baby brother will die soon. His parents explain that Heavenly Father has made it possible for Luis to see his brother

again. Knowing this doesn't take away the sad feelings, but Luis finds comfort in realizing that death is not the end.

"Gethsemane" (page 28)

Learn this beautiful song about the Savior's Atonement. Talk with your

children about how the Savior can help us through any hard thing in our lives.

"Fishing Buddies" (March 2016 Friend, pages 34–36)

After Grandpa dies, it's hard for Jacob to do the old traditions they shared. Read the sidebar "When Someone We Love Dies" to learn more about grief. If you haven't had someone close to you die, you can use the tips in the sidebar to help you and your children reach out to those who have.



TALK ABOUT IT

- Use concrete language, like "died" rather than "lost" or "passed on." Vaguer terms can leave children wondering when their loved one will be coming back.
- Answer all their questions honestly, even the hard ones. It's OK to say, "I don't know."
- Let children talk about the person who died, both good and bad memories. Bringing up that person's name will show children that it's OK to talk about him or her.
- Listen without judgment and avoid phrases like "I know what you're feeling." Everyone experiences grief in their own way.

RELATED RESOURCES

- Read the story of Lazarus to see how even Jesus Christ grieves (see John 11:1–5, 17–35). Remember that Jesus understands how we feel.
- Read Mosiah 18:9. Think about ways you can comfort those who are mourning.
- To find more resources and support, see "Grief," Gospel Topics, topics.lds.org. For child-specific resources, see childrengrieve.org and doug.org (not Church affiliated).

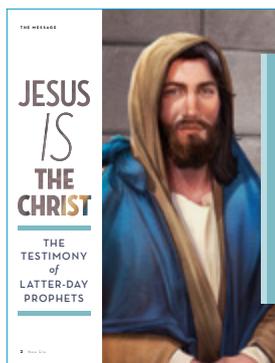
Find stories, activities, and media about other gospel topics at lessonhelps.lds.org. For past *Friend* Connection articles, visit FriendConnection.lds.org.



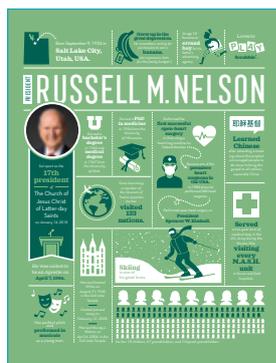
The *New Era* magazine is there for your teens—and for you. See how this month’s issue can help you talk with them and teach them.

A Testimony of the Savior

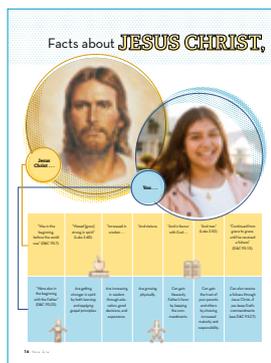
This month, the *New Era* contains three articles that focus on faith in Jesus Christ.



A collection of testimonies of the Savior from each of the Presidents of the Church from Joseph Smith to Russell M. Nelson (page 2).



President Russell M. Nelson teaches young people how they can do the impossible through faith in the Lord (page 48).



An article comparing facts about Jesus Christ to facts about you in order to help you see that you can, in fact, follow Him (page 16).

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Here are some questions answered in this month’s *New Era*:

What should I do if my friends have different standards from mine?

Is it OK when people call Church leaders by just their last names?

“Q&A” pages 42–43

TALK WITH THEM

Here are some questions you might ask:

- How have prophets’ testimonies of Jesus Christ been important for your own personal testimony?
- What have you learned about Jesus Christ so that you come to truly know Him and follow Him?

TEACH THEM

In family home evening or other teaching settings, consider using something you saw in the *New Era*. For instance:

- Read the prophets’ testimonies (page 2) and share an experience when you heard a prophet testify of Jesus Christ and had your own testimony strengthened.
- Read the message by Elder Claudio R. M. Costa of the Seventy about how a testimony of modern prophets led to his conversion (page 34), and share how following a particular teaching of modern prophets helped you in your life.
- Read the message by President Nelson (page 48), and share how God has helped you do great things through faith and obedience.

SEND US YOUR SUGGESTIONS

How can the *New Era* better meet the needs of your youth? Do you have specific ideas for article topics, questions to be answered, or ways to help youth understand the gospel? Send your suggestions to newera@ldschurch.org.





PORTRAITS OF FAITH

When Christian discovered his grandfather's talks, he had no idea they would mean so much to him and his family.

CODY BELL, PHOTOGRAPHER

Christian Karlsson

Buskerud, Norway

My mom gave me a box of old pictures. One of the surprises in this box was my grandfather's journals. Many entries are short and succinct and include simple things like the price of gasoline, bananas, or fish.

Along with his journals, the greatest treat was the careful records of the talks Grandpa gave in church.

In his talks, Grandpa shared his thoughts and feelings and the struggles he faced investigating the Church. He had to humble himself to pray about joining the Church. He received an answer and acted on it.

It is amazing to share Grandpa's firsthand accounts with my wife and children. They've never met him, but his words are reaching them 30 years after his death.

DISCOVER MORE

See more about Christian's journey of faith at [ensign.lds.org](https://www.lds.org/ensign).

Find more stories of faith in the Media Library on [LDS.org](https://www.lds.org).

Learn how you can preserve your own family's memories and photos at [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org).

SEARCHING FOR ANCESTORS AND FINDING TRUTH

I was interested in learning about my Italian ancestors, so a few years ago I began researching my genealogy. A day did not go by that I did not do some research to find them. Eventually, I found the birth record of my third great-grandfather from Italy. Finding his record touched me in such a way that I felt I should continue searching for my ancestors.

As I did, I found many ancestors I had never even heard of. I also met a young woman through social media named Ingrid Zanini. We suspected that we might somehow be related because we share the same last name. During our conversation, Ingrid told me that she was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She talked to me about the Church, and said she would send me a copy of the Book of Mormon. As soon as the book arrived, I began reading it.

One day at work, a young woman named Erika noticed that I had the Book of Mormon with me. I will never forget the expression on her face—she was so happy and excited. She asked if I was enjoying the book

Finding my third great-grandfather's birth record touched me in such a way that I continued searching for my ancestors. As I searched, I found something more.

and if I would like to go to church with her and her brother. Two weeks after receiving the Book of Mormon, I attended church for the first time.

The lesson that day in Sunday School was on baptisms for the dead and the importance of family history.

I was very interested. I met the

missionaries and attended a meeting about family history that afternoon at the stake center. As I investigated the Church, I could feel the presence of my ancestors, and I felt encouraged to learn more.

When the missionaries invited me to be baptized, I paused to think about everything that had happened since I began doing my family history. Being introduced to the gospel and learning about the eternal importance of family history could not have been just a coincidence. I accepted the missionaries' invitation to be baptized.

I still do family history, and I am grateful to know that my efforts in searching for my ancestors can now bring eternal blessings to them because I found the gospel of Jesus Christ. ■

Yuri Siqueira Zanini, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



REACHING OUT TO ANNA

Some years ago, I taught the six-year-olds in Primary. Anna was listed on my roll. I knew the family well enough to know that her parents had separated and she lived with her father. They rarely came to church.

I stopped by the house to meet Anna and her father and to invite Anna to Primary. Anna seemed interested, but she never came. Every Sunday morning for weeks, I called her home to invite her to Primary. No one ever answered the phone, but I always left a message telling Anna how happy I would be to see her in Primary.

One Sunday morning, Anna was there. Her father had helped her get ready for Primary in her best Sunday dress and then he dropped her off at the church. Happy to see her, I welcomed her and helped her get to know the other children in the class.

We had our lesson, sang songs, and had a coloring activity at the end of class. As the children were leaving, Anna came to me and dropped a crumpled piece of paper in my hands. At first, I thought it was trash. I was about to throw it away, but the Spirit prompted me to unfold it. Anna had written me a note on the paper. In a six-year-old's handwriting, it said, "I love you."

Anna didn't know me enough to love me. All she knew of me was a voice on her answering machine inviting her to Primary. But that small

effort to reach out to her helped Anna know that someone cared about her and wanted to help her feel the Savior's love.

I saw Anna in Primary once in a while and her father began coming to church occasionally as well. But when circumstances changed again for their family, we didn't see them as often.

Anna had written me a note. In a six-year-old's handwriting, it said, "I love you."

I have thought about Anna over the years. With all my heart I hope she remembers her time in Primary. She may remember some of what she learned, but I hope far more that she remembers feeling the love of the Lord, the comfort of the Spirit, and the love of a teacher. ■

Margaret S. Lifferth, Utah, USA



HAD GOD FORGOTTEN ME?

I had searched everywhere. Twice I had driven from the office to the fabrication yard seeking the essential parts needed to complete a crane we were shipping to a military installation. It was scheduled to ship in two days—just in time to meet our contracted deadline. My company would face serious penalties if we did not meet our commitment.

I entered the office storeroom and once again looked for the missing parts. I inspected every box and reconfirmed that the parts had indeed been ordered.

It was too late to reorder the parts and still meet the deadline. I was discouraged. I headed home, still trying to figure out how to resolve the problem.

I said a quick and empty-hearted prayer before bed and tried to get some sleep. In my mind I retraced the steps I took earlier that day, hoping I would remember something I missed. I tossed and turned until 3:00 a.m.

Finally I sat up. I looked down at the pillow I placed on the floor to remind myself to pray. I didn't feel like praying. I had prayed all day but felt

that nothing I said was making any difference. Had God forgotten me?

Having nowhere else to go, I slid to my knees and began to pray. I asked Heavenly Father if He was aware of my situation. "Heavenly Father," I pleaded, "*Thou* knowest where the missing parts are. Couldst Thou let me know too—today?"

Later that morning, I walked to my office. I set my briefcase on my desk and felt that I should check the storeroom one last time. I entered the storeroom and looked over the boxes

I inspected every box in the storeroom and still couldn't find the missing parts. I didn't know how to resolve the problem and still meet the deadline.



I had checked and rechecked the day before. A large box caught my eye. Something didn't look right.

A closer look revealed that it wasn't one box but two boxes nested together. I lifted the top box from the one below. In the bottom box, I found the parts! I said a prayer of gratitude and returned to my office to notify the fabricators that the missing parts had been found.

Suddenly, I realized that I had not just found the parts, but I had also discovered that Heavenly Father knew where I was and that I was important to Him. God had not forgotten me, and He never will. ■

Edwin F. Smith, Utah, USA

MY DREAM COME TRUE

I was born in Hong Kong, China. When I was young, I dreamed of living in a beautiful country surrounded by nature.

After I grew up and got married, my husband and I moved to Australia.

He was a skilled mechanic and was granted a work visa, which allowed us to stay in Australia for four years. When we both became employed, we received an additional four-year extension on our visas.

During this time, we worked to improve our situation so we could apply for permanent residency. We couldn't afford to pay for English classes, but a brother and sister in our ward helped us learn. Still, at the end of eight years, it looked like we would have to leave Australia. We fasted and prayed to find a way to stay. Our ward fasted and prayed for us as well.

Our situation looked hopeless. We started to pack and make plans for our return to Hong Kong. One night a friend called and asked about our visas. We explained our situation and he told us that he knew an immigration agent who might be able to help.

The next day we visited with the agent. He quickly put our minds at ease. He would submit the papers for an extension on a

different visa—a permanent-residency visa that required us to move out of Sydney and into the countryside.

We moved to a city about one and a half hours north of Sydney. We found a home close to a chapel, surrounded by lush green Australian foliage. We loved our new home and ward.

Soon we were granted temporary visas. My husband and I continued to pray. He fasted every Sunday for six months. We read the scriptures daily and attended the temple weekly.

Then one day we received a call from the immigration agent. We needed to return to the office in Sydney and hand in our passports. They were handed back to us stamped with an approval for permanent residency. We thanked Heavenly Father for this blessing. We had faith that our prayers would be answered, and they were. And my dream of living in a country surrounded by nature had come true. ■
Valencia Hung, New South Wales, Australia



By Elder
Robert D. Hales
(1932–2017)

Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

HE WILL MAKE OUR BURDENS LIGHT

The Savior's redeeming power would transform human existence if we would let it.

I have a great love for the scriptures. I love reading about the mortal life of Jesus Christ. There is so much in His life that can lift and inspire, and strengthen us in our times of need. To me, one of the most sacred chapters in all the scriptures is John chapter 17. The entire chapter is an intercessory prayer offered by Jesus Christ to His Father. He says, in effect, “If only the world could know you as I know you.” He tells His Father that He has done everything He has been asked to do.

Sometimes we forget how remarkably obedient the Savior was. Everything that He did, everything that He said was out of obedience to His Father. His seeking out and caring for the poor, the calling of His disciples, His teachings both in the land



of Palestine and in the Americas—all these things were done because His Father had commanded Him to do them. He had no personal agenda. He said, “I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me” (John 8:28). What a perfect example of obedience!

In the choices we make in life, we need to know the Savior. His simple admonition “Come . . . follow me” (Matthew 19:21) could transform human existence if we would let it. He has the power to make our burdens light if we will turn to Him.

As an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, I have the opportunity to bear

testimony as a sacred witness of the Savior. My greatest desire is that my testimony might penetrate the hearts of those who hear it.

I know that Jesus Christ lives. I know that He guides and directs His Church by revelation through His prophet in this very day and time. If we will have faith in our Savior, He will see us through our trials and tribulations, and we will be able to endure to the end and return to His presence after this mortal probation. He lives and knows and loves each one of us. He so much wants to bless us if we will come unto Him. ■

From “Special Witnesses of Christ,” Ensign, Apr. 2001, 12–13. To watch Elder Hales deliver this message, “Jesus Christ Is the Perfect Example of Obedience,” visit prophets.lds.org and select “Special Witnesses of Christ.”



**GETHEMANE (JESUS IS MY LIGHT),
BY JORGE COCCO SANTÁNGELO**

"[Jesus] went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done" (Matthew 26:42).



PARENTS

**WHEN 1 FAMILY
+ 1 FAMILY
= 1 FAMILY**

*Although blending two families
can be challenging, it can also
be rich and rewarding.*

66

YOUNG ADULTS
**UNENDOWED
BUT NOT
UNIMPORTANT**

20

WOMEN
**WATCHING OVER
EACH OTHER**

14

SENIORS
**I STILL HAVE
MUCH TO GIVE**

60

TEACHERS
**OUR PERSONAL
EXODUS**

46

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

