

# Ensign

A photograph of three women walking and talking in front of a building with large steps. The woman on the left is wearing a beige and black striped long-sleeved top and a matching skirt, carrying a black bag. The woman in the middle is wearing a black short-sleeved top and a black skirt, wearing a pearl necklace and carrying a black bag. The woman on the right is wearing a maroon top with a lace collar and a light blue skirt with a ruffled hem, carrying a blue bag.

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THE  
CHURCH  
IS HERE

# Rome Italy





When the Rome Italy Temple is dedicated on March 10–12, 2019, Latter-day Saints around the world will rejoice, especially the Saints in Italy. What more meaningful edifice could the “eternal city” receive than a house of the Lord?

The temple, the first in Italy, is located in the northeast section of Rome. It is part of a religious and cultural complex that includes a multifunctional meetinghouse (with a cultural hall and facilities for conferences), a visitors’ center, a family history center, and patron housing, all surrounded by gardens.

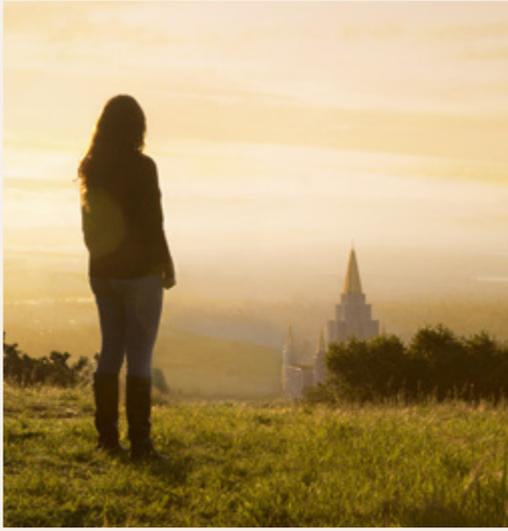
Missionary efforts in Italy began in 1850, but progress was interrupted by local concerns with the Church and by certain legal requirements. The Church was allowed to resume missionary efforts in 1964. In 1993, Italy granted formal legal status to the Church. In 2012, the Church received official status as a “partner of the state,” which allows the Church greater freedom to do more good, both as a church and as a social institution.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MOSSIMO CRISCIONE

- Today nearly 27,000 Latter-day Saints in Italy meet in 101 congregations.
- President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) presided at the 2010 groundbreaking for the Rome Italy Temple, which was also attended by the vice mayor of Rome.
- There are two missions in Italy: the Italy Milan Mission and the Italy Rome Mission.



Learn more about the history of the Church in Italy and other countries at [history.lds.org/GlobalHistories](https://history.lds.org/GlobalHistories).



**Connecting Daughters of God  
with His Priesthood Power**

*Barbara Morgan Gardner*

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# I Have So Much to Learn about the Priesthood

**A**s a young woman and later as a missionary, I remember wondering if certain verses in the scriptures applied to me as a female, especially those which referred to missionary work and priesthood. Now in my various Church callings and as a religion teacher, others have asked me similar questions about how the priesthood applies to them.

As I note in my article on page 30, Church leaders in the last few years have asked members to better understand the priesthood. President Russell M. Nelson voiced a concern that “too many of our brothers and sisters do not fully understand the concept of priesthood power and authority” (“Ministering with the Power and Authority of God,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 69).

The saying is true that “information inspires inspiration.” As I have studied the priesthood and taught university students about it, I have not only come to realize how little I know but have also had my mind and heart opened to eternal truths regarding the priesthood.

I hope that as you learn more about the priesthood in this issue, you’ll come to understand that our Heavenly Parents desire to bless us with the priesthood and that latter-day prophets are pleading for us to take advantage of these privileges—perhaps especially those given to worthy men and women in the temple.

Sincerely,

Barbara Morgan Gardner



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By Heather White Claridge and Chakell Wardleigh

The head artist who helped create the stained glass mural in the Rome Italy Temple Visitors' Center explains the significance and symbolism of this piece.

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By Alex Hugie

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By Zariah Inniss

A young adult from Barbados learns she doesn't have to be perfect to be worthy to enter the temple.

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# THE SOURCE OF PRIESTHOOD AUTHORITY

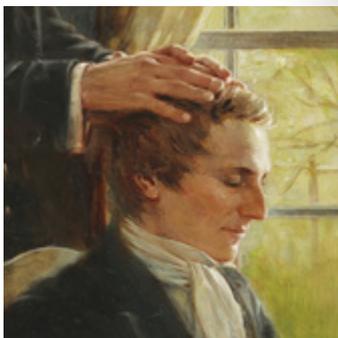
**T**he priesthood is the power and authority of God, which He gives to us to help carry out His work of salvation (see *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], page 8). The Lord has given His priesthood to chosen servants since the days of Adam. Because the priesthood is given to worthy men by the laying on of hands and a record is kept of those ordinations, priesthood holders today can trace their line of authority back to Joseph Smith, who received the Melchizedek Priesthood from Apostles of Jesus Christ.

## 1. Peter, James, and John

During His mortal ministry, Jesus Christ gave His priesthood authority to His Apostles, including Peter, James, and John (see Matthew 10).

## 2. Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery

On May 15, 1829, John the Baptist appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to give them the Aaronic Priesthood. A few weeks later, the ancient Apostles Peter, James, and John gave Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery the Melchizedek Priesthood (see Doctrine and Covenants 27:12; 128:20; *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 81, 101).



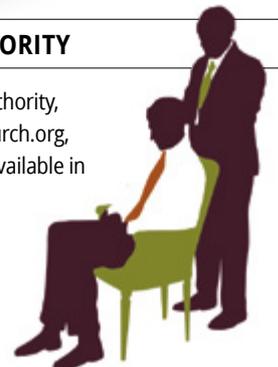
## 3. Latter-day Apostles and Leaders

The Prophet Joseph Smith gave the priesthood to other worthy men, who, under the Prophet's direction, gave it to other worthy men, and so on, up to the modern day.

## PRIESTHOOD LINE OF AUTHORITY

To receive your priesthood line of authority, send an email to [lineofauthority@ldschurch.org](mailto:lineofauthority@ldschurch.org), with the letters PLA in the subject line (available in English, Portuguese, and Spanish).

To learn more about the priesthood, see *"Connecting Daughters of God with His Priesthood Power"* on page 30.



## PRIESTHOOD KEYS

PRIESTHOOD KEYS ARE THE AUTHORITY GOD HAS GIVEN TO PRIESTHOOD LEADERS TO DIRECT THE USE OF HIS PRIESTHOOD

on earth, including how the priesthood is passed from one priesthood holder to another. For example, only a bishop, who holds the priesthood keys for his ward, can authorize a man or young man in his ward to receive the Aaronic Priesthood. In April 1836 the Prophet Joseph Smith received important priesthood keys from Moses, Elias, and Elijah in the Kirtland Temple (see Doctrine and Covenants 110). ■



DETAIL FROM CHRIST ORDAINING THE TWELVE APOSTLES, BY HARRY ANDERSON THE MOMENT AFTER, SCULPTURE BY TREVOR SOUTHEY

DETAIL FROM OLIVER COWDERY ORDAINS JOSEPH SMITH, BY WALTER RANE



## Jason and Jackie Wong

Hong Kong, China



*Views on gender roles can vary widely from culture to culture, but the challenge of becoming united as newlyweds seems to be universal. Jason and Jackie learned some important lessons as they worked together.*

**LESLIE NILSSON, PHOTOGRAPHER**

### Jason:

I grew up thinking that girls were supposed to do all the housework. I quickly learned that was not realistic. Jackie was very busy and under a lot of pressure with her job. While I'm under a lot of pressure too, I realized that I should start doing more to help.

### Jackie:

Being a newlywed has been a change. Honestly speaking, God is super important within our relationship. Without God, we might have broken up!

### Jason:

We realized that we needed to spend more time together. So now we do housework together. This helps us get it done, and we are able to be with each other.

### Jackie:

We also try to take time in the evenings to talk about our day; then we pray and read the scriptures before we sleep. Living the gospel has blessed our marriage.

### FIND MORE

See more about Jason and Jackie's journey of faith, including additional photos, in the online or Gospel Library version of this article.

President Russell M. Nelson testifies of the blessings of celestial marriage at [lds.org/go/031906](https://www.lds.org/go/031906).

# Ministering Principles

## HOW TO **SHARE** TESTIMONY **MORE NATURALLY**



### **MINISTERING IS TESTIFYING.**

THE FLEXIBILITY OF MINISTERING CAN INCREASE OUR OPPORTUNITIES  
TO SHARE TESTIMONY IN FORMAL AND INFORMAL WAYS.

We have covenanted to “stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places” (Mosiah 18:9). Sharing our testimonies is part of standing as a witness and is a powerful way to invite the Holy Ghost to touch someone’s heart and change their life.

“Testimony—real testimony, born of the Spirit and confirmed by the

Holy Ghost—changes lives,” said President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.<sup>1</sup>

But sharing our testimony can be intimidating or uncomfortable for some of us. That may be because we think of sharing our testimony as something we do in fast and testimony meeting or when teaching a lesson.

In those formal settings, we often use certain words and phrases that seem out of place in natural conversation.

Sharing our testimonies can become a more regular blessing in our lives and the lives of others when we understand how simple it can be to share what we believe in everyday settings. Here are a few ideas to help you get started.

## Keep It Simple

A testimony doesn’t need to begin with the phrase, “I’d like to bear my testimony,” and it doesn’t need to end with, “In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.” A testimony is an expression of what we believe and know to be true. So to visit with your neighbor on the street about a problem she is having and to say, “I know that God answers prayers,” can be as powerful as any testimony shared from the pulpit at church. The power doesn’t come from flowery language; it comes from the Holy Ghost confirming truth (see Doctrine and Covenants 100:7–8).



## The Savior’s Example

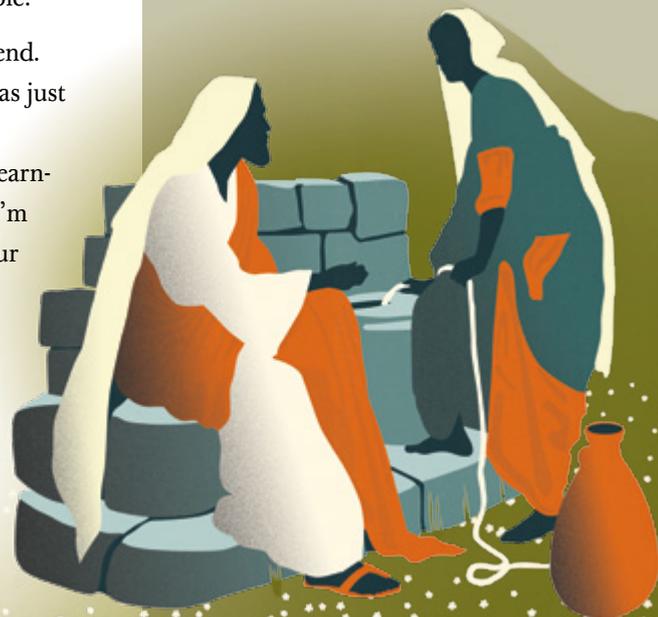
Weary from a journey through Samaria, the Savior paused to rest at a well and met a woman there. He started a conversation about drawing water from the well. Using this everyday task that the woman was engaged in gave Jesus the opportunity to testify of the living water and eternal life available to those who believe in Him (see John 4:13–15, 25–26).

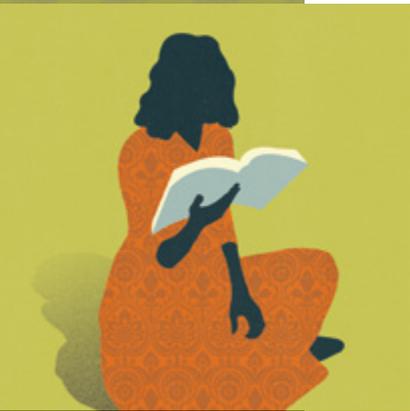
## Fit the Flow of Natural Conversation



If we’re willing to share, there are opportunities all around us to fit testimony into everyday conversations. For example:

- Someone asks you about your weekend. “It was great,” you reply. “Church was just what I needed.”
- Someone expresses sympathy after learning about a challenge in your life: “I’m so sorry.” You reply: “Thanks for your concern. I know that God will see me through. He’s been there for me before.”
- Someone remarks: “I hope this awful weather changes soon,” or “The bus sure is late,” or “Look at this traffic.” You might respond: “I’m sure God will help everything work out.”





## Be Prepared

For some of us, sharing testimony on the spur of the moment can be intimidating. There are ways we can plan ahead and “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh [us] a reason of the hope that is in [us]” (1 Peter 3:15).

First, being prepared can mean looking at how we live. Are we inviting the Holy Ghost into our lives and strengthening our own testimonies each day through righteous living? Are we giving the Spirit opportunities to speak to us and give us the words we need through prayer and scripture study? As the Lord counseled Hyrum Smith, “Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed” (Doctrine and Covenants 11:21).

Second, being prepared can mean looking ahead and considering opportunities you might have that day or that week to share your testimony. You can prepare for those opportunities by thinking about how they might give you a chance to share what you believe.



## Share Your Experiences

We often talk with each other about our challenges. When someone tells you about what they are facing, you might share a time when God helped you in your trials and testify that you know He can help them too. The Lord said

He strengthens us in our trials so “that ye may stand as witnesses for me hereafter, and that ye may know of a surety that I, the Lord God, do visit my people in their afflictions” (Mosiah 24:14). We can stand as witnesses of Him when we testify of how He has helped us in our trials.



## Stay Centered on the Savior and His Doctrine

President Ballard taught, “Although we can have testimonies of many things as members of the Church, there are basic truths we need to constantly teach one another and share.” As examples, he listed: “God is our Father and Jesus is

the Christ. The plan of salvation is centered on the Savior’s Atonement. Joseph Smith restored the fulness of the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ, and the Book of Mormon is evidence that our testimony is true.” As we express those heartfelt truths, we invite the Spirit to bear witness that what we have said is true. President Ballard emphasized that “the Spirit cannot be restrained when pure testimony of Christ is borne.”<sup>2</sup>



### *A Simple Testimony Can Change Lives*

President Russell M. Nelson has told of a nurse who asked then-Dr. Nelson a question after a difficult surgical procedure. “Why are you not like other surgeons?” Some surgeons she knew could be short-tempered and profane as they performed such high-pressure procedures.

Dr. Nelson could have answered in any number of ways. But he simply replied, “Because I know the Book of Mormon is true.”

His answer prompted the nurse and her husband to study the Book of Mormon. President Nelson later baptized the nurse. Decades later, while presiding over a stake conference in Tennessee, USA, as a newly ordained Apostle, President Nelson enjoyed an unexpected reunion with the same nurse. She recounted that her conversion, brought about by his simple testimony and the influence of the Book of Mormon, helped lead to the conversion of another 80 people.<sup>3</sup>

## Invitation to Act

Don't be afraid to share your testimony. It can bless those to whom you minister.

How will you use these ideas or your own to share your testimony today? ■

### NOTES

1. M. Russell Ballard, “Pure Testimony,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 40.
2. M. Russell Ballard, “Pure Testimony,” 41.
3. In Jason Swensen, “Be Ready to Explain Your Testimony Using the Book of Mormon, President Nelson Says,” Church News section of LDS.org, Feb. 6, 2018, news.lds.org.



Ministering Principles articles are intended to help us learn to care for one another—not to be shared as messages during visits. As we come to know those we serve, the Holy Ghost will prompt us to know what message they might need in addition to our care and compassion.

### SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES

Send us your experiences as you have ministered to others or have been ministered to. Go to [ensign.lds.org](https://www.lds.org) and click “Submit an Article or Feedback.”



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How can  
those who face  
challenges  
still be  
cheerful,  
strong, and  
at peace?



# Sources of Peace and Power



By Elder  
Carlos A. Godoy  
Of the Presidency  
of the Seventy

One of the most touching experiences I have had as a General Authority was to serve among our dear Saints in Venezuela. People there, including Church members, live in difficult circumstances. However, although this reality exists, I could also see, in my frequent visits to the country, that there was a difference between the general population and the Latter-day Saints.

## The Venezuela Experience

The Saints in Venezuela are doing their best. It is true that many are suffering and struggling, and the Church has been active in supporting those in need through fast-offering funds, welfare programs, and self-reliance initiatives. But while the Saints could easily find reasons to be sad, even with all the challenges they face, they are a happy people—at peace with themselves, often smiling, and hoping for better days ahead.

This is true for youth of the Church in Venezuela. Their personal and family challenges are making them stronger and preparing them for the future. And this is also true for our Venezuelan missionaries. They need to be strong

for themselves, for their investigators, and for their families. And they are. They remind us of the 2,000 stripling warriors of Helaman. Though small in numbers, they are “exceedingly valiant for courage” (see Alma 53:20–21). In Venezuela the Lord is preparing a strong generation of mothers, fathers, and leaders. Whenever we are among the Saints there, we find ourselves filled with faith in the gospel and in the future.

## Peace in Times of Troubles

How can these members, who face such challenges, still be cheerful, strong, and at peace? I believe what is happening with many of them is that they are becoming more dependent on God. As a consequence, they are receiving strength from the source of all strength. They recognize the blessings they receive from Heavenly Father, they rely on the power of Jesus Christ and His Atonement, and they are comforted, supported, and strengthened by the Holy Ghost. As a result, their burdens become lighter, their sorrow is relieved, and they find peace in the midst of their trials.

The Venezuelan members are experiencing a modern example of what took place among Alma and his people in the Book of Mormon:

“And now it came to pass that the burdens which were laid upon Alma and his brethren were made light; yea, the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord” (Mosiah 24:15).

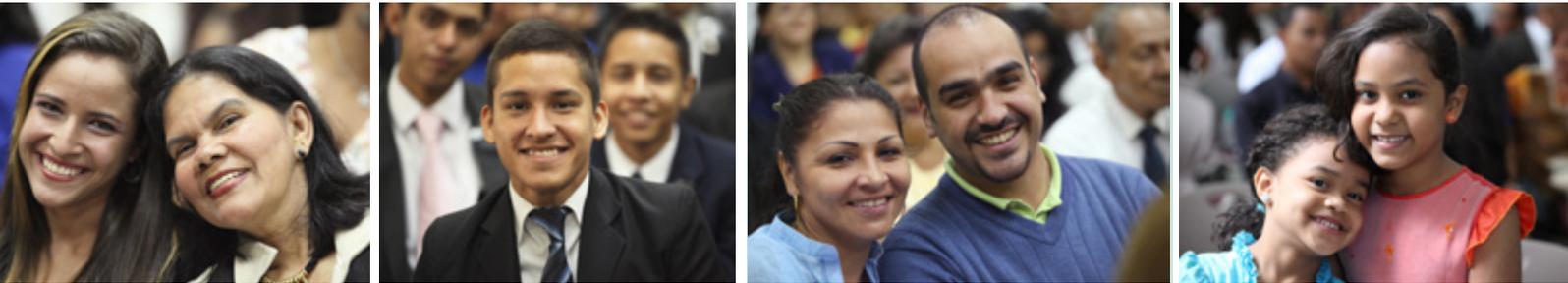
### The Atoning Power of Jesus Christ

My testimony of God’s desire to bless us has become stronger by spending time among our members in Venezuela. As in the experience of Alma and his followers, the Saints in Venezuela

*The Saints in Venezuela are a happy people—at peace with themselves, often smiling, hoping for better days ahead.*

What has happened to them is the same process that should happen to each of us. We will all have challenges and trials in our lives. When we do, we should ask ourselves:

- Are we looking to God to help us overcome those difficult times?
- Are we willing to pay the price to become a better person and to develop Christlike attributes so necessary to our progress?
- Do we understand that through the power of the Savior’s Atonement, we can find strength and hope?



*One way they stay strong is by listening to the counsel of prophets and apostles, as these Saints did when Elder Quentin L. Cook spoke in Caracas, Venezuela, in 2013.*

have been strengthened, and their increased capacity has lightened the burdens they bear. The Savior invites us to come unto Him if we have heavy burdens, and we will find rest (see Matthew 11:28–30). These good members have been empowered to carry their burdens in the strength of the Lord.

As a consequence of their trials, and as a blessing for putting their trust in the Savior and His grace, they have experienced a change of heart and they each have become “as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon [them], even as a child doth submit to his father” (Mosiah 3:19).

In summary, through trials they have developed Christlike attributes all disciples of Christ hope to attain.

How and why is the Savior able to provide such comfort and power? The scriptures tell us: “And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people.

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

### The Lord Knows

As Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “The Savior has suffered



*A yoke enables animals to pull together with power, just as the yoke of Jesus Christ connects us to His redeeming and enabling power.*

not just for our iniquities but also for the inequality, the unfairness, the pain, the anguish, and the emotional distress that so frequently beset us. . . . You and I in a moment of weakness may cry out, ‘No one understands. No one knows.’ No human being, perhaps, knows. But the Son of God perfectly knows and understands, for He felt and bore our burdens before we ever did. And because He paid the ultimate price and bore that burden, He has perfect empathy and can extend to us His arm of mercy in so many phases of our life” (“The Atonement and the Journey of Mortality,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2012, 47).

Elder Bednar then quotes this scripture, which helps us understand that because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, each of us can find peace:

“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).

I want to add my testimony to Elder Bednar’s words. I also know through personal experience that we can find strength and peace in the loving arms of our Savior. The Savior’s redeeming and enabling power is not just the source of the forgiveness of our sins but also a powerful source of hope, peace, strength, comfort, talents, inspiration, and all that is necessary to help us go

through our journey in this life and succeed. We can truly rely upon “the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah” (2 Nephi 2:8).

### **Our Own Life Application**

How can we access this source of strength? What do we have to do to get the help we need?

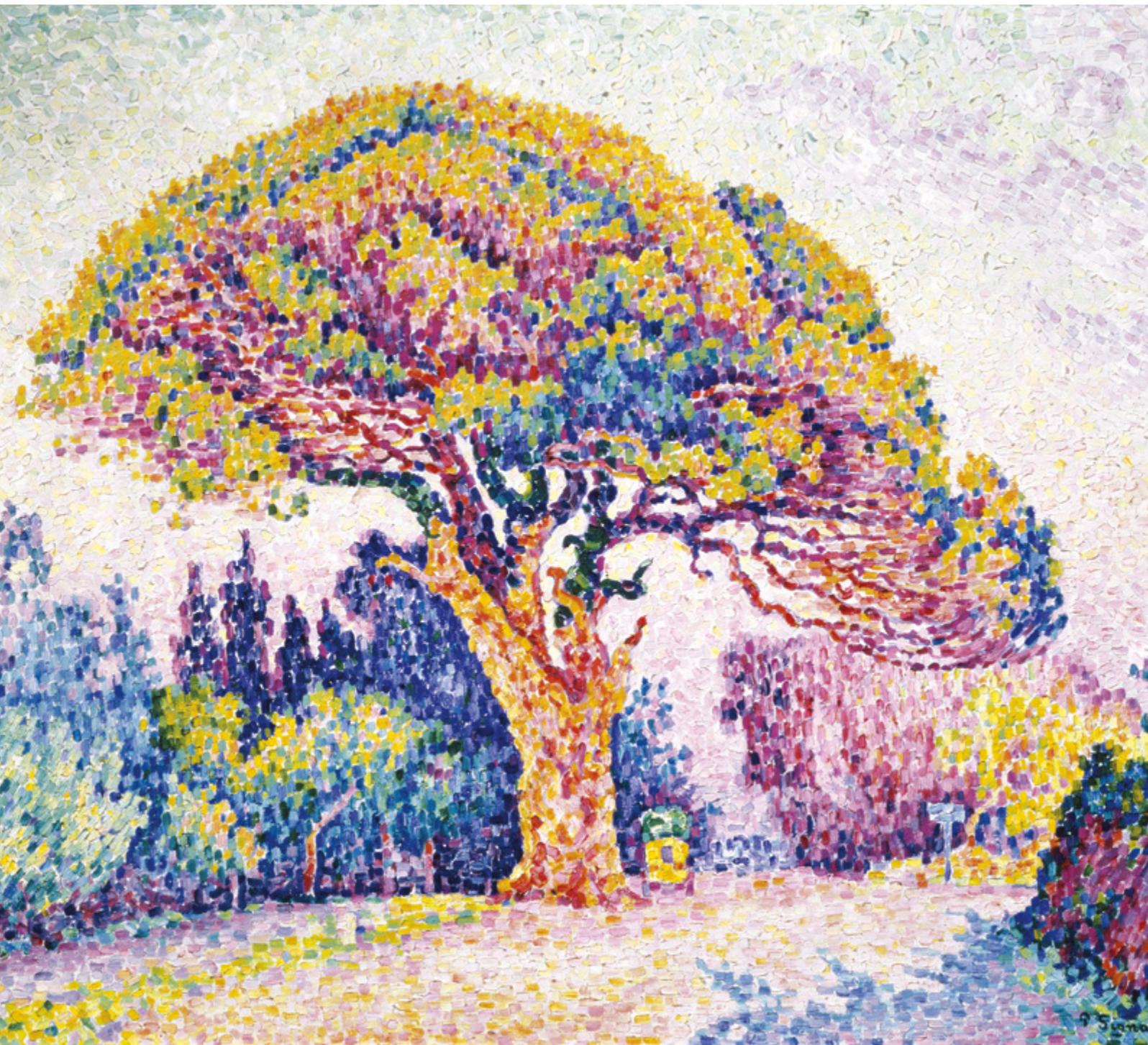
First, we should have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His Atonement. We need to understand that He and His Father are the sources of peace and power. They make everything possible.

Then, we must act and do our best with whatever we are going through. We may be working to overcome a weakness, seeking relief from sorrow, or striving to develop a talent. Even if our best seems insufficient sometimes, if we really give our best, the Lord through His grace will bless us with what we need.

“As you and I come to understand and employ the enabling power of the Atonement in our personal lives,” Elder Bednar said, “we will pray and seek for strength to change our circumstances rather than praying for our circumstances to be changed. We will become agents who act rather than objects that are acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:14)” (“The Atonement and the Journey of Mortality,” 44).

We should also remember that when we are doing our part, the Lord is by our side. Our part of the battle doesn’t need to be fought alone. He will be with us, from the very beginning to the very end. I testify that the words of Isaiah are true: “For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee” (Isaiah 41:13). That is true for the Saints in Venezuela, and it is true for Saints everywhere in the world. ■

*Remember that when we are doing our part, the Lord is by our side.  
Our part of the battle doesn’t need to be fought alone.*





**By Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf**

Of the Quorum  
of the Twelve  
Apostles

# Your Adventure through Mortality

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Believe—and God will be with you. Incline your heart to Him—and He will guide you on your journey.

*From a worldwide devotional for young adults, “The Adventure of Mortality,” delivered by Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf and Sister Harriet Uchtdorf in the Conference Center on January 14, 2018.*

**I**t is so good to be with you today and to feel your spirit, your strength, your energy. I am very happy that you had a chance to hear from Sister Uchtdorf. Harriet is indeed the sunshine of my life. Everyone who knows her, loves her. She is the kind of person who makes those around her better and happier. She has certainly had that influence on me.

We just celebrated our 55th wedding anniversary. When we look at our two children and their spouses, our six grandchildren with their families, and our four great-grandchildren, we are amazed at the great adventure our life has been.

## **The Age of Instant Answers**

An interesting thought occurred to me as I was preparing for this event. Yes, it’s true, the years when I was ages 18 to 30 are barely visible in my rearview mirror, but despite my current age, I still feel young inside. In fact, most of us older people consider ourselves to be young people who have just been living a very long time.

When you look at us, the “older generation,” you could be surprised how much more we have in common with your generation than you might suppose. I believe that the differences between Heavenly Father’s children, whatever their age, are minor compared to the similarities. For instance, many of you have questions about God and about yourself—deep, fundamental questions that are similar to those asked by people much older than you:



*“Receiving [heavenly] answers often requires sacrifice, work, and patience,” said Elder Uchtdorf, pictured with Sister Uchtdorf and young adults in the Conference Center.*

- “Does God really exist? Does He care?”
- “Am I on the right path?”
- “Why do I sometimes feel empty, overwhelmed, overlooked, or lonely?”
- “Why hasn’t God intervened in my life?”
- “Why didn’t He answer a prayer?”
- “Why did He allow me to experience this sadness, illness, or tragedy?”

These can be difficult questions to answer.

In this age of instant answers—where seemingly absolute and unsailable knowledge is merely a Google search away—we sometimes get frustrated when answers to our most personal, important, and urgent questions are delayed. We lift up our hearts to heaven, and all we seem to get is a frustrating, spinning “wait cursor.”

We don’t like waiting.

When we have to wait more than a few seconds for a search engine to respond, we might suppose the connection is down or broken. In our frustration, we might even abandon the search. But when it comes to eternal questions, matters of the soul, we must be more patient.

Not all answers are of equal worth. Answers that come from worldly wisdom or popular opinion are easy to come by, but they lose their worth

quickly when new theories or trends emerge. Heavenly answers—eternal answers—are priceless. Receiving these answers often requires sacrifice, work, and patience.

These answers are worth the wait.

My purpose is to offer my certain witness that your Father in Heaven knows you, hears you, and will never abandon you. As you incline your hearts to Him and strive to follow His way, He will intervene in your life and direct your path as you journey through this great and exciting adventure of mortality.

### **Connecting the Dots**

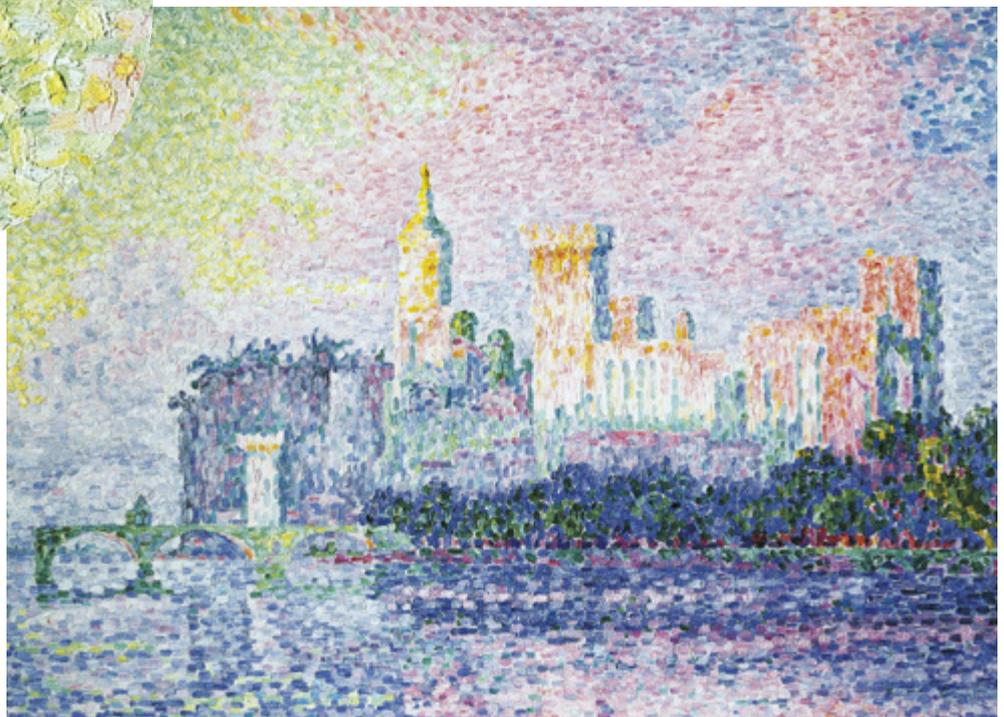
One of the great innovators of our time, Steve Jobs of Apple, had this insight: “You can’t connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backward. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future.”<sup>1</sup>

*When we look at our lives in the frame of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we can begin to see how the various dots in our lives interconnect.*

What did he mean by that? In the late 19th century, artists such as Georges Seurat and Paul Signac began painting in a new style that would become known as neo-impressionism. Their technique consisted of dotting canvases with small specks of color. Close up, these dots appear unconnected and random. But when you take in the entire painting, you can see how the dots blend into colors and how the colors form shapes that reveal a beautiful pattern. What once seemed arbitrary and even confusing begins to make sense.

Sometimes our lives are like neo-impressionistic art. The dots of color that make up the moments and events of our days can appear unconnected and chaotic at times. We can't see any order to them. We can't imagine that they have a purpose at all.

However, when we step back and take an eternal perspective, when we look at our lives in the frame of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we can begin to see how the various dots in our lives interconnect. We may not be able to see the entire picture just yet, but with patience we can see enough to trust that there is a beautiful, grand design. And as we strive to trust God and follow His Son, Jesus Christ, one day we will see the finished product, and we will know that the very hand of God was directing and guiding our steps.





*You have to ask yourself, “Can I muster enough faith to believe God? Am I willing to trust that He loves me and wants to guide my path?”*



We will know that the Master Artist had a plan for those random dots all along. We will see that He amplified our talents, prepared opportunities, and introduced us to possibilities far more glorious than we ever could have imagined or accomplished on our own. I have certainly seen this in my own life.

### **My Adventure of Mortality**

When I was very young, my family was twice forced to flee our home and leave everything behind. On both occasions, it became apparent that people in our new locations considered us as “less” than them. Among the children my age,

my accent marked me as an outsider, and it was a rich source of ridicule and laughter for them.

The trauma and stress of our relocations caused me to fall behind in my studies, and I lost one full school year. In East Germany, I had studied Russian as a second language. It was difficult, but I managed. Now, in West Germany, I was required to learn English.

This seemed impossible to me! I believed that my mouth was simply not made for the English language.

During my teenage years, I had a crush on a most amazing girl with beautiful large brown eyes. Unfortunately, she didn’t seem the slightest bit interested in me.

So there I was, a rather insignificant and struggling young man living in post-war Germany who didn’t seem to have much chance of success in life.

However, I had a couple of good things going for me. I knew that my family loved me. In school and in church, teachers encouraged me to always set my goals high. I still remember when a young American missionary taught this principle from the scriptures: “If God is for [you], who can be against [you]?”<sup>2</sup>

There was something about this that struck me with great power. “If that’s the case,” I thought, “then why should I fear?”

So, I believed. And I trusted God.

For a time, I was in an apprenticeship program. One of my teachers challenged me to aim higher and attend night school to study mechanical engineering. It took a great deal of extra work, but it led me to discover my great passion for aviation! It came as a shock when I learned that to become a pilot, I needed to know English. But I wanted to become a pilot, and somehow miraculously my mouth seemed to change, and English no longer was such an impossible language.

With new motivation, a fresh commitment to work hard, and trust in Heavenly Father, I took small steps that helped me to build the confidence that I could do it. Of course, that didn't mean things always went smoothly.

When I was 19, I traveled to San Antonio, Texas, USA, to begin my air force pilot training. On the airplane, I sat next to a man who spoke with a Texan accent. I realized to my horror that the English I had worked so desperately to learn was not the same English he spoke!

At pilot training school, things were difficult too. It was an extremely competitive program, with everyone vying for the top spot at graduation. I knew right away that I was at a disadvantage because most of my classmates were native English speakers.

My flight instructors cautioned me about another potential disadvantage—I spent a lot of time at church. The local members welcomed me into their branch and into their homes, and we even built a chapel in Big Spring, Texas, together. My instructors worried that such activities were impairing my chance at a high ranking. I didn't think so. So I trusted God and did the best I could.



Eventually, I did learn English, though I'm still working on it. I completed my pilot training—and finished first in my class. I became a fighter pilot and later an airline captain. And that beautiful, brown-eyed girl of my dreams became my wife.

### **Do Small Things Perfectly**

Is there a lesson in this? I think there are several!

One might be this: Don't get overwhelmed by the many large, difficult tasks of life. If you commit to doing the "easy" things—the "small" things God asks you to do—and you do them as perfectly as you can, big things will follow.

Some of these small and easy things you could do perfectly are study the scriptures, live the Word of Wisdom, attend church, pray with real intent, and pay tithes and offerings.

Do these things even when you don't want to. These "sacrifices" may appear to be small, but they are important, for "sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven."<sup>3</sup>

In a sense, your small and simple sacrifices are the dots of daily living that make up the masterpiece painting of your life. You may not see how the dots connect now, and you don't need to yet. Simply have faith enough for the moment you are living in now. Trust in God, and "out of small things [will come] that which is great."<sup>4</sup>

### **Trust in God**

Now, you may be thinking: "Yes, Elder Uchtdorf, that's all very nice for you. But you are an Apostle. I'm just a regular member of the Church. My prayers are not answered. My life is not directed. If there is a plan for me, it's a thrift store version. A hand-me-down plan. A pat-on-the-head-just-be-content-with-what-you-have plan."



My dear friends, you are children of the living God, the God of the universe. He loves you, He wants you to succeed, He has a plan prepared for your success. Remember what Steve Jobs said: “You cannot connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backward.”

When I was your age, I had no idea where my life would take me. I definitely didn’t see any dots connecting in front of me.

But I did trust God. I listened to the advice of loving family and wise friends, and I took small steps of faith, believing that if I did the best I could in the moment, God would take care of the big picture.

He did.

He knew the end from the beginning when I did not.

I could not see the future, but He could.

Even during those times of hardship when I thought I was abandoned, He was with me—I see that now.

In Proverbs we find this great promise: “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”<sup>5</sup>

I don’t believe there is a question mark at the end of that verse. No, I think there should be an exclamation point!

So you have to ask yourself, “Can I muster enough faith to believe God? Am I willing to trust that He loves me and wants to guide my path?”

In fact, you might do very well on your own in many things. But I urge you to believe that your life will be infinitely better if you rely on God to guide your steps. He knows things you cannot possibly know, and He has a future prepared for you that you cannot possibly imagine. The great Apostle Paul testified, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.”<sup>6</sup>

Do you want your Heavenly Father to guide you, bless you, and uphold you?

Then believe.

Love Him.

Seek Him with all your heart.

Walk in His ways—which means keeping the commandments, honoring your covenants, following the teachings of the prophets, and hearkening unto the promptings of the Spirit.

Do this and God will “increase you a thousand times and bless you as he has promised!”<sup>7</sup>

I understand that for some this may seem easy

to say and hard to do. You don't have to go far in today's culture to hear contradictory voices that discourage or even ridicule belief in God generally, and in our religion specifically.

Such voices are amplified in our day by unmatched advances in communication. That is your challenge, but it also is your privilege.

I am confident that you will find means to deal with it the Lord's way! It is part of your adventure of mortality. How you do it will greatly influence your future and the part you play in God's work here on earth.

Nevertheless, what you are experiencing in life is not all that uncommon. Yours is not the only generation whose faith in God has been challenged and ridiculed. In fact, this seems to be part of the mortal test for all of God's children.

"If ye were of the world," Jesus told His disciples, "the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."<sup>8</sup>

You might as well accept the likelihood that once you make the commitment to follow the Savior, the residents of the great and spacious building will disapprove—quite vocally, at times.<sup>9</sup> They may even attempt to bully and shame you.

But remember that you do not answer to them. You answer to God. One day you will stand before Him to account for your life.

He will ask what you did to overcome the temptations of the world and follow the path of righteousness. He will ask if you followed the Savior, if you loved your neighbor, if you earnestly tried to stay on the path of discipleship.

Remember, we can't have it both ways. We cannot receive the incomprehensible blessings of discipleship while at the same time maintaining our membership records in the Babylon First

Ward. Dear friends, now is the time to commit to Christ and follow His path.

One day all of God's children will know what is right—including those who now mock the truth. They will bow the knee and confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer, the Savior of the world.<sup>10</sup> They will know that He died for them.

On that day it will be clear that His is the only voice that ever really mattered.

You will know with certainty how blessed you are because you kept the faith, kept God's commandments, served your fellowmen, and built God's kingdom here on earth. My beloved friends, believe—and God will be with you. Incline your heart to Him—and He will guide you on your journey through this great and exciting adventure of mortal life.

### **"It Mattereth Not"**

When we speak of letting God guide our lives, I would like to clarify one thing. You might not like what I'm about to tell you. When you ask God what to do about decisions in your life—including some important decisions—He may not give you a clear answer right away. The truth is that sometimes it just doesn't matter what you decide, as long as you stay within the fundamental covenants and principles of the gospel.

In many cases, the decisions you make may not be as important as what you do after making the decisions.

For example, a couple may choose to get married even though some in their own families do not consider them a perfect match. However, I have great hope for such a couple if, after they make their decision, they stay totally committed to each other and to the Lord with all their heart and mind. By treating each other with love and kindness and by focusing on one another's emotional, spiritual, and temporal needs—by doing the little things consistently—they become the perfect match.

In contrast is the couple who think they picked the "perfect" person and then assume that all the heavy lifting is over. If they quit courting each other, stop communicating one-on-one, and slide into egotism and a self-centered life, this couple is on a path that leads to sorrow and regret.

The same principle applies to vocational choices. I have great hope for those who pick a less prestigious occupation but who do the best they can and find ways to make their work interesting and challenging.

I have less hope for those who choose impressive-sounding occupations but along the way lose that inner fire necessary to make them

successful at their work. In fact, successfully adapting to changes in the workplace will be one of the prime attributes your generation will have to develop to cope with the future.

So how does the Lord want you to approach key decisions?

His instructions to Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith have helped me. The Lord told them, “You must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right.”<sup>11</sup>

Heavenly Father has given you a brain and a heart. If you trust Him, He will help you to use both of them properly in your decision making.

For many decisions, you have more than one good option to choose from. When this happened to Joseph and his companions, the Lord used an interesting phrase as they sought His guidance: “It mattereth not.”<sup>12</sup>

But the Lord immediately added, “Only be faithful.”<sup>13</sup>

Your work is to make the best decisions you can based on



the information available to you, grounded in the values and principles of the gospel. Then strive with all your might to succeed in the things you undertake—and be faithful.

Do that, and the dots will connect.

Perhaps it’s disappointing to hear that God won’t necessarily give you a detailed itinerary for your life’s journey. But do you really want direction in every detail of your life? Do you really want someone giving you the cheat codes to life before you have a chance to figure things out for yourself? What kind of adventure would that be?

My dear friends, you pass through the adventure of mortality only once. Wouldn’t an individually tailored walk-through complete with spoilers and answers to all of life’s great questions take away your great feeling of accomplishment and your increase of confidence in the Lord and in yourself?<sup>14</sup>

Because God has given you your agency, you can choose many directions to go and still lead a fulfilling life. Mortality is an open-ended, choose-your-own-adventure story. You have commandments, you have covenants, you have inspired prophetic counsel, and you have the gift of the Holy Ghost. That is more than enough to lead you to mortal happiness and eternal joy. Beyond that, don’t despair if you make some decisions that are less than perfect. That is how you learn. That’s part of the adventure!

No, adventures never go smoothly from start to finish, but if you are faithful, you can be assured of a happy ending. Consider the example of Joseph of Egypt. In many ways, his life was disastrous. He was sold into slavery by his brothers. He was cast into prison for a crime he did not commit. Despite all the terrible circumstances forced upon him, he maintained his faith. He trusted God. He made the best of it. Year after year—even when it appeared that he had been overlooked and abandoned—he believed. Joseph always inclined his heart to God. And God showed that He is able to turn negatives into positives.<sup>15</sup>

Today, 4,000 years later, we still find inspiration in Joseph’s story.

Your adventure may not be quite as dramatic, but it will have its ups and downs. So, remember Joseph’s example.

Remain faithful. Believe. Be honest. Don't become bitter. Don't be a bully. Love God. Love your fellowmen. Trust the Lord, even when things appear bleak.

You may not see it until much later, but you will look back and know that the Lord did indeed direct and guide your path. And the dots did connect.

### Five Things to Remember

Until then, may I ask you to remember five things?

First, know that God's answers to your most profound questions may take a little time and may come in ways you don't expect. God's answers are of eternal value. They are worth the wait.

Second, have a little faith. Incline your hearts to God. Believe that you are important to God, and trust that He will make more of you than you can possibly make of yourself. Learn of Him. Love Him. Believe Him. Speak with Him regularly, intensely. Listen for His voice.

Third, walk as best as you can on the path of discipleship. Don't get overwhelmed. Just do the small things as perfectly as you can, and the big things will fall into place.

Fourth, don't let discouraging voices dissuade you from your journey of faith. Remember, you don't answer to your critics. You answer to your Father in Heaven. His values count.

Fifth, make the best decisions you can by following the promptings that come to your heart and mind. Give your best efforts to follow through. Have faith, and God will consecrate your honest efforts for your eternal good.<sup>16</sup>

Do this and, in the end, all will be well.

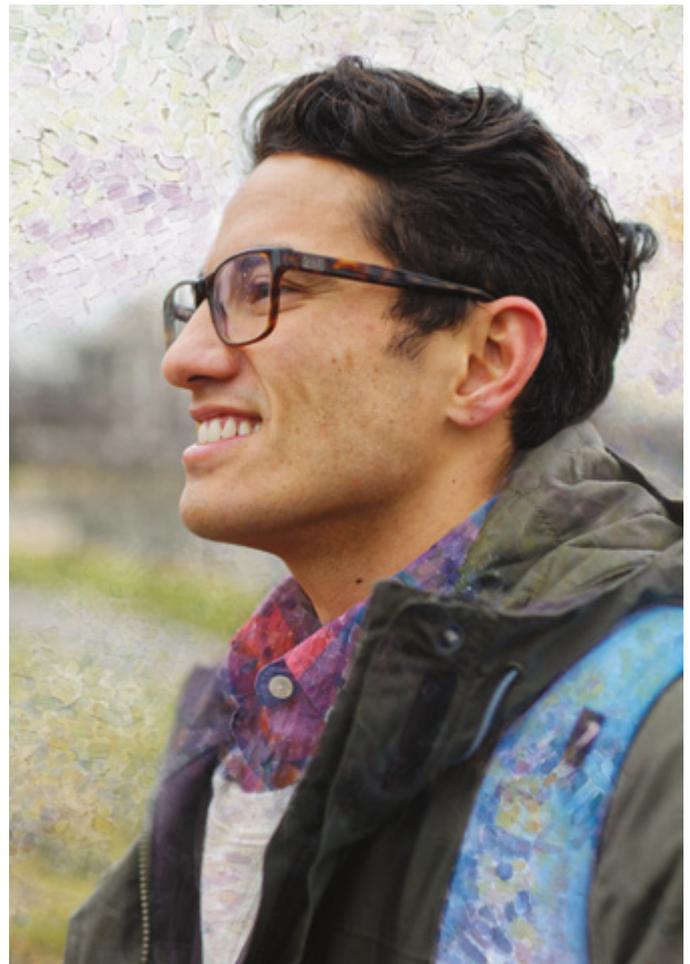
As you seek to follow your Savior, your confidence will grow.<sup>17</sup> And as you walk in faithfulness and open your heart to the Light of Christ, your love of God will mature and your ability to love your neighbor will be refined.

And all this will bring you happiness and joy.

It will bring you peace.

One day, it will bring you eternal glory.

On that future day, you will look back on this cherished and exciting adventure of mortality, and you will understand.



You will see that the dots really did connect into a beautiful pattern, more sublime than you ever could have imagined.

With unspeakable gratitude, you will see that God Himself, in His abounding love, grace, and compassion, was always there watching over you, blessing you, and guiding your steps as you walked toward Him. ■

### NOTES

1. Steve Jobs, Stanford University commencement address, June 12, 2005.
2. Romans 8:31, New International Version (1984).
3. "Praise to the Man," *Hymns*, no. 27.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 64:33.
5. Proverbs 3:5–6.
6. 1 Corinthians 2:9, New International Version.
7. Deuteronomy 1:11, New International Version.
8. John 15:19.
9. See 1 Nephi 8:26–28.
10. See Romans 14:10–12; Philippians 2:10.
11. Doctrine and Covenants 9:8.
12. Doctrine and Covenants 60:5; 62:5; 80:3.
13. Doctrine and Covenants 62:5.
14. See Doctrine and Covenants 121:45.
15. See Genesis 37, 39–46.
16. See 2 Nephi 32:9.
17. See 2 Nephi 32:9.



By the Sunday  
School General  
Presidency

# Learning a New Way of Learning

As we move forward, consider these five principles that guide learning and teaching the gospel.

**I**t has been two months since we began using *Come, Follow Me* for Primary, Sunday School, and the home. What are your first impressions? How have these new resources helped you and your family?

Think about your answers to these questions as you read the following principles that can help us successfully use these new resources. We will discuss how these five principles can apply to both learners and teachers.

## PRINCIPLE 1:

***The new curriculum is about elevating learning in the home.***

### For the learner:

There are 168 hours in a week, and only a few of those hours are spent at church. So while you may be learning a lot in your Church classes, you will also want to strive to learn and live the gospel throughout the week. Think of spiritual learning like exercise: you will see greater benefits if you exercise several times a week than if you exercise just one day a week. And to the extent that you study the scriptures at home, you will be filled with insights and spiritual understanding that will bless your life and the lives of others as you share what you are learning.

### For the teacher:

It may not be enough simply to give a good lesson on Sunday. One of the goals of a teacher should be to encourage personal and family study of the scriptures. What experiences did class members have studying the scriptures this week? What insights can they share? You might find it helpful to view your role like that of a choir director teaching singing and bringing out all of the voices into one beautiful harmony. You can teach a lesson, direct the discussion, and bring all you know to the experience, but you won't make inspiring music if class members don't share their own insights and inspiration.

**PRINCIPLE 2:**

*The Lord wants us to learn and grow in our doctrinal understanding.*

**For the learner:**

When you study the scriptures, you can find gospel truths—doctrine—that help you know God better and find greater understanding to face your challenges. You may also find that some gospel truths are stated directly in the text while others are implied. Think of your search for truth like a search for buried treasure. You may need to dig a bit to uncover and discover truth, but in the end, you will have “the brightest prize to which mortals or Gods can aspire.”<sup>1</sup>

**For the teacher:**

Teachers are more than facilitators and moderators; they have an obligation to teach doctrine—to testify, guide, and inspire. As you prepare to teach by studying, pondering, and praying, you will be prepared to help those you teach better understand and act on an inspired doctrine. Have confidence in your role as a teacher in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. With concerted effort, you can teach more like the Savior.





### **PRINCIPLE 3:**

***Personal revelation is central to gospel learning and teaching in the Church.***

#### **For the learner:**

President Russell M. Nelson recently invited Church members to “increase [their] spiritual capacity to receive revelation.”<sup>2</sup> As you study God’s word, you show Him that you want to receive revelation. Personal revelation often comes when you are studying revelation that the Lord has already given to His prophets. Paraphrasing the ninth article of faith: when you study all that God “has revealed,” you prepare yourself to receive all that “He does now reveal” and all that “He will yet reveal.”

As you receive revelation, develop the habit of recording your impressions and acting on them. Not only does this show the Lord that you value the things He is teaching you, but to be changed by what we learn, we must apply it.<sup>3</sup>

#### **For the teacher:**

Revelation about what to teach in class can come to you in many ways. It may come as you study the scriptures for yourself. Or it might also come as you review the *Come, Follow Me* resources for the home or for Church classes. When inspiration comes, record and act on the impressions you receive.

Even after you make plans for what you might do in class, do not be afraid to respond to inspiration during class to meet the needs of those you teach.

#### **PRINCIPLE 4:**

***The new materials are resources, not the source.***

#### **For the learner:**

The word of God is a source of spiritual knowledge and strength. *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families* is meant as a resource to support your personal and family scripture study. Use it as a guide or aid as you study the New Testament. If you are a parent, you can use it to plan inspiring family home evening experiences and support your family in studying the scriptures together. Single adults could gather and use it for scripture study as a group. Use the resource in any way that helps you and your family draw on the power that comes from learning and acting on the word of God.

#### **For the teacher:**

Remember that members of your class are having powerful experiences as they study at home. Spend time in each class finding out what they are learning. The *Come, Follow Me* resources for Sunday School and Primary provide suggested activities to help you create engaging learning experiences for those you teach. But don't feel bound by what is written on the pages. Modify or create activities that you feel will build on the faith, understanding, and testimonies of class members. If some learners do not feel the desire to share much, that is OK. Help them know that their faith is also expressed by being there and desiring to hear the word of God.

#### **PRINCIPLE 5:**

***We can improve our efforts to minister to others.***

#### **For the learner:**

Your efforts to minister to others can be blessed by what you learn in the scriptures. You may find something in your study that you can share with someone else. In the New Testament especially, you will find scriptural examples of how the Savior and others ministered in powerful ways. The Lord's invitation to "come, follow me" (Luke 18:22) is about what you will do after you have studied—putting into practice the things you are learning and feeling. So as you study the life of Jesus Christ this year, look for what His life teaches you about how to minister to others and how your own ministry can bless the lives of those around you.

#### **For the teacher:**

A teacher is responsible for serving not just the people who come to class but also those who don't attend. As a teacher, be aware of who is in class and who isn't. You can minister to members outside of class by visiting them in their homes, calling them on the telephone, or sending them an electronic message, and encouraging them to participate in learning the gospel at home and at church. Your influence is greater than you know, and your love and concern for others will make all the difference.

As we stay focused on the guiding principles behind the new *Come, Follow Me* curriculum, we will be more successful in making it part of our lives and allowing it to change our lives in the ways God intended. ■

#### **NOTES**

1. "Oh Say, What Is Truth?" *Hymns*, no. 272.
2. Russell M. Nelson, "Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives," *Ensign*, May 2018, 96.
3. See Richard G. Scott, "To Acquire Spiritual Guidance," *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 6–9.

*You can find the curriculum and related resources at [comefollowme.lds.org](http://comefollowme.lds.org).*



# CONNECTING Daughters of God WITH HIS Priesthood Power

**By Barbara Morgan Gardner**

Associate Professor of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University

**I**'ve come to recognize as never before the importance of understanding the priesthood and its associated blessings for women. We're living in a day when equality, power, fairness, and tolerance are touted—often above other virtues. What's more, identity, authority, spirituality, and even God are topics of great confusion for many.

Many women, not knowing what blessings they have access to, are not taking full advantage of the spiritual feast available to them. Many men are also confused on the topic.

How can we better understand the connection women have with priesthood power and help them “to step forward,” to “take [their] rightful and needful place

in [their] home, in [their] community, and in the kingdom of God—more than [they] ever have before”?<sup>1</sup> First, we can humbly seek to understand truths associated with the priesthood, especially the most recent teachings of Church leaders. Second, we can seek to understand why some women don't fully realize their access to God's priesthood power.

**WOMEN ARE ESSENTIAL PARTICIPANTS IN THE WORK GOD ACCOMPLISHES THROUGH HIS PRIESTHOOD POWER.**

Third, we can be aware of how we can help women more fully participate in the work God accomplishes through His priesthood power.

# 1. What Truths Have Been Clarified Regarding Women and the Priesthood?

Apostles and general women auxiliary leaders have recently given more emphasis to the relationship of women and the priesthood. The following are some truths that are vital to understand and teach correctly.

## **The priesthood is the power and authority of God.**

The priesthood is the power through which God accomplishes His great work of salvation, bringing to pass “the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). Both men and women have an important role in God’s work, and both men and women have access to His power to accomplish His work.

## **Women play an official and critical role in the work of salvation.**

Bonnie L. Oscarson, former Young Women General President, declared: “All women need to see themselves as essential participants in the work of the priesthood. Women in this

Church are presidents, counselors, teachers, members of councils, sisters, and mothers, and the kingdom of God cannot function unless we rise up and fulfill our duties with faith.”<sup>2</sup>

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) taught: “God has given the women of this church a work to do in building his kingdom. That concerns all aspects of our great triad of responsibility—which is, first, to teach the gospel to the world; second, to strengthen the faith and build the happiness of the membership of the Church; and, third, to carry forward the great work of salvation for the dead.

“Women in the Church are associates with their brethren in carrying forward this mighty work of the Lord. . . . Women carry tremendous responsibilities and they are accountable for the fulfillment of those responsibilities. They head their own organizations, and those organizations are strong and viable and are significant forces for good in the world. They stand in an associate role to the priesthood

[holders], all striving together to build the kingdom of God in the earth. We honor and respect you for your capacity. We expect leadership, and strength, and impressive results from your management of the organizations for which you are responsible. We uphold and sustain you as daughters of God, working in a great partnership to assist him in bringing to pass the immortality and the eternal life of all of the sons and daughters of God.”<sup>3</sup>

## **Both women and men are delegated power and authority by those who hold priesthood keys.**

Priesthood keys are “the authority God has given to priesthood [holders] to direct, control, and govern the use of His priesthood on earth.”<sup>4</sup> President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, explains, “Every act or ordinance performed in the Church is done under the direct or indirect authorization of one holding the keys for that function.”<sup>5</sup>

Women have authority to perform their callings, under the direction of one who holds priesthood keys, just as men do. President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, stated, “Those who have priesthood keys . . . literally make it possible for all who serve faithfully under their direction to exercise priesthood authority and have access to priesthood power.”<sup>6</sup>

President Oaks said: “We are not accustomed to speaking of women having the authority of the priesthood in their Church callings, but what other authority can it be? When a woman— young or old—is set apart to preach the gospel as a full-time missionary, she is given priesthood authority to perform a priesthood function. The same is true when a woman is set apart to function as an officer or teacher in a Church organization under the direction of one who holds the keys of the priesthood.”<sup>7</sup>

When teaching this concept to my students, I often ask, “If a stake is having a joint Young Men and Young Women presidency meeting, who presides?” Because both the stake Young Women president and the stake Young Men president were called and set apart by one holding priesthood keys (the stake president), with their callings, both have the same priesthood authority and therefore neither presides over the other. It would make sense for them to take turns in conducting meetings.

## **The Lord blesses women and men equally through His priesthood.**

The Lord provides many blessings through His priesthood that may come to all members who make and keep sacred covenants. President Ballard taught, “All who have made sacred

*Sister missionaries are an example of women being set apart and given priesthood authority to perform a priesthood function.*

covenants with the Lord and who honor those covenants are eligible to receive personal revelation, to be blessed by the ministering of angels, to commune with God, to receive the fulness of the gospel, and, ultimately, to become heirs alongside Jesus Christ of all our Father has.”<sup>8</sup>

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) instructed: “The blessings of the priesthood are not confined to men alone. These blessings are also poured out upon . . . all the faithful women of the Church. . . . The Lord offers to his daughters every spiritual gift and blessing that can be obtained by his sons.”<sup>9</sup>

And as women go about their Father’s work, they too will be blessed to be “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17; see also verse 16).

## **Both women and men (single and married) may be endowed with priesthood power in the temple.**

In 1833 the Lord promised Joseph Smith that the Saints, both men and women, would be endowed with “power

from on high” (Doctrine and Covenants 95:8). President Ballard clarified: “The endowment is literally a gift of power. All who enter the house of the Lord officiate in the ordinances of the priesthood. This applies to men and women alike.”<sup>10</sup> All worthy members who have received their endowment and keep the covenants they have made in the temple have priesthood power. Thus, women, married or single, can have priesthood power in their homes regardless of a visit from a priesthood holder.

Sheri Dew, former counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, asked, “What does it mean to have access to priesthood power? It means that we can receive revelation, be blessed and aided by the ministering of angels, learn to part the veil that separates us from our Heavenly Father, be strengthened to resist temptation, be protected, and be enlightened, and made smarter than we are—all without any mortal intermediary.”<sup>11</sup> What is the most important outcome of this power and how is it received? The Lord has revealed that



“the power of godliness,” including the power to become like Him, is manifested through priesthood ordinances (see Doctrine and Covenants 84:20).

## Priesthood authority sometimes functions differently in the Church than in the family.

The Church organization is hierarchical; the family is patriarchal. President Oaks taught that there are “some differences in the way priesthood authority functions in the family and in the Church.”<sup>12</sup> By divine design, the husband and wife may have some different responsibilities, yet they work together as “equal partners.”<sup>13</sup> Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “Remember, brethren, that in your role as leader in the family, your wife is your companion. . . . Since the beginning, God has instructed mankind that marriage should unite husband and wife together in unity. Therefore, there is not a president or a vice president in a family. The couple works together eternally for the good of the family. They are united together in word, in deed, and in action as they lead, guide, and direct their family unit. They are on equal footing. They plan and organize the affairs of the family jointly and unanimously as they move forward.”<sup>14</sup>

What happens then when a spouse dies? President Oaks taught: “When my father died, my mother presided over

our family. She had no priesthood office, but as the surviving parent in her marriage she had become the governing officer in her family. At the same time, she was always totally respectful of the priesthood authority of our bishop and other Church leaders. She presided over her family, but they presided over the Church.”<sup>15</sup>



## 2. Stumbling Blocks

What are some of the stumbling blocks that can keep women from fully realizing their access to God’s priesthood power?

### Confusion by both men and women regarding the priesthood.

President Oaks taught: “The Melchizedek Priesthood is not a status or a label. It is a divine power held in trust to use for the benefit of God’s work for His children. We should always remember that men who hold the priesthood are *not* ‘the priesthood.’ It is not appropriate to refer to ‘the priesthood and the women.’ We should refer to ‘the *holders* of the priesthood and the women.”<sup>16</sup>

By saying, “The priesthood will now sing a song,” or “we need priesthood volunteers to go to Young

Women camp,” we are doing ourselves and others, no matter how well intended, a disservice by instigating and perpetuating confusion and minimizing God’s power.

### Thinking that the priesthood does not have to do with women.

When invited to study the priesthood, some sisters respond, “I don’t need to get into that topic. It doesn’t apply to me.” But because the priesthood blesses all of God’s children, we all benefit from a greater understanding of it. We would all benefit from a greater understanding of the priesthood. Think of how the Church and our families would be blessed if both the women and the men of the Church were equally well-versed in understanding and teaching truths



## 3. What Can We Do?

regarding the priesthood.

Linda K. Burton, former Relief Society General President, emphasized that women as well as men need to study the topic of the priesthood. “Sisters, we cannot stand up and teach those things we do not understand and know for ourselves.”<sup>17</sup>

### Putting limits on women that aren’t really there.

It’s clear that some callings in the Church require ordination to priesthood office, but we must be careful not to limit our women simply based on culture, history, false perceptions, or traditions. For example, women can be capable leaders and teachers, important voices in Church councils, and powerful examples of discipleship to members of all ages.

Here are some ways each of us can help our sisters in the gospel participate more fully in the work God accomplishes through His priesthood power.

### Be up-to-date on the words of the Brethren and our women leaders.

Over the last several years, senior members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have spoken specifically on the role of women in the Church. Are we carefully listening to these talks?

For example, in 2015, President Russell M. Nelson exclaimed, “The kingdom of God is not and cannot be complete without women who make sacred covenants and then keep them, women who can speak with the power and authority of God!”<sup>18</sup>

### Help all members understand the unique role of women in the work of the priesthood.

President Ballard reminded the women of the Relief Society that their “sphere of influence is a unique sphere—one that cannot be duplicated by men. No one can defend our Savior with any more

persuasion or power than can you—the daughters of God who have such inner strength and conviction. The power of the voice of a converted woman is immeasurable, and the Church needs your voices now more than ever.”<sup>19</sup>

Bonnie L. Oscarson declared, “[Women] of the Church need to see themselves as essential participants in the priesthood-directed work of salvation and not just as onlookers and supporters.”<sup>20</sup>

### Give credence to women leaders.

Justifiably, we give great attention to what is said by those we sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators. They hold the keys of the kingdom, and the Lord directs His work through them. In addition to their teachings, female leaders of the Church have been set apart and given priesthood authority to speak to both men and women of the Church. We want to listen to their teachings as well and hear what counsel God would give us through them.



### **Involve women in councils, not only by title but with action.**

President Ballard said: “Any priesthood leader who does not involve his sister leaders with full respect and inclusion is not honoring and magnifying the keys he has been given. His power and influence will be diminished until he learns the ways of the Lord.”<sup>21</sup>

### **Do not give “authoritative” answers to questions the Lord Himself hasn’t answered.**

President Oaks has cautioned Church members to avoid answering questions the Lord has not answered: “Don’t make the mistake that’s been made in the past, . . . trying to put reasons to revelation. The reasons turn out to be man-made to a great extent. The revelations are what we sustain as the will of the Lord

and that’s where safety lies.”<sup>22</sup>

President Ballard gives a perfect example of this: “Why are men—and not women—ordained to priesthood offices? . . . The Lord has not revealed why He has organized His Church as He has.”<sup>23</sup> President Ballard also warned us “not to pass along faith-promoting or unsubstantiated rumors or outdated understandings and explanations of our doctrine and practices from the past. It is always wise to make it a practice to study the words of the living prophets and apostles; keep updated on current Church issues, policies, and statements through [mormonnewsroom.org](http://mormonnewsroom.org) and [LDS.org](http://LDS.org); and consult the works of recognized, thoughtful, and faithful Latter-day Saint scholars to ensure you do not teach things that are untrue, out of date, or odd and quirky.”<sup>24</sup> Remember that sometimes “I don’t know” really is

the best answer. We must search diligently in the light of faith to learn divine truth.

### **Help women and men better understand the priesthood.**

Helping both men and women become confident in their ability to study and learn about the priesthood is critical. Some scriptures that can help in this process include, but are not limited to, Alma 13 and Doctrine and Covenants sections 2, 13, 20, 76, 84, 95, 107, 110, 121, and 124. Attending the temple for the purpose of seeking faithfully not only for answers but especially for inspired questions regarding the topic cannot be overemphasized.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles instructed: “This doctrine of the priesthood—unknown in the world and but little known even in the Church—cannot be learned out of the scriptures alone. . . .

“The doctrine of the priesthood is known only by personal revelation. It comes, line upon line and precept upon precept, by the power of the Holy Ghost to those who love and serve God with all their heart, might, mind and strength. (See D&C 98:12.)”<sup>25</sup>

## 4. Conclusion

### Help women understand that they must stand with the Lord and His prophets.

The world is becoming more divisive and cynical. Women, in many ways, are being pitted against each other. Opinions are strong and emotions run deep. Imagine the influence for good in this world if all members of the Church could see that they, like Esther, have been reserved “for such a time as this” (Esther 4:14) and that they, individually and as a united whole, are needed to lead, not follow, the world.

Emma Smith stated: “We are going to do something extraordinary. . . . We expect extraordinary occasions and pressing calls.”<sup>26</sup> These pressing calls, even pleas, have come from the leaders of the Church to the sisters over the last several years as never before. As we better understand the truths associated with the priesthood, recognize possible reasons why many women are living below their privileges, and act on the knowledge we gain regarding women and their opportunities to participate in the work of the priesthood, we may “find the joy and the peace that comes from knowing through your teaching that you have touched a life, you have lifted one of Heavenly Father’s children on his or her journey to one day be embraced once again in His presence.”<sup>27</sup> ■

#### NOTES

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4. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 2.1.1.
5. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 49.
6. M. Russell Ballard, “Men and Women in the Work of the Lord,” *New Era*, Apr. 2014, 4; see also *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 138–39.
7. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood,” 51.
8. M. Russell Ballard, “Men and Women in the Work of the Lord,” 4–5.
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10. M. Russell Ballard, “Let Us Think Straight” (Brigham Young University devotional, Aug. 20, 2013), 7, speeches.byu.edu.
11. Sheri Dew, *Women and the Priesthood: What One Mormon Woman Believes* (2013), 125.
12. Dallin H. Oaks, “Priesthood Authority in the Family and the Church,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 26.
13. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, May 2017, 145.
14. L. Tom Perry, “Fatherhood, an Eternal Calling,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 71.
15. Dallin H. Oaks, “Priesthood Authority in the Family and the Church,” 26.
16. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Powers of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 65.
17. Linda K. Burton, “Priesthood: A Sacred Trust to Be Used for the Benefit of Men, Women, and Children” (Brigham Young University Women’s Conference, May 3, 2013), womensconference.byu.edu/transcripts.
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19. M. Russell Ballard, “Men and Women and Priesthood Power,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2014, 33.
20. Bonnie L. Oscarson, “Rise Up in Strength, Sisters in Zion,” 14.
21. M. Russell Ballard, “Men and Women and Priesthood Power,” 31.
22. Dallin H. Oaks, *Life’s Lessons Learned: Personal Reflections* (2011), 68–69.
23. M. Russell Ballard, “Men and Women and Priesthood Power,” 31.
24. M. Russell Ballard, “The Opportunities and Responsibilities of CES Teachers in the 21st Century” (address given to Church Educational System Religious Educators, Feb. 26, 2016), broadcasts.lds.org.
25. Bruce R. McConkie, “The Doctrine of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, May 1982, 32.
26. Emma Smith, in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 14.
27. M. Russell Ballard, “The Opportunities and Responsibilities of CES Teachers in the 21st Century.”





## Peter's Mother-in-Law

By Karee Brown  
Church Magazines

*Like Peter's mother-in-law,  
we can be healed and  
strengthened when we allow  
the Savior into our lives.*

It had been only a few months since my stake president, a mentor and dear friend, suddenly passed away. After his passing, his newly widowed wife and their children testified of the plan of salvation and eternal families. They seemed to gain an added level of strength and peace from the Savior and their knowledge of His Atonement.

I didn't feel like there was anything I could do to let the family know I cared. However, sure that they were still in need of comfort, I decided to drop off some flowers and a note anonymously on the doorstep.

As I approached the door, I could see the family gathered in the living room, ministering to another widow in the ward. They likely had invited her to dinner, but in that moment they

were all gathered around while a son gave her a blessing. Tears began to flow down my face as I realized that even in their grief, this family had found ways to minister to others in need.

It reminds me of an often-overlooked story in the New Testament about Peter's mother-in-law—a woman who expressed her gratitude to God through ministering (see Matthew 8:14–15; Mark 1:29–31; Luke 4:38–39). We don't know the extent of her suffering, but Luke, a physician, seems to emphasize the seriousness of her illness by describing it as a “great fever” (Luke 4:38). When Jesus arrived at Peter's home, He was informed of her condition. He “took her by the hand, and lifted her up” (Mark 1:31). All eyes must have been on

Peter's mother-in-law. How would she respond? How do you thank the Savior for saving you?

“Immediately she arose and ministered unto them” (Luke 4:39). Note that in describing the woman's response, Mark used the same Greek word (*diakoneō*, translated as “ministered”) that he used to describe how the angels served Jesus only a few verses earlier (see Mark 1:13). As one Latter-day Saint source points out: “Mark, by using the same word for the action of angels and the action of the healed woman, may be attempting to equate her level of service to Jesus as that of the angels. What the angels were able to do for Jesus in the wilderness, the woman whose fever has now fled does for him in her home.”<sup>1</sup>



After being healed, Peter's mother-in-law showed her gratitude by serving the Savior and His followers. Her actions stand as an example to all of us.

In the three accounts of the Savior's healing of Peter's mother-in-law, we learn that the news of the miraculous healing had spread by the end of the day. Her faith to be healed and her service to others became a beacon of hope to those in her community and within her family. Many brought their sick to Jesus, "and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them" (Luke 4:40).

My stake president's family, in gratitude for what the Savior had done for them, found healing through ministering. The example of this faithful sister and her children caused friends, neighbors, and people in the community to ask, How could they be so grateful when they had lost so much?

When we seek to be grateful in our circumstances by turning outward to provide service, we lift others and in turn are strengthened ourselves. ■

**NOTE**

1. Jeni Broberg Holzapfel and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, *Sisters at the Well: Women and the Life and Teachings of Jesus* (1993), 109.



**A GRATEFUL HEART IS A CHANGED HEART**

"It might sound contrary to the wisdom of the world

to suggest that one who is burdened with sorrow should give thanks to God. But those who set aside the bottle of bitterness and lift instead the goblet of gratitude can find a purifying drink of healing, peace, and understanding."

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Grateful in Any Circumstances," *Ensign*, May 2014, 70.

## Thirsting for Greater Understanding

One time I went on a first date with a girl in my ward. The next morning, we were the only two who showed up for our ward's temple trip. We offered to help with whatever ordinance needed the most patrons . . . which turned out to be sealings.

I was so nervous, but to my surprise, doing vicarious sealings with a girl less than 12 hours after our first date wasn't nearly as awkward as I thought it would be. If anything, that experience gave me more **perspective on how important each aspect of temple work is**—including sealings (read more in my digital article).

All of our situations are unique, but if we **strive to better understand the covenants** we make in the temple, those ordinances will be less like items to be crossed off our spiritual checklist and more like much-needed sources of **"living water" that can give us spiritual strength** (see Doctrine and Covenants 63:23). And in the hectic world we live in, we need all the strength we can get!

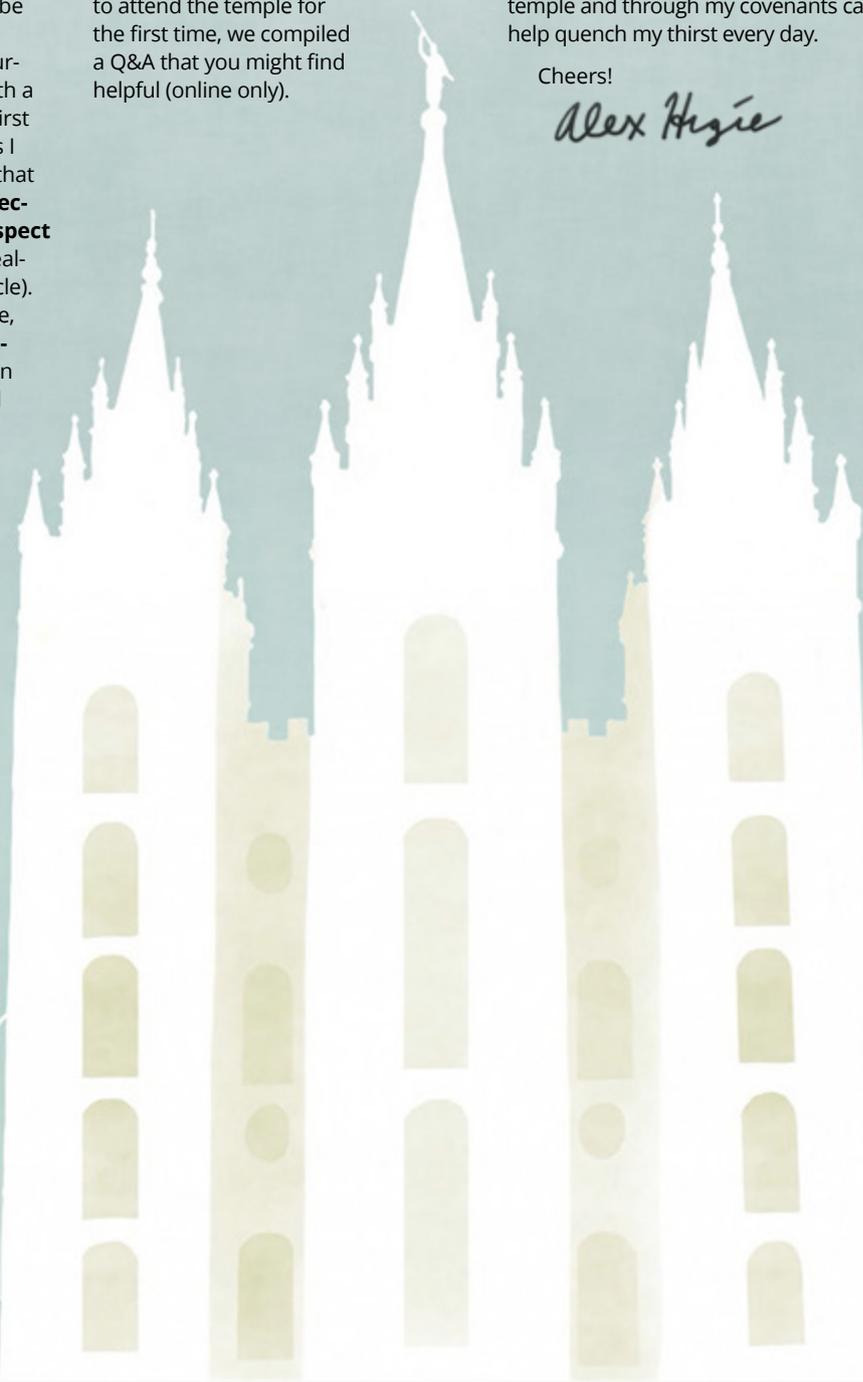
In this issue, **young adults share their experiences with the temple**. Kealohilani shares how faithfully wearing the temple garment has blessed her life (see page 42). Mahesh talks about how he returned to the temple to better understand the covenants

he made there (see page 46). Maryssa talks about how she prepared for her endowment and how she felt afterward. (see page 48). In a digital-only article, Zariah shares her fears about not feeling good enough to enter the temple. If you're also preparing to attend the temple for the first time, we compiled a Q&A that you might find helpful (online only).

While I do try to make it to the temple as often as I can to **fill my spiritual reservoir**, what matters most is that **I allow the Spirit in the temple to teach me and change me** both within and outside its walls. Then the "living waters" that flow from the temple and through my covenants can help quench my thirst every day.

Cheers!

*Alex Hsieh*



# YOUNG ADULTS

## BEST ADVICE . . .

*Young adults share the best advice they've ever received about making the temple a part of their lives.*

"My bishop told me that the temple would be as sacred of an experience as I wanted it to be. It is always up to me to decide how big of an impact the temple can have on my life."

—**Jasmyn Nye, Utah, USA**

"Having a temple nearby is great, but if members never attend the temple, then it will always be far away. We must stay close to the temple, no matter how far away it might be."

—**Cole Murphy, California, USA**

"Have a purpose. Go with a question, do work for an ancestor, seek peace, or listen for promptings."

—**Sydney Orton, Utah, USA**

*What's the best advice you've ever received about making mistakes and trying again? Send us your response at [ensign.lds.org](http://ensign.lds.org) by March 31, 2019.*

## SHARE YOUR STORY

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## ABOUT THE YOUNG ADULT AUTHORS

**Kealohilani Wallace** writes clean, mainstream young adult fiction that is inspired by both her life and her beliefs. She is a Brigham Young University–Hawaii alumna and an active member of her current YSA ward.



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**Alex Hugie** is from Oregon, USA. He graduated from Brigham Young University with a bachelor's degree in English. He has particular interests in studying young adult literature, writing wonky short stories and novels, and drinking milk.



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## DIGITAL ONLY

### Temple Endowment Q&A

### Good Enough for the Temple?

By Zariah Inniss

### 5 Reasons Singles Should Participate in Temple Sealings

By Alex Hugie



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ILLUSTRATION BY TONI DEMURO



The power and protection promised to those who faithfully wear the temple garment doesn't come from magic; it comes from God.

# Shielded by Covenants

By Kealohilani Wallace

**M**y love for wearing the temple garment cannot be fully expressed in words. Though the physical material that the garment is made from is light and barely noticeable once I got used to it, what the garment represents, the blessings that come with it, and the ever-present outward expression of my inner commitment to God—and of my love *for* God—make wearing it every day a beautiful and spiritual experience. It is peace. It is strength. It is tranquility. It is power. It is holy. It is as much of a blessing in my life as I treat it.

Sometimes people consider the garment as mere underwear or simply a measure of modesty, meant to show them what they can and cannot wear—an arbitrary line of what is decent and indecent. And while proper wearing of the garment certainly does encourage modesty (especially by the world's standards), the garment of the holy priesthood represents so much more.

## Powerful Eternal Perspective

I received my own endowment at age 19 in preparation for my temple marriage. And while unfortunate

circumstances brought that marriage to an end, I had been faithful to my covenants, and those covenants I had made with the Lord remained. I clung to them and they sustained me. I was not left alone in my trials and I was made stronger for them.

I have received numerous blessings for continuously holding a temple recommend, for properly wearing the garment as instructed, and for keeping the covenants I made in the temple. Though it would be impossible to single out every blessing from this obedience, the most obvious ones I have noticed are the ability to maintain a heavenly perspective and the constant physical reminder to make correct choices even when others around me are not—and even when the choices of others cause me pain.

A *lot* went wrong in my life during the past 11 years (the lowlights of which include divorce, painful financial struggles, and frustrating career and personal setbacks), but consistently wearing the



PHOTOGRAPH FROM GETTY IMAGES; POSED BY MODEL



garment and regularly attending the temple helped me know that there is more to this life than whatever trial I was experiencing at the moment—no matter how difficult or painful each moment was.

Because these two constants helped me stay close to the Spirit, I have been led out of physical danger with internal promptings I chose to follow—and I have also been given a strong sense of hope and an eternal perspective that have guided me through dark points when I didn't feel like I had the strength to take one more emotional or physical step forward on my journey. This peace continues to sustain me as new challenges and trials arise.

Blessings from the temple that I have experienced range from the day-to-day blessings we sometimes overlook (like inner peace and promptings), to the dramatic, everlasting, and obvious (like being forever sealed to our families). Each individual's experience is unique and personal—but blessings always come to us in the Lord's perfect



timing when we keep our covenants (see Doctrine and Covenants 82:10). And wearing the garment is an important, personal way of showing the Lord that we remember our covenants.

### **Constant Spiritual Protection**

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained one of the blessings we can expect when we wear the garment properly: “The garment represents sacred covenants. It fosters modesty and becomes a shield and protection to the wearer.”<sup>1</sup>

This shield can protect us from what Nephi called the “fiery darts of the adversary” (1 Nephi 15:24). If we could calculate how many darts Satan throws at us every single day, I imagine the number would be astronomical. We live in a world

that actively seeks to destroy what we believe. Inappropriate images and messages surround us everywhere, along with pressure to use harmful substances or break the law of chastity. Even more rampant is the pressure and temptation to argue and to be unkind, either in person or especially online; to mock or belittle others for expressing their opinions or beliefs; or to tease a person for something as small as a grammatical mistake. These spiritual attacks, if heeded, dull our senses and reduce our ability to sense warnings from the Holy Ghost.

The list of “fiery darts” that Satan throws at us is literally endless and always dangerous. Elder Taniela B. Wakolo of the Seventy said, “The many distractions and temptations of life are like ‘ravening wolves.’” So how are we to protect ourselves? Later in that same

talk, he added, “I promise that participating in ordinances and honoring the associated covenants will bring you marvelous light and protection in this ever-darkening world.”<sup>2</sup>

If the “darts” Satan throws at you every day were literal sharp objects that you could both see and feel, would you leave a shield at home? Would you ignore the knowledge of how to defend yourself—or of the path to a place of refuge? Would you put off making or keeping covenants with God when He promised that those covenants would help you be victorious?

### **The Power of Covenants in Our Progression**

The protection the garment gives doesn’t come from any sort of magic in the physical garment itself, as some

mistakenly believe. Rather, the promised protection is the protection the Lord provides both physically and spiritually when we keep our covenants and express our faithful commitment to Him every day.

Temple covenants and the garment are *not* for perfect people. They are meant to help shield and protect imperfect people who are trying their best to become better. People who repent when they fall and keep going forward. People like you and me.

Just as we physically partake of the sacrament every week to remember and renew our baptismal covenants, wearing the garment every day serves as a physical reminder of the covenants we have made in the temple. These are things that we need on our journey to becoming more Christlike.

Beyond divine protection, keeping our covenants and wearing the garment are ways to show God every day how much we love Him and that we will follow His commandments *because* we love Him—and it is a way for us to receive the numerous blessings God wants to give us. He truly loves us more than we can understand and He wants us to be safe and have the protection that He has promised.

### **Blessed Every Day**

We all fight on a spiritual battlefield every day, whether we realize it or not. Covenants made in the temple and kept in our daily lives will help us win the war

against sin and Satan, but it is up to us to prepare—and then to be faithful.

I am so glad for my decision to go to the temple—and for the subsequent decisions I've made to keep my covenants. I am blessed every day for my choice and for properly wearing the garment, as I covenanted to do. It keeps me safe. It reminds me of my covenants. And it shows God that I love Him more than the world and that I will do what He asks me to do. ■

*The author lives in Hawai'i, USA.*

#### **NOTES**

1. Boyd K. Packer, *The Holy Temple* (1980), 75.
2. Taniela B. Wakolo, "Saving Ordinances Will Bring Us Marvelous Light," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 40, 41.

#### **DISCOVER MORE**

- Learn more about temples, temple preparation, and temple ordinances at [temples.lds.org](https://temples.lds.org).
- Watch a Church-produced video that can help explain temple garments to others at [mormonnewsroom.org/article/temple-garments](https://mormonnewsroom.org/article/temple-garments).





## LOOKING AGAIN TOWARD the Holy Temple

By Mahesh Kumar Vedurupaka

I realized that I needed to return to the temple to better understand and remember the covenants I had made.

**F**our years ago, my institute teacher, Brother Suresh Natrajan, asked the class, “How many of you have gone to the temple?” Because my wife, Anantha, and I had made the 10-hour trip to the Hong Kong China Temple for the first time the year before, I raised my hand proudly. Then he asked another question: “Do you remember what covenants you made in the temple?”

His question was thoughtful. There was so much to take in during my first time in the temple. While I had tried to be attentive, after all that time, I realized I had forgotten the covenants that I made in the temple. At that very moment, I made the decision to go back to temple for the second time and this time to pay attention to and remember the covenants I made and other things that are essential for my salvation.

Time passed. I was facing terrible trials in my life. But I was enrolled in an

institute class, and one day we had a lesson on the prophet Jonah. Jonah didn’t do what the Lord commanded him to do. One of the verses that caught my attention was Jonah 2:4: “Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.”

This scripture touched my heart, and I prayed to Heavenly Father to give me and my wife another chance to visit the temple.

After four years, Heavenly Father blessed us to again enter His house, this time in the Taipei Taiwan Temple.

While there, I had the opportunity to perform ordinances on behalf of my uncle who had died of cancer. When I was being baptized for him, I thought about the blessings he would receive through this temple ordinance. I was so happy, and I recognized what the temple president told me when I had come to the temple for the first time and had been a little bit confused. He told me, “Brother, you may not understand all



of what you are doing right now, but a day will come when you will feel you have done great things here.”

I got my answer. It has taken me four years to understand by visiting the temple for the second time.

Now while partaking of the sacrament each and every week, I remember how powerful the Atonement of Jesus Christ is and how sacred the covenants I have made in the temple are.

This year is mine and my wife’s 10th wedding anniversary. I want to celebrate it in the temple and perform sealing ordinances for my ancestors. To do this, I have been working a second job apart from my regular job, one that doesn’t affect my time with my family.

I know and I feel that temple work is real. Nothing can replace it, and it’s worth any sacrifice to attend the temple and do Heavenly Father’s work for ourselves and for souls who are on the other side of the veil. ■

*The author lives in Andhra Pradesh, India.*



**Mahesh and Anantha Vedurupaka in front of the Taipei Taiwan Temple.**

## TEMPLE ENDOWMENT Q&A

If you are preparing to go to the temple for the first time, read our Q&A in the digital version of this article in the Gospel Library or at [ensign.lds.org](https://ensign.lds.org). Below is one of the five questions you’ll find.

### What can I do to better understand the temple endowment and the covenants I make there?

Focus on the teachings and covenants of the temple in your personal study. Look for references to the principles and covenants of the endowment found in the scriptures, general conference addresses, and other Church materials. Reviewing these truths in your personal study will help you grow in your understanding of temple ordinances and covenants. When studying the law of chastity, for example, how can Joseph’s integrity when tempted by Potiphar’s wife bless your commitment to obey this law? (see Genesis 39). How can Nephi’s commitment to obey the commandments of God apply to the way you approach your service in your calling? (see 1 Nephi 3:7).

Return to the temple as often as your personal circumstances allow.

“We all receive the same instruction, but our understanding of the meaning of the ordinances and covenants will increase as we return to the temple often with the attitude of learning and contemplating the eternal truths taught.”

Silvia H. Allred, former First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, “Holy Temples, Sacred Covenants,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 113.

Go to [lds.org/go/031949](https://lds.org/go/031949) to read an article that can help you understand the covenants we make with God.

# The Temple Is for Me

Even though I wasn't going on a mission or getting married, I felt the time was right for me to enter the temple.

**By Maryssa Dennis**  
Church Magazines

**I**n the spring of 2016, I was finishing up my last semester of college. And I was terrified.

I was about to venture into the murky, foggy realm of adulthood—real adulthood, without the training wheels. There were so many unknowns ahead, and I wanted something I could be sure about.

I found myself longing for the temple. It was my beacon. I knew I could find the peace I was looking for within those holy walls. For the first time, I began to seriously consider receiving my endowment.

## **“This Is for You!”**

I'd always assumed that I'd enter the temple right before I went on a mission or got married. I'd even taken a temple prep class to prepare. But I hadn't served a mission. And there was definitely no fiancé in sight. Yet I still wondered whether the time was right.

General conference was coming up, so I wrote down my question: “Is it the right time for me to receive my endowment?” I fasted and prayed that I would receive an answer during conference. Then I listened carefully to each speaker. I received lots of impressions . . . but nothing about receiving the endowment. Until the very last session.

Elder Kent F. Richards of the Seventy opened his talk with a quote from Joseph Smith: “We need the temple more than anything else.”<sup>1</sup>





Immediately, a light switched on inside me. It was like the Holy Ghost had leaned in and whispered, “This is for you!” I felt that my question had been answered and that it was time to meet with my bishop.

### **Resistance and Resolutions**

My family was coming from out of state for my graduation soon. I knew I wanted them to be in the temple with me, so I met with my bishop as soon as I could.

My bishop felt I was ready to receive my endowment, so he conducted the interview and signed my new temple

recommend. He told me that the stake president was very busy and advised me to set up an appointment with him immediately. He also recommended that I call the temple soon since it was a busy time of year.

Right after our meeting, I tried to make an appointment with the stake president. But his schedule was completely full! I started to worry that the timing wasn’t right after all.

Despite my worries, everything worked out. My stake president was willing to meet with me outside of his normal interview hours. And though the closest temple had no openings, I was able to squeeze in a time at a temple farther away. So



## WHEN SHOULD I RECEIVE MY ENDOWMENT?

If you feel a strong desire to enter the temple but are not getting married or preparing for a mission, pray about it. Talk with people you trust. Meet with your bishop. He can help you know whether you're ready. If you're in your late teens or early twenties, your bishop or stake president might not recommend that you receive your endowment right away. But your eligibility is determined by your worthiness and spiritual maturity, not your current stage in life. (Priesthood leaders: see the current version of *Handbook 1: Stake Presidents and Bishops* [2010], 3.3.3, on LDS.org.)

much of this experience was out of my hands that I knew Heavenly Father was orchestrating it all. It was a further testimony to me that it *was* the right time.

I later realized that these problems might have been Satan's last-ditch efforts to keep me from the temple. President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained:

"We should expect that the adversary will try to interfere with us. . . .

"Temple work brings so much resistance because it is the source of so much spiritual power to the Latter-day Saints."<sup>2</sup>

## You Know Him

I was eager to enter the temple but also a bit nervous. Every day I prayed that I'd find peace and feel the Spirit in the temple. I found comfort by talking with my parents and close friends who were endowed, but I was still uneasy.

The night before, I couldn't sleep. A million thoughts swirled around in my head. What if the temple ceremonies were confusing or intimidating? What if I didn't know what to do? What if I was so overwhelmed that I couldn't feel the Spirit? What if I wasn't really ready?

As I lay awake, a Primary song popped into my head: "I love to see the temple. I'm going there someday."<sup>3</sup> I sang through the song in my head, and my fears slowly seeped away. I realized that I'd been preparing to enter the temple since I was a little girl. Receiving the blessings of the temple was simply the next step in my progression toward eternal life.

I remembered how I felt when I did baptisms for the dead or spent time on temple grounds. The spirit of the temple was already familiar to me, because it was Heavenly Father's Spirit. And I was already familiar with Him! He was the God I loved, trusted, obeyed, prayed to, and strived to be like every day. I was willing to do whatever He asked of me.

The next day, I sat in the temple next to my mom. I still felt nervous. When a temple worker came to show me where to go next, she told me that Heavenly Father was pleased I was there.

Then it hit me—I had made it to the temple! My entire life so far had been leading up to that moment, when I could enter the temple, worthy and ready to start receiving all the light God could give me there. I was filled with an overwhelming sense of His love. I knew that the Holy Ghost was testifying to me that Heavenly Father wanted me to be in His house.

## A House of Learning

That day, I heard some of the most beautiful words I'd ever heard. I learned so much about the plan of salvation and my role in God's kingdom. I received



## LEARN MORE

You can learn more about preparing to receive the temple endowment with the following resources:

- *Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple* (booklet, 2002), [lds.org/manual](https://www.lds.org/manual)
- Russell M. Nelson, “Personal Preparation for Temple Blessings,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 32–35
- *Temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (special issue of the *Ensign*, Oct. 2010)
- “How I Prepared to Enter the Mormon Temple,” Mormon Channel blog, [mormonchannel.org](https://www.mormonchannel.org)
- Visit [mormonnewsroom.org/topic/temples](https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/topic/temples)
- Visit [lds.org/topics/temples](https://www.lds.org/topics/temples)

amazing eternal promises and made sacred covenants. And I felt the Spirit in a way I never had before.

The experience was incredible. But I’d be lying if I said I wasn’t a little overwhelmed. There was so much to take in that I wasn’t sure what to think.

After the endowment session, I sat with my family and a few close friends in the celestial room. I had a thousand questions, but I couldn’t find the words to ask them. My friend told me that she had felt the same way. “It’s like trying to understand calculus as a kindergartener,” she said. “We probably won’t ever understand it all in this life. But that’s why we keep going back—so we can understand a little better each time.”

Over the next few days, I pondered everything I’d learned and felt. The more I thought about it, the more I realized how beautiful and meaningful the experience was. Every day I felt more gratitude for the temple and more resolve to honor my covenants.

I lived near the temple, so I decided to go regularly. Later, I even got to serve as an ordinance worker there. As I set aside time to be in the temple, I started understanding more. I think of temple attendance like scripture study—you can get something more out of it each time.

I’ve received some of my most significant and personal spiritual insights in the temple. Sometimes understanding

comes not during the ordinance itself but while I’m waiting. I cherish those times I have in the temple to pray or read the scriptures or simply sit quietly and reflect. In a place where I can be so close to the Spirit, I’m much more open to what He has to teach me.

## At Home in His House

The feelings I get in the temple are just as important as what I learn there. When I walk through the doors, it’s like coming home. The peace I feel is a small miracle to me—a confirmation from the Spirit that I’m where I’m supposed to be.

I’ve learned that I can find so much of what I need in the temple. When I have questions, I can find answers. When I feel weary, I can find rest. When I feel weak, I can find strength. And when I feel uncertain, I can find peace.

Sometimes in life, I feel out of place. But in the temple, I know that I belong. I can feel the Spirit whisper to me like He did before: “This is for you.” I’m grateful that no matter what, I can always feel at home in my Father’s house. ■

## NOTES

1. Joseph Smith, in Kent F. Richards, “The Power of Godliness,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 118.
2. *Preparing to Enter the Holy Temple* (booklet, 2002), 35, 36.
3. “I Love to See the Temple,” *Children’s Songbook*, 95.

# Lessons on Motherhood from Almost Sleeping through General Conference

I wouldn't get much from general conference with my toddlers running around. Would I?

**By Mindy Selu**  
Church Magazines

I only realized the lunacy of ordering a new notebook specifically for general conference when it arrived. Did I really expect to be able to take notes during any of the 10 hours of conference with my almost-two-year-old twins running around? They couldn't handle the sight of a pen not in their possession but couldn't be trusted with one yet either. I decided I'd at least write down the questions I had on my mind—after the girls were in bed, obviously—and try to listen for answers.

The night before general conference, as I wrote down my final question, “How can I be a better mother?” a distinct answer came to mind: “Go to the temple.”

“Huh,” I thought. “A pre-conference answer to a pre-conference question. Wasn't expecting that.” But the answer was clear.

The first morning of conference, I tried to listen, hoping for other answers or impressions. My husband works graveyard shifts, so I planned on him being asleep. Luckily my toddlers were entertained—at least for the first 45 minutes or so—by the beautiful music, our “special” breakfast (AKA just our regular breakfast, with a few extra blueberries, eaten on the living room floor instead of in high chairs), and a few simple activities (can you say “puffy stickers”?).



When the new two-hour block schedule was announced, I rejoiced, along with many mothers of young children. But I also felt the overwhelming responsibility of needing to teach my children the gospel better and more regularly at home. It felt like one more thing to add to the list of areas where I was already falling short in my efforts to be a good mother. At the same time, every reference in conference to temple work seemed directed at me and reinforced my earlier answer that I personally could be a better mother by attending the temple more.<sup>1</sup>

### The Message I Needed

When Sunday morning came, I woke up feeling exhausted and that even-my-skin-hurts kind of sick. I was sure I had the flu and that this wasn't just the result of staying up too late too many nights in a row, trying to squeeze every last ounce of "me time" in after my children went to sleep. (Spoiler: it wasn't the flu.) We still tuned in, physically even if not quite mentally, to the Sunday morning session, and I timed it just right to have my busy twins nap at the same time as the afternoon session. I then grabbed my notebook and lay down on the couch to enjoy the last session in silence (rookie mistake, I know).

When my eyes opened again, I fumbled for my cell phone to check the time. The session was almost over. I turned toward the TV just in time to hear President Nelson say, "Now let's turn to the topic of temples." I was grateful that I'd woken up at that very moment.

He continued: "We know that our time in the temple is crucial to our salvation and exaltation *and to that of our families*. . . .

" . . . Our need to be in the temple on a regular basis has never been greater. I plead with you to take a prayerful look at how you spend your time. Invest time in your future *and in that of your family*. If you have reasonable access to a temple, I urge you to find a way to make an appointment regularly with the Lord—to be in His holy house—then keep that appointment with exactness and joy. I promise you that the Lord will bring the miracles He knows you need as you make sacrifices to serve and worship in His temples."<sup>2</sup>



### Revelation Meant Just for Me

Now, I don't recommend trying to watch general conference on a lack of sleep (or with young children running around, but that can't always be helped). But Heavenly Father understood my circumstances, and because He cares about me and my children, He taught me a few things after that memorable conference.

First, God provides divine instruction at general conference, but I didn't need to wait for conference to seek answers. Second, the way I was spending (read: wasting) my free time wasn't pleasing to the Lord—nor to my tired body. I was sacrificing sleep for fruitless pursuits instead of eternal ones (see Luke 21:34). Third, and perhaps most obvious, I needed to spend more time in the temple. My sacrifice of time—not away from my family but away from other distractions—would be the best thing for me to become a better mother and a better teacher to my children. ■

#### NOTES

1. See, for example, Ronald A. Rasband, "Be Not Troubled," *Ensign*, Nov. 2018, 18–21; Michelle D. Craig, "Divine Discontent," *Ensign*, Nov. 2018, 52–55.
2. Russell M. Nelson, "Becoming Exemplary Latter-day Saints," *Ensign*, Nov. 2018, 114; emphasis added.

# Righteous, Intentional Parenting

Raising children isn't easy, but the Savior's example can inspire us to parent in righteous, intentional ways.

By **Ralphie Jacobs**

**W**hile in the midst of a busy evening at home, I encouraged all of my children to start our daily tradition of working together to clean up after dinner. One particular daughter was simply out of sorts, moaning and whining about things being too hard and loudly reminding us all that we were making her life miserable. As she turned the corner in a huff, the glass bowl that she carried fell to the floor and shattered across the kitchen. What a mess!

I looked at her, her eyes brimming with tears, and an inspired thought came to my mind: “What would Jesus do?”

I bent down and started helping her clean up. We worked side by side quietly until it was finished. About 15 minutes later, she came up to me, leaned in for a hug, and said, “I’m so sorry, Mom, that I broke the bowl.” With a clear perspective in my heart, it wasn’t difficult for me to reply, “It’s OK. It’s just a bowl. I love you so much more.”

## **Intentional, Christlike Parenting**

In his first public statement as President of the Church, President Russell M. Nelson said, “I thank God . . . for parents who are serious about their commitment to righteous, intentional parenting.”<sup>1</sup>

Most parents probably hope to be counted among that group. We care deeply about our families and the work we do in our homes. It’s no secret, however, that parenting is very hard. How blessed we are to have our Savior’s example as we navigate learning how to parent in righteous, intentional ways.



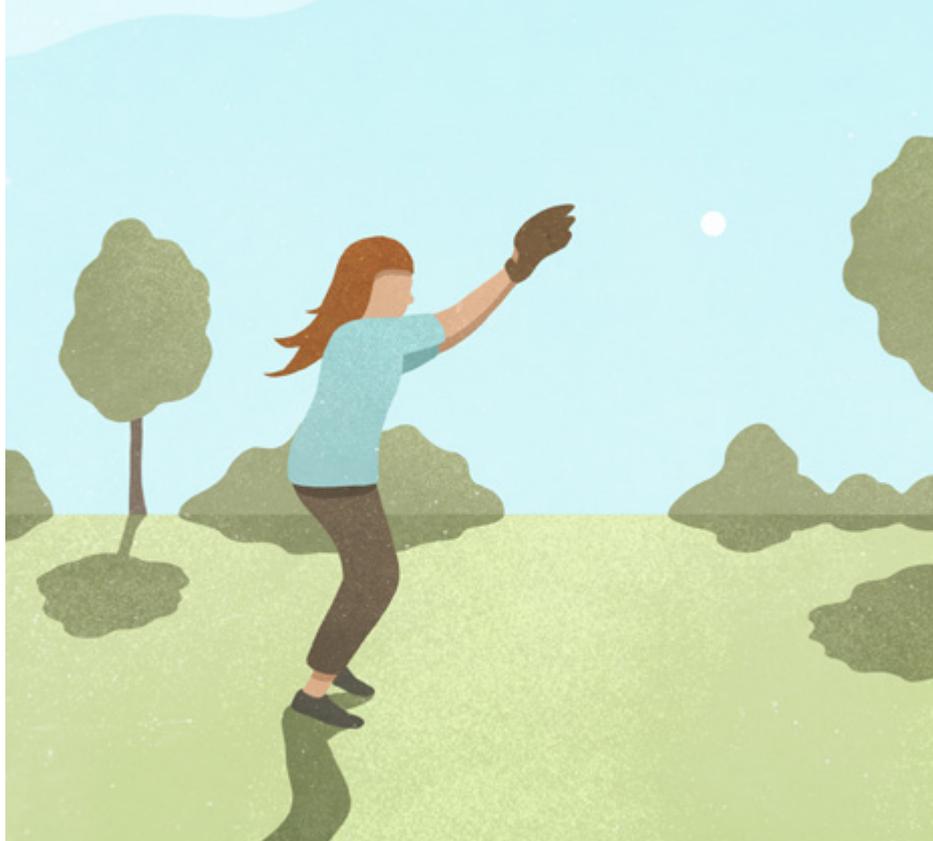
What is righteous, intentional parenting? Intentional parenting is Christlike parenting. It is making decisions about how you will respond (rather than react) to your child's behavior in a purposeful and deliberate way that teaches skills and nurtures connection.

As guardians of our families, our greatest responsibility is to create a home that is full of Christlike love, a home that is a safe teaching environment, where children can learn the happiness that comes from doing what is right. It is a place where parents model compassion and seeing the good in others. It is not a place that is governed by fear and dominion but rather a sanctuary where growth is recognized and encouraged.

### Pattern for Intentional Parenting

How do we parent as Jesus Christ would and create this kind of home environment? We follow His pattern. We do our best to walk in His footsteps, especially when honoring our sacred role as parents.<sup>2</sup> Christlike, intentional parenting is done purposefully, with resolve and earnest attention. It truly looks like learning on the parent's part, practicing deliberately because our minds and hearts are open to growth.

There are many ways that we can apply the Savior's example to our lives, and as we learn more about Him, we discover many divine attributes that give us guideposts for how to interact with and raise our children. The following are four ways to apply His example to our commitment to righteous, intentional parenting.



### 1. Be a living example.

#### Jesus Christ's Example

- Jesus was patient, compassionate, long-suffering, and gentle. He is the “supreme example of the power of humility.”<sup>3</sup> He taught us to “walk in the meekness of [His] Spirit” (Doctrine and Covenants 19:23).
- Jesus did not revile, meaning He never spoke to others abusively or with contempt. Even when He was faced with cruelty, Jesus knew that the best way to change hearts was through love and understanding. To not revile or use abusive language is one of the Savior's most important messages to us. He reminded us that “he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me” (3 Nephi 11:29).

#### Parenting Application

- Stay close to your children. Learn how to listen to them without any judgment or belittling so that when they need help they will come to you. Pay attention to their point of view when something goes wrong, and allow their struggles to create compassion within you.
- Be calm and wise during those times when emotions run high. Remember that your children learn from your example, so seek to develop traits of long-suffering, patience, gentleness, and meekness (see Alma 13:28).
- Model being happy. Look on the bright side of things and show your children how to handle disappointment and conflict in a healthy way. For example, “I had a bad day at work, but let's go play catch. That will help me feel better.”



## 2. Teach your children.

### Jesus Christ's Example

- Jesus spent most of His ministry on earth teaching. He taught the same principles many times, changing the way that He taught to suit the learner.
- Jesus knew that a sin was often committed because the sinner didn't fully understand the blessings of keeping the commandments. He taught about Heavenly Father and the gospel and forgave those who repented.
- Jesus said we should come to Him with "a broken heart and a contrite spirit" (3 Nephi 9:20), making us more receptive and teachable.

### Parenting Application

- You are your child's teacher. When your child misbehaves, instead of reaching for punishments, think about how you can better teach your child to behave well. Think, "What does my child need to learn?" Teaching allows your child to build skills that can be used in the future.
- Teach your children when they are ready to learn. Wait for them to be teachable by allowing time to create calm within the child and within yourself (see 3 Nephi 17:3). When they are ready, teach them about specific behaviors that you would like to see. Find nonthreatening settings for teaching, such as a family meeting with role-plays. Make learning new skills a happy experience by giving lots of praise.
- Redirect your children. Focus on the positive form of the behavior. For example, instead of saying, "Stop running," say, "Walking feet." Focus your energy on teaching them what they should do.
- Expect that you will need to teach the same concept multiple times, whether you're teaching a child about faith or about tidying up their room. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) reminded us that "repetition is a law of learning."<sup>4</sup>





### 3. Look for the good.

#### Jesus Christ's Example

- Jesus “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38) and pointed out the good He saw in others (see, for example, John 1:47; 3 Nephi 27:30).
- Our Savior taught the law of the harvest, that we reap what we sow. He taught that to bear good fruit, the ground must be nourished and cared for. (See Jacob 5; Doctrine and Covenants 6:33.)

#### Parenting Application

- Look for the good in your children. Build them up and let them know that all the good they do is valued and seen. Paying attention to a child when they are behaving well is the best way to make that behavior stronger. It connects good feelings with good behavior, and as a result, they learn to love to do what is right.
- Use praise as a tool to nurture within them a strong character. Say things like “Thank you for waiting for me. That’s being patient.” Children respond so much better to responsibility when they know their good deed will be recognized.





#### 4. Allow your children to make choices.

##### Jesus Christ's Example

- The Savior gave His life for us that we might learn and become better through our choices, including opening our hearts to repentance and forgiveness.
- The Savior uses laws to guide our choices and to teach us the connection between agency and consequences.

##### Parenting Application

- Keep a long-term perspective and help your children to become strong and capable adults by setting clear expectations and then giving them autonomy and control over their decisions.
- Allow your child's choices to become a vehicle for many life lessons. Do not take away their opportunities to learn from the consequences of their exercised agency.



#### Creating a Loving Home

We all have struggles and trials within the walls of our homes. There is not one home that is free from challenges, because this is part of Heavenly Father's plan to refine us so that we might reach our full potential as eternal parents. He doesn't desire that we just wade through affliction, however; He asks us to seek His counsel and be willing to change and improve, and in turn He will magnify our abilities. With His help, we *can* make a commitment to righteous, intentional parenting by the Spirit, the kind of parenting that assures us that as long as we are centered on Jesus Christ and His gospel, from an eternal perspective "nothing can ever go permanently wrong."<sup>5</sup>

Following the Savior's pattern (even when you feel there is little hope) will help keep your children close and create a Christlike countenance about you. Intentional parenting keeps you focused on the most rewarding work you will ever do—creating a loving home. ■

*The author lives in Texas, USA.*

##### NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, "As We Go Forward Together," *Ensign*, Apr. 2018, 5.
2. See "I'm Trying to Be like Jesus," *Children's Songbook*, 78–79.
3. Richard C. Edgley, "The Empowerment of Humility," *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 99.
4. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children," *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 50.
5. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Howard W. Hunter* (2015), 1.

# REDESIGNING MY LIFE AFTER LOSS

My husband and I had always made our decisions as a couple. How could I do it alone?

**By Christy Monson**  
Church Magazines

**A**s a therapist, I have helped many people face life after the passing of a loved one, but when my husband of 54 years moved on to a new life beyond the veil, I sat in the kitchen grief-stricken, confused, and unable to think.

Fortunately, our son hurried to be by my side to help me move through the next few days—the memorial service, the burial, and the many other decisions that need to be made immediately after a death. The children all came home; the memorial service was beautiful. The president over the mission where my husband and I had served also came—even with his busy schedule. Everyone supported me.

But as life settled down, the depth of my loss felt all too real. I would hear the score of the ball game and want to discuss it with my husband—but I was alone. I had to stop myself from putting his cereal bowl on the table and bringing in his paper. In sacrament meeting, I missed snuggling against his shoulder. I mourned for his loss but was happy he was with God (see Alma 28:12).

Grief lapped at the shore of my life like the waves of the sea. Sometimes it was there and

sometimes it was gone. There were times when life went on as normal. But at other moments, I felt things were falling apart.

My aloneness loomed before me like a mountain too steep to climb. I had to take one step at a time. I read my scriptures daily, as I had always done. I listened to conference talks several times a week, as I had always done. But that didn't seem to be enough.

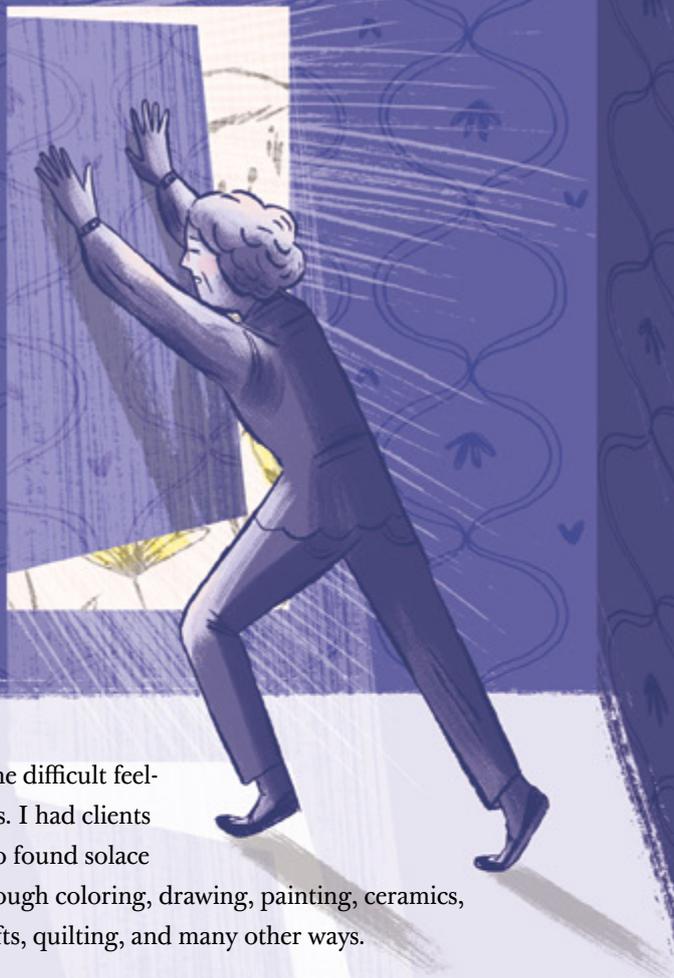
I prayed for Heavenly Father's guidance through this adjustment process. I knew He would hear me. "Whatsoever thing ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is good, in faith believing that ye shall receive, behold, it shall be done unto you" (Moroni 7:26).

Here are a few of the practices that lighted my way.

## Inspiring Words

When waves of grief overcame me, I repeated the Book of Mormon and Bible scriptures I had memorized. They sank deep into my soul. Sometimes in the middle of the night when I couldn't sleep, I repeated Proverbs 3:5–6:

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.



“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

I began to study “The Living Christ.”<sup>1</sup> Could my old brain memorize it? With the help of the Lord, I began. Peace filled my soul as I meditated on the Savior, His Atonement, and His love for me.

### **A Memorial**

I started to write my husband’s story—as a memorial to the goodness of his life. I wanted everyone to remember his magnetic personality, his zeal for the gospel, and his love of the Lord. I had collected many family histories over the years and loved doing that kind of writing. I felt my husband close. Memories of things that happened in our lives came back to me—things I would not have thought of on my own.

### **Art**

On days when life seemed overwhelming, I wrote other things—an emotions journal, a gratitude journal. The topic didn’t matter. Writing released my feelings. But everyone walking this path will find a little different way. Other forms of art can be helpful also. I had a client, a pianist, who would come into her session saying she’d played a lot of Rachmaninoff that week, and I knew she’d been working through

some difficult feelings. I had clients who found solace through coloring, drawing, painting, ceramics, crafts, quilting, and many other ways.

### **Self-Care**

Even when I didn’t feel like it, I took care of myself physically by eating healthy foods and exercising. My daily walk lessened the anxiety of being alone, and I looked forward to the boost of energy it gave me.

### **Smiling Thoughts**

I’ve found that smiling is always a quick pick-me-up. Thoughts of my husband reuniting with his family gave me comfort. His father had died when my husband was a young child, and I knew they were together now, having a good time. He and his older sister loved to watch ball games together. I could see them, cheering on their favorite team.

The words of President Heber J. Grant (1856–1945)—who lost several family members during his lifetime, including three children—helped me keep this mind-set. He said: “I can never think of my loved ones . . . as being in the grave. I rejoice in the associations they are enjoying and in the pleasure



they are having in meeting with their loved ones on the other side.”<sup>2</sup>

I could picture my husband joining forces with his father and forefathers in preaching the gospel to those on the other side. Peace confirmed that principle to my soul as I read the vision of President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918): “From among the righteous, he organized his forces and appointed messengers, clothed with power and authority, and commissioned them to go forth and carry the light of the gospel to them that were in darkness” (Doctrine and Covenants 138:30).

I am humbly grateful for Jesus Christ, who, through His Atonement, made all of this possible.

### **Service**

Ministering added to my peace. Building new relationships fills the giver and the receiver with love. Both become givers and receivers.

A neighbor and a dear friend had just lost her husband in a plane accident several months before my husband’s death. We had long talks about the process we were experiencing. We went to church together each week, and she came every Sunday for lunch.

Another friend was in the process of losing the love of her life to cancer. He had lived much longer than the doctors thought possible. I took her cookies and visited with her. I listened as she talked about the difficulties of his care during those final months. We mourned her impending loss together.

### **Prayer**

This entire experience has brought me closer to my Heavenly Father. I am in a more spiritual place. I love the promise in Jeremiah 29:13: “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.” I had sought Heavenly Father with all my heart and knew He would bless me to see more clearly my purpose in life. I prayed for patience and believed the promise in Ether 12:6: “Faith is things which are hoped for and not seen; wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith.”

### **Angels Nearby**

Healing the heart is a journey of a lifetime. It happens a little here and a little there, but I don’t think it’s ever finished.



Loneliness just before bed was very unsettling for me. I began to picture my husband with me especially as I knelt to pray. I felt him close—as an angel near my side—and I was comforted.

Referring to Adam and Eve and their descendants, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland said, “In times of special need, [God] sent angels, divine messengers, to bless His children, reassure them that heaven was always very close and that His help was always very near.”<sup>3</sup> These thoughts gave my heart a feeling of light.

When it came time to make decisions on my own, I felt off balance. My husband and I had always made our decisions as a couple. How could I do it alone? I settled myself in my favorite chair and pictured the two of us sitting together, talking over a problem. I could see his friendly smile as he spoke. I listened to his ideas concerning all points of the issue. I shared my thoughts and soon I had come to a peaceful decision.

I then took it to the Lord: “You must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you” (Doctrine and Covenants 9:8). Peace came to me, and I knew the decision was the one best for me.

### Daily Peace Is Part of My Life

My days of overwhelming grief are fewer than they were. I know now this is a path I will walk for the rest of my life. My loneliness has subsided some. I continue immersing myself in the scriptures, memorizing “The Living Christ,” writing my husband’s history, taking care of myself physically, and giving service.

I find myself filled with greater light (see Alma 32:35). My way is more defined. I have nourished the gospel in my life and now partake of the promise given in Alma 32:42: “Ye shall pluck the fruit thereof, which is most precious, which is sweet above all that is sweet, and which is white above all that is white, yea, and pure above all that is pure; and ye shall feast upon this fruit even until ye are filled.”

The pathway before me is one of light—through the blessings of the gospel and the Atonement of my Savior, Jesus Christ, I find the peace I seek for daily. ■

#### NOTES

1. “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2000, 2.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Heber J. Grant* (2002), 44.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Ministry of Angels,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 29.

# Doubt Not, but Be BELIEVING

What should we do if we have questions about what we once knew to be true?

By Jakob R. Jones

Many of us have had powerful moments when the Holy Ghost has borne witness to our hearts that the gospel is true, that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, and that the Lord guides His Church through living prophets today. Those impressions from the Spirit are hard to ignore or forget.

Yet there are moments when the testimony we have gained through these experiences may be tested. When these tests arise, we can remember that it's normal and okay to have sincere questions. The Lord loves us. As we learn to look to Him for answers to those questions, He can help us resolve our concerns and develop greater faith and testimony.

Amy (name has been changed) had been a faithful member of the Church her entire life and felt she had a strong testimony of the gospel. One day, she encountered statements that surprised her about early Church history and leaders. She struggled to reconcile this new information with the spiritual witnesses of truth she'd experienced in the past and began to have questions about her testimony. She felt guilty for having these questions, so she kept her concerns to herself. The sources she turned to for answers only increased her concerns.

Before long, Amy's unaddressed questions grew into doubts that began to affect other parts of her life. She questioned the reality of God and Jesus Christ. Without the hope of Christ's Atonement, she began to lose confidence in herself. She even began to wonder if she really wanted the life she had chosen as a wife and mother. What began as concern over unanswered questions became a daily struggle with guilt, confusion, anxiety, and fear.

PHOTOGRAPH BY EVE TUFT



You or someone you love may be struggling like Amy. What should we do if we encounter something that causes us to have questions about what we once knew to be true? How can we obtain a lasting testimony of Jesus Christ and His restored Church? How can we avoid allowing our questions to become doubts that threaten our faith? Here are eight principles I hope can help those who are struggling with sincere questions or doubt.

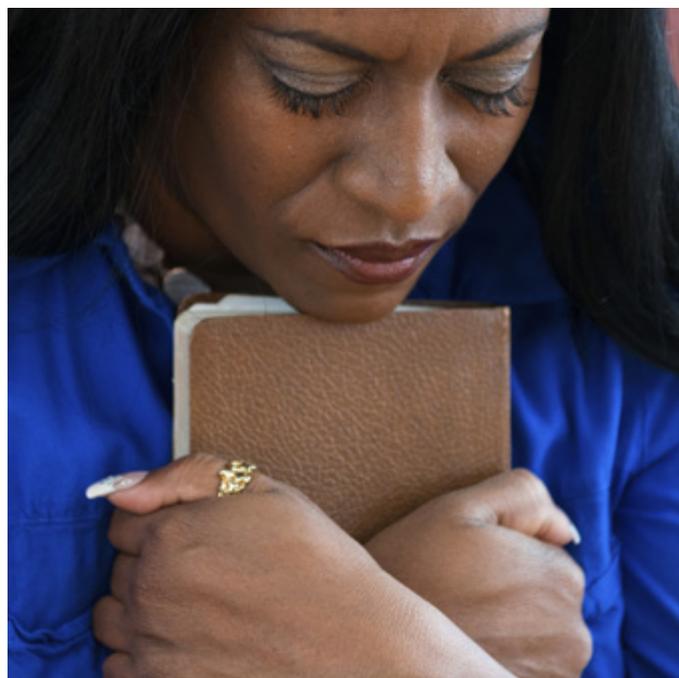
### 1. Seek the Holy Ghost

President Henry B. Eyring, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, taught: “The truth that matters most is verified only by revelation from God. Our human reason and the use of our physical senses will not be enough. We live in a time when even the wisest will be hard-pressed to distinguish truth from clever deception.”<sup>1</sup>

What Amy’s heart really longed for was the peace and personal witness of truth that can come only from God.

The Savior also gave this guidance to His disciples, knowing He would soon no longer be physically present to answer their questions:

“These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.



“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things” (John 14:25–26).

A testimony of divine truth does not come from an internet search or from our own reasoning. Receiving revelation requires great effort. But that effort does not consist of just using our intellect; as we study and search for answers, we need to seek the witness of the Holy Ghost to discover truth.

### 2. Hold to the Testimony You Already Have

When Oliver Cowdery desired a witness of the Book of Mormon, the Lord counseled him to remember the experiences he’d already had:

“If you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things.

“Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?” (Doctrine and Covenants 6:22–23).

I remember sitting in a Primary room as a young boy when the Spirit bore witness to me that God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to Joseph Smith. I remember reading the Book of Mormon as a young man and receiving the overwhelming witness that the people I read about were real and their stories true. I remember countless moments as a missionary teaching in people’s homes as the Holy Ghost witnessed the truth of the restored gospel. I’ve felt Jesus Christ changing me and allowing me to repent of my sins.

As Amy began to look to the Lord for answers to her questions, she too was able to recall many experiences where she’d felt the witness of the Holy Ghost. Our past experiences can serve as anchors for our faith. It’s okay to hold to them when our testimonies are tested.

### 3. Talk to Your Bishop or Stake President

When the time came for Amy to renew her temple recommend, she didn’t want to go to the temple, much less have an interview with her bishop regarding her testimony. But at her husband’s prompting, she met with her bishop. The bishop sensed something was wrong and asked how she was doing. Amy finally shared her concerns. She had been so worried



that her bishop would think less of her, but he reassured her that God loved her for wanting to do the right things and would not stop loving her because she had questions. Amy’s bishop listened to her concerns without judging her. They talked about how she could begin to receive answers from the Lord through the Holy Ghost. Amy still had questions, but she left that visit with renewed hope.

If you are struggling with questions, please talk to your bishop or stake president. The Lord can give you personal guidance through them. They love you, and the mantle they carry is real.<sup>2</sup>

#### 4. Remember God’s Mercy

Moroni gave this invitation to all those seeking a witness of truth: “Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things” (Moroni 10:3).

Why does Moroni suggest remembering God’s mercy as essential to receiving a witness of truth? I believe it’s because something changes in us when we realize that Jesus Christ can heal us, that we can repent and be cleansed of our sins, that we can change. When we experience God’s mercy for us personally, we see all of His works through the lens of His mercy.

As Amy worked to feel God’s love for her, she realized she didn’t need

to judge Church leaders and that the mortal frailties of others did not impact the witness of truth she could receive through the Holy Ghost. When we encounter perceived shortcomings in others, we can remember that the same mercy that allows us to be forgiven also allows God to patiently work through His imperfect servants.

#### 5. Convert Doubts into Sincere Questions

When we are troubled by uncertainty, the Savior counsels us to avoid doubt. He said, “Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not” (Doctrine and Covenants 6:36). And Moroni wrote, “Doubt not, but be believing” (Mormon 9:27).

We should remember that “the term *question* is not synonymous with the term *doubt*.”<sup>3</sup> Doubt assumes the very worst about ourselves and others. When we doubt, we fear that someone is trying to cheat or deceive us. To doubt that Jesus is the Christ implies that He and those who have borne witness of Him are confused, misguided, or lying. To doubt the Book of Mormon, one



must assume the worst about Joseph Smith and everyone who gave so much to bring it forth. To doubt our ability to repent and change implies that Christ cannot do what He claims, that His power is somehow limited.

Although the Lord discourages doubt, He invites us to come to Him with our sincere questions. “Ask, and it shall be given you,” He taught (Matthew 7:7).

We can replace doubts with sincere questions, such as “Is Jesus the Christ?” “Is the Book of Mormon true?” “Did Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appear to Joseph Smith?” “Does Christ lead this Church today?” or “Can I be forgiven of my sins?” Sincere questions like these can soften our hearts as we show our trust in the Lord and look to Him for answers.

We may also discover that some of our questions aren’t so important or don’t really need immediate answers. Tad R. Callister, Sunday School General President, stated: “I can live with some human imperfections, even among prophets of God—that is to be expected in mortal beings. I can live with some alleged scientific findings contrary to the Book of Mormon; time will correct those. And I can live with some seeming historical anomalies; they are minor in the total landscape of truth. But I cannot live without the doctrinal truths and ordinances restored by Joseph Smith, I cannot live without the priesthood of God to bless my family, and I cannot live without knowing my wife and children are sealed to me for eternity.”<sup>4</sup>

If we truly seek God’s will, we will know which questions are important to pursue now and which can wait. Amy discovered that the things she worried about weren’t relevant to her testimony and that she could wait for further understanding.

## 6. Study

The Lord has commanded us to “seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:118). The purpose of our study is not to uncover every scientific or historical fact that might prove or disprove our concerns. The purpose is to provide opportunities for the Holy Ghost to bear witness of the truth to our mind and heart.

What should we study? If the fruits of the Spirit are “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Galatians 5:22–23), it is unlikely that the Spirit will bear witness of truth when we study the opinions of those who are filled with anger, hatred, and skepticism toward the Church, its leaders, or the Savior Himself.

A witness of Jesus Christ comes as we study His words and the words of His servants. If we desire to know that Joseph Smith was a prophet, we study the things he brought forth, including the Book of Mormon and the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants. A testimony of living prophets will come as we read and listen to their words in general conference. If we are sincere in our desires, the Spirit can bear witness in the very moment we study or hear truth.

Amy began to study the scriptures and words of living prophets instead of looking to the internet for answers. After one evening of study, she commented, “I know Heavenly Father loves and cares for me. I have a new feeling and a sense of peace and liberation I’ve been seeking for so long.”

## 7. Pray

Moroni wrote, “And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost” (Moroni 10:4).

How can we pray with a sincere heart and real intent? One of the most sincere prayers I know of was given by the king of the Lamanites after Aaron taught him the gospel of Jesus Christ. Seeking to know the truth, the king “cried mightily, saying: O God, Aaron hath told me that there is a God; and if there is a God, and if thou art God, wilt thou make thyself known unto me, and I will give away all my sins to know thee” (Alma 22:17–18).

To pray with real intent means we are willing to do whatever the Lord asks of us. When you pray, remember you are talking to your Heavenly Father. He loves you. Be honest with Him. Tell Him about your fears, your mistakes, and your weaknesses. Tell Him you want to be good, that you’re trying to do the right thing. Tell Him you are sorry for your sins. Ask for His forgiveness. Then ask your sincere questions. Listen for the promptings of the Holy Ghost and have the courage to follow them.

## 8. Keep the Commandments

The Savior taught that obedience to the commandments is a prerequisite to receiving the companionship of the Holy Ghost. He said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, . . . even the Spirit of truth” (John 14:15–17).

We cannot withhold our obedience from God and then claim we’ve done our part to receive answers to our questions. Abandoning our covenants and justifying sin are the worst things we can do during a trial of faith—the time when we most need the companionship of the Spirit.

Amy shed tears of relief when her bishop helped her realize that because she was keeping her covenants, she could go to the Lord with confidence that He would respond to her sincere questions.

## Conclusion: Be Believing

Over several months, Amy learned to look to the Lord for answers to her sincere questions. As she sought the Spirit through sincere study, prayer, and obedience, she was gradually blessed with a bright, rekindled testimony. After joyfully returning to the temple, Amy recorded, “God is so good. The Savior has reached down to lift and save me. I feel so humbled and blessed, and the faith and trust that I have in Him has freed my soul.”

If the Lord can do that for Amy, He can do it for each of us. May the Lord bless us as we look to Christ, overcome doubt and fear, and resolve to be believing. ■

*The author lives in California, USA.*

### NOTES

1. Henry B. Eyring, “The Holy Ghost as Your Companion,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 104.
2. See Robert D. Hales, “The Mantle of a Bishop,” *Ensign*, May 1985, 28–30; 2 Kings 2:9–15.
3. “Answering Gospel Questions,” Gospel Topics, topics.lds.org.
4. Tad R. Callister, “What Is the Blueprint of Christ’s Church?” (Church Educational System devotional for young adults, Jan. 12, 2014), broadcasts.lds.org.



# How Your Mission Can Help You Have **the Time(-ing) of Your Life**

Full-time missionary service isn't about leaving just because you're old enough. It's about being ready to serve the Lord.

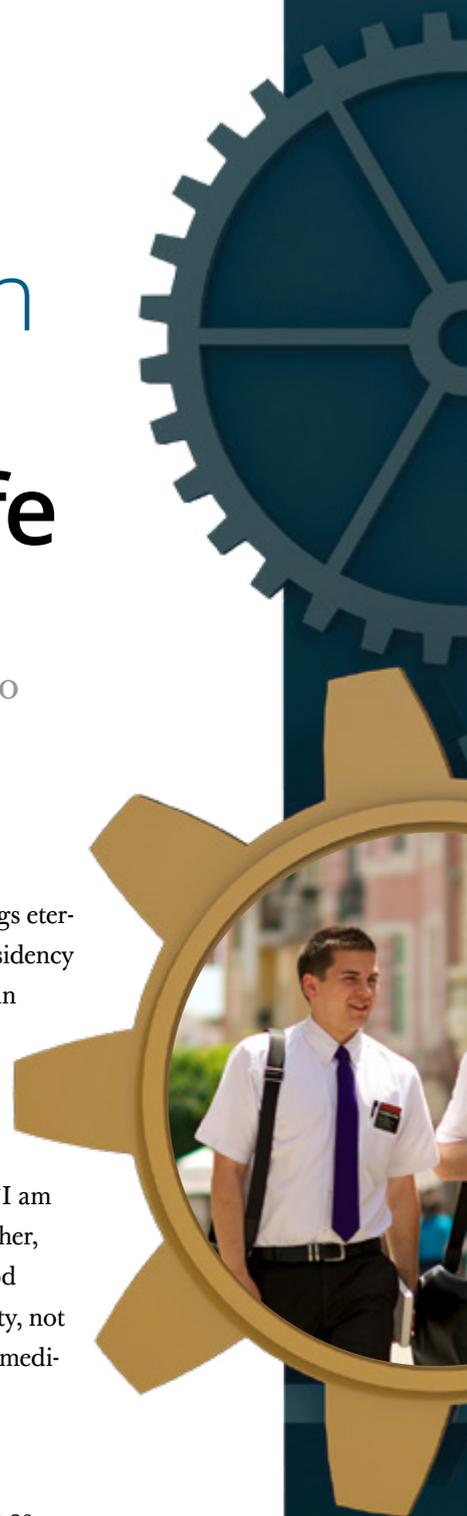
**By Richard M. Romney**  
Church Magazines

“**T**o serve the Lord as a missionary is a glorious, sacred privilege that brings eternal blessings to the individual and those he or she serves,” the First Presidency said in a letter dated November 16, 2018. And since the announcement in October 2012 general conference that young men could begin full-time missionary service at 18 and young women at 19, thousands have been blessed—both those who have become missionaries at 18 (sisters at 19) and those they have helped come to Christ.

In that announcement, President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) also said, “I am not suggesting that all young men will—or should—serve at this earlier age. Rather, based on individual circumstances as well as upon a determination by priesthood leaders, this option is now available.”<sup>1</sup> The option was meant to provide flexibility, not to create a feeling that young men are somehow unworthy if they don't serve immediately when they turn 18.

## **How Can You Bless Others?**

In my own experience, even though I was eager to serve a mission as soon as possible, I wasn't able to go until I had fulfilled a military obligation. I wondered if I would fit in with missionaries who were younger than I was, and was grateful to find some other missionaries in the France Paris Mission who were a little older too.





*The timing of a mission should be determined with prayerful pondering, paying particular attention to the will of the Lord.*

PHOTOGRAPH OF SISTER MISSIONARIES BY CELIA JEFFERY

One elder was from England. A convert, he came on his mission at 24, after he had finished college. Because he had already lived away from home, he helped younger missionaries rise above two common concerns: homesickness and fear of talking to strangers.

Another elder came from Argentina. He became a full-time missionary at 21. His native language was Spanish, so he had to learn both French and English. He helped all of us be more patient as we learned just one new language.

A 25-year-old sister from California felt so prompted to serve that she left behind running her own business. Her organizational and leadership skills strengthened every branch and ward she served in.

### **Can Some Questions Cause Cringing?**

As I look back on my mission, I also look ahead for two young men I know. One is a faithful but shy young man. He used to talk regularly about going on a mission but hasn't gone—yet. He's 19, still in his first year of college. When he comes home to visit, ward members invariably ask a well-intentioned question: "So, when are you going on a mission?" Even when asked by people he loves, he sometimes cringes. I have also overheard speculation about what has caused him to be "late" in entering the mission field. Health problems? Transgressions? Maybe he just wants to finish a year of school.

The other young man hasn't been to church in several years. He has watched friends leave on missions. He has watched them return. A 23-year-old prospective elder, he feels his opportunity to serve has passed. He was surprised when I told him of the "older" missionaries in my mission and how they inspired me. "There is always a place for you in the Church, whether

IMAGE OF GEARS FROM GETTY IMAGES

you serve a mission or not,” I told him. “But if you still want to go, there’s time.”<sup>2</sup>

Some young men may not have been properly prepared at 18 (and some sisters at 19). But more than anything, they need encouragement, reassurance, and support. When they *are* ready to serve, the door is still open.

### When Is the Right Time?

How should the timing of a mission be determined? The same way you schedule other significant events, with consideration for worthiness, family needs, finances, health, and academic possibilities thrown in.

But one component outweighs all others—the will of the Lord. When President Monson announced the age changes, he also said, “We have prayerfully pondered . . .”<sup>3</sup> That’s an example anyone thinking about missionary service should follow. The best time to serve is when the Lord confirms the time is right, even if that timing might appear inconvenient for other reasons.

As you prayerfully ponder the timing of your life, including your mission, here are some additional things to consider.

### What Should You Consider?

When you fill out the forms for the online Missionary Recommendation System, you are asked to specify a date of availability. Sometimes prospective missionaries select a date based on family events—marriages of siblings, for example, or the pending birth or death of a family member. Sometimes parents or siblings have strong feelings about when you ought to serve, based on their experiences.

But the most common consideration for many prospective missionaries is school schedules.

Many want to leave right after they finish secondary education and hope to return from their missions when they are able to enter college or other training programs without delay.

Those who decide to leave before going to college may find themselves with time on their hands, particularly if their call includes a date to report to the missionary training center that is months away. Finding productive activities to occupy the time until they enter the MTC can present a challenge. For some prospective missionaries, a period of idleness can become a time of temptation as the adversary works to keep them from being worthy to serve.

Prospective missionaries who have already attended a university may try to time their return in order to take advantage of deferred enrollment and scholarships, class sequences for major fields of study, and other seasons and schedules tied to the academic world. In fact, timing when to *return* may be a bigger consideration than timing when to depart.

Because prospective missionaries cannot specify their reporting date, many set their availability date for the earliest possible time, in order to increase chances their reporting date will fall within their desired window.

### Can Timing Affect Your Experience?

But the truth is, when so many want to leave right after high school and so many want to return just before fall semester, challenges arise. It is difficult for missionary training centers to adjust housing, numbers of teachers, and other accommodations if there are extreme peaks and valleys in the number of missionaries arriving. Missions face similar challenges in arranging housing and having trainers ready. This can be disruptive to the mission and to the work.

As a missionary, you may study and live in less-crowded MTC facilities, receive more personal attention in the classroom, and have more seasoned training when you arrive in the mission field, if you time your missionary experience to coincide with the “off season.” This may, however, require sacrifice with regard to your personal timing.

### What Can You Do?

The “right time” to serve may vary for each individual, but there are some things every prospective missionary should do.

**1. Don’t delay preparation.** Whatever the Lord’s plan for your future may be, becoming better prepared to serve is always a good plan.

## FIND OUT MORE

To learn more about preparing to serve a mission, including options for those not physically and mentally capable of full-time missionary service, go to [lds.org/topics/missionary-preparation](https://lds.org/topics/missionary-preparation).



*There may be more flexibility than you thought concerning when to get back into training programs, school, and other activities.*

Strengthen yourself spiritually through scripture study, prayer, and repentance. Counsel with your bishop and stake president to ensure that standards for worthiness are being met. And remember, the Lord’s timing is better than timing you try to work out on your own. When you feel the Lord is calling you to serve, that takes precedence over other considerations.

**2. Make a plan.** Your goal should be to serve God throughout your life. Although the timing of a mission may affect education or training, ask yourself, What is the best way to serve God now? What will be the best way to serve Him later? If the right decision is to serve a mission now, then don’t delay.

Counsel with family members, inspired leaders, and trusted friends about factors that might affect timing. Advisers and counselors can help you become familiar with policies concerning deferred scholarships, leave of absence, and readmission. There may be more flexibility than you thought.

If the timing of your mission is flexible, consider providing an availability date during off-peak times (for the Provo Utah Missionary Training Center, this is between November and May). If that means you’ll arrive back at the university off track, consider attending short semesters (while others are taking a break) in order to graduate faster or to realign with academic schedules. Consider the possibility of working for a few months when you first return.

**3. Seek divine guidance.** When you do your best to find a solution, then humbly ask Heavenly Father for help to do His will and not your own, He will help you see the path forward. As you seek to do the will of the Lord, if you feel prompted to serve a full-time mission as soon as you’re 18 (or 19, for sisters), don’t hesitate. However, counsel with parents, Church leaders, and the Lord as you make your decision. Then trust in God and go forward with faith. (See Proverbs 3:5–6.) ■

## NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Welcome to Conference,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 4–5.
2. Young elders may serve up to the age of 25. Sisters are considered senior missionaries at age 40.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “Welcome to Conference,” 5.

PHOTOGRAPH OF MISSIONARIES BY SCOTT LAW

TOP AND BOTTOM: PHOTOGRAPHS FROM GETTY IMAGES

# Off the Dusty Bookshelf

By Rose Harvey

*My family benefited when I added my stories to FamilySearch.*

I was raised in a remote farming community in southern Alberta, Canada, and as a young girl I watched my mother diligently sort through rare family photos and record bits and pieces of family history using only the materials that were available to her at the time: short, stubby pencils and odd, misshaped pieces of paper that she would carefully file into an old shoebox.

Preserving our genealogy and stories seemed so very important to Mother, and I couldn't help but have similar feelings as the Spirit touched my heart. As I got older, I followed her example and began to copy from her records

and gather historical facts for my own personal book of remembrance.

While raising my young family, I too diligently recorded the milestones for each of our seven children. My passion for collecting and recording events through photos, letters, and stories expanded and soon included documentation of their births, travels, schooling, callings, missions, and marriages. Over the years, increased technology helped me collect and share family history information with my immediate and extended family.

## Sharing My Heritage

Over the years my diverse collection of rare photos, stories, and journals of my ancestors increased beyond capacity. I felt that the information that I had preserved needed to be categorized into individual binders for each of my ancestors. I got to work, and a large closet in our home was rebuilt with long rows of shelves to hold these binders. I arranged my collection of binders on the shelves for display with my children and grandchildren in mind. I felt certain that they would visit me and request to spend time studying and devouring my immense collection of family history offered for their enjoyment from my personal library.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles promised the youth: "As you respond in faith to this invitation [to participate in family history], your hearts shall turn to the fathers. The promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be implanted in your hearts. Your patriarchal blessing, with its declaration of lineage, will link you to these fathers and be more meaningful to you. Your love and gratitude for your ancestors will increase."<sup>1</sup>

Those are the promises that I wanted my grandchildren to experience.

## Technology to the Rescue

I soon realized that the sacred pages of antique photos and rich stories that I had spent the last 65 years compiling



were gathering dust on my bookshelves. I needed to do something different. My descendants were bustling about serving as missionaries and in callings, earning a living and raising families, and in the process, they were lukewarm toward the wealth of information waiting and all but forgotten on my bookshelves.

The answer came in 2013, when a new initiative to upload photos and stories to FamilySearch began. I could share my work—and through the accessibility of modern technology, my family could share in my work as well. My heart soared at the knowledge that I had the capacity to share my great wealth of information with my posterity and could help them be a part of this hastening of the Lord’s work.

Now I simply scan the information from my collection, upload it to an ancestor’s page, and press “save.” Family members all over the continent have instant access: my grandson in Seattle, Washington, USA, or my granddaughter in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, can each pick up their devices and at the touch of a finger access any of the many stories I have uploaded to FamilySearch.

Moving the records from my dusty bookshelf means my beloved ancestors are now being carried around in the pockets and purses of my posterity—it is a modern-day miracle. Off the dusty bookshelf . . . into the hands of the youth! ■

*The author lives in Alberta, Canada.*

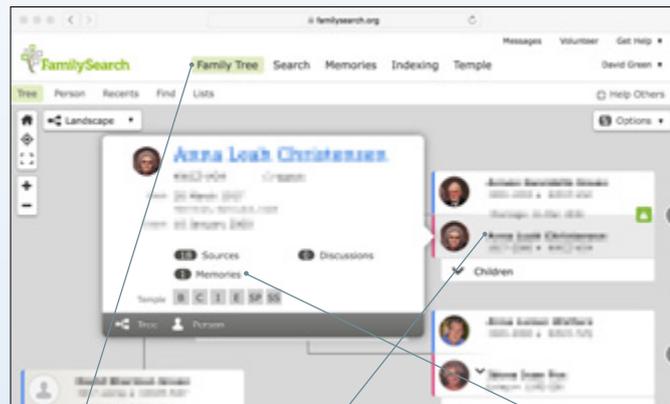
**NOTE**

1. David A. Bednar, “The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 26–27.

## DO YOU HAVE STORIES AND PHOTOS TO SHARE?

Here’s how you can share stories and photos on FamilySearch.org:

### Getting to the Person’s “Memories” Page



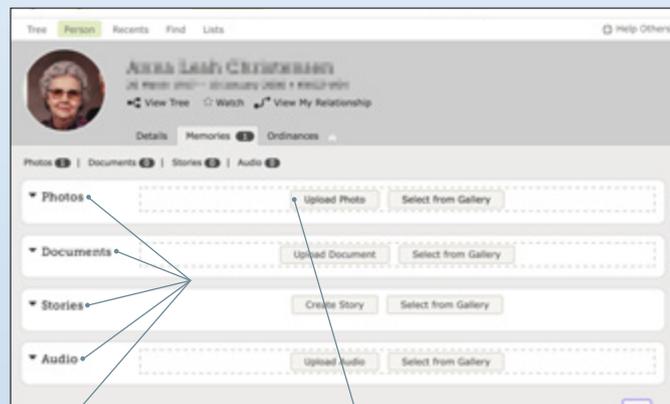
Click 1

2

3

1. Click “Family Tree.”
2. In the tree, click on the person whose story or photo you want to share.
3. Click “Memories” on the white card that pops up.

### Uploading Files



Click 1

2

1. Choose which format you want: photos, documents, stories, or audio.
2. Click the upload button for your chosen format (for stories, click “Create Story”). Choose a file to upload, add a title, and press “Save.” For stories, type or paste in the text, then click “Save Story.” Be sure to add a title to your images and tell the story behind them.

Note that you can also upload memories to FamilySearch through two apps: FamilySearch Tree and FamilySearch Memories.

## It's Not about the Chairs

No one was at the church when, as Young Women president, I arrived to set up chairs in the cultural hall the night before a Young Women activity. I was seven months pregnant, and I had to set up the chairs almost all by myself. But soon my secretary and a counselor arrived and helped me finish. Then we started hanging decorations.

That's when a lady poked her head in. "I'm sorry," she said, "but the Relief Society has this room reserved for our yoga class tonight."

We asked if there was another room they could use, but the other rooms were occupied. So we did the only thing we could: we took down the chairs. I went home that night feeling tired, knowing that in the morning I would need to set up chairs again.

Sometimes life feels this way. With a new baby and four little ones, I feel like I spin my wheels all day and then wake up to do the same thing the next day. At any given moment, there are tummies to fill and piles of clothes, toys, and dishes to put away—I put up the chairs and take down the chairs. That is my life.

But is it about the chairs? As I took down the chairs after the Young Women activity, I couldn't help but smile as I thought about those fun and wonderful girls I have come to love dearly. I was grateful for the time I had spent with them.

It is the same at home. It's not about the peanut butter smudges on the couch or the socks that never seem to have a match. It's about my little family, who swells my heart with joy.

The Lord said: "Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great" (Doctrine and Covenants 64:33).

The small things have come to mean so much to me: hugs, made-up songs, crayon drawings, skipping to the mailbox and back, and eating burnt toast because it was made just for me.

We may do mundane things day after day, like set up chairs and take them down again. But it's not about the chairs—it's about the people we love who sit in them. It's not about the task at hand—it's about the people we serve. When I think of them and how much I love them, I thank the Lord for the beauty of life and for tomorrow, when I'll get up and gladly set up those chairs again. ■

Janessa Orgill, Iowa, USA

*We may do mundane things day after day, like set up chairs and take them down again. But is it about the chairs?*



# Do You Think You'll See Your Brother Again?

It was late at night, I was the only cashier on duty, and there wasn't another soul in the entire grocery store. As I wiped down the checkout counters, I began humming.

My humming quickly turned into singing. I started singing "Come, Come, Ye Saints" (*Hymns*, no. 30). I don't usually sing hymns for fun, but I sang energetically until the sight of someone stopped me.

An older man approached.

"I *know* that song," he said. "How do you know it?"

"It is a hymn we sing in my church," I said.

"Are you a Mormon?"

I responded that I was.

He told me his wife had been a Latter-day Saint and had passed away from cancer in 2011. He said "Come, Come, Ye Saints" was sung at her funeral. I expressed my condolences and told him my older brother passed away in 2011 while serving a mission in Chile. We also sang that hymn at his funeral. The Spirit touched our hearts as we marveled at this "coincidence."

"So do you think you'll see your brother again?" he asked.

I had asked myself the same question countless times. In the difficult months after my brother died, I struggled with

doubts. Eventually, Heavenly Father blessed me with a sweet knowledge that families are forever. I still had questions, but I met the man's gaze and declared, "Yes, I do!"

"You have a lot of faith," the man said. "My wife used to say we should have 'a perfect brightness of hope.'"

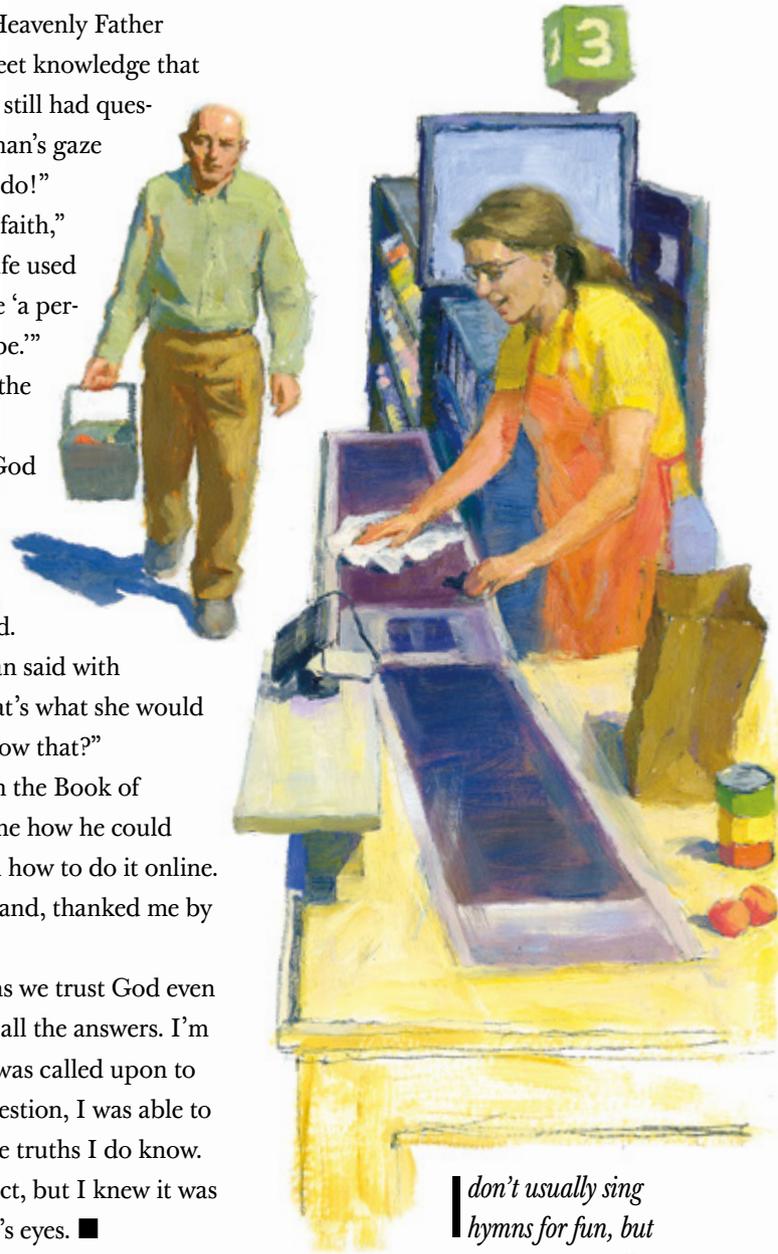
I agreed and quoted the rest of 2 Nephi 31:20, that we should love God and all men, press forward, feast upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end.

"That's it!" the man said with tears in his eyes. "That's what she would say! How did you know that?"

I told him it was in the Book of Mormon. He asked me how he could get a copy. I told him how to do it online. The man shook my hand, thanked me by name, and left.

Having faith means we trust God even when we don't know all the answers. I'm grateful that when I was called upon to answer that man's question, I was able to rely on my faith in the truths I do know. My faith wasn't perfect, but I knew it was sufficient in the Lord's eyes. ■

Wendy Jennings (as told to Leah Barton), Utah, USA



*I don't usually sing hymns for fun, but I sang energetically until the sight of someone stopped me.*



*One night, about a year after I quit attending church, I had a dream.*

## Tomorrow, I'll Go to Church

Two years after my wife, Madeleine, and I were baptized and confirmed, I became less active and quit going to church. Every Sunday morning, she would encourage me to get up and go with her, but I would say no.

"I'm tired. Let me sleep," I would say. And later I would go play soccer.

Madeleine would get up by herself and head to the chapel with our

son, Lucas. In the rain or the cold, she always went.

Looking back, I realize that Satan was attacking me. He convinced me that I was fine without the Church. He told me, "You're good, you're calm, you're comfortable." But in reality, I had lost blessings, progress, and happiness. Thankfully, my wife and my Heavenly Father helped me see things clearly.

One Friday night about a year after I quit attending church, I had a dream. I dreamed that I was in a beautiful countryside, walking hand in hand with my wife and my son. We were very happy.

But then it began to grow dark. It became so dark that I couldn't see anything. Suddenly, I noticed that I was no longer holding hands with my wife and son. I called their names, hoping they

## A Driving Lesson

would return. I wanted them back, and I wanted the darkness to disappear.

At that moment, I experienced what it means to be truly miserable. I had lost Madeleine and Lucas. They had moved ahead without me, leaving me alone, surrounded by darkness.

When I awoke the next morning, I realized that my Father in Heaven had given me a sign. If I didn't return to church and take my wife and son to the temple to be sealed, I would lose them. I would not have them in the next life. I would be in a lost, miserable state.

"Tomorrow," I told Madeleine, "I'll go to church."

Every Sunday morning since then, I have gone to church with my family. I have not missed a single meeting since that dream five years ago. We were eventually sealed in the temple in September 2016.

I'm thankful for all my blessings. I'm especially grateful for my family and for my wife's courage, strength, and example. I'm grateful that she and my Heavenly Father never gave up on me. I am the man I am today thanks to them. ■  
Harmin Toledo Gonzalez, Chiloé, Chile

I was driving home from a young-adult meeting on a beautiful Sunday afternoon. I felt relaxed and unhurried as I thought about the messages I had heard about developing our potential as children of God. I asked myself what I could do to develop the potential that is in me.

My route home took me through a narrow, two-way stretch of road. A long line of cars came from the opposite direction, but no one was behind me. Then, all of a sudden, I heard the repeated blaring of a car horn. There was now a driver behind me. He flicked his headlights on and off and yelled at me to get out of the way. It appeared he wanted to drive faster.

I thought that this person needed to learn patience and respect for others, so I slowed down. As we went past a number of streets, he kept blowing his horn and flicking his lights. He then turned off the road and stopped. I looked in my rearview mirror to see his reaction at not being able to go faster. I felt good about having taught him a lesson.

Suddenly, the driver jumped out of

his car and opened the passenger door. A woman emerged quickly with a baby in her arms. I looked to see where they were going. In the distance, I saw the lighted letters: "Hospital Emergency Room."

"What have I done?" I asked myself. I arrived home, fell to my knees, and with tears in my eyes, I asked God to forgive me.

That day I learned that the actions of those around us can be motivated by things we cannot always see or understand. Today, when I see someone act in a way I judge to be wrong, I prefer to think that I do not quite understand what they are going through. I try to show the love and compassion that Jesus Christ has asked us to have toward others and to focus on understanding and helping those around me.

How can I develop my potential as a child of God? I can respond to the actions of others with love and understanding. Doing so has enabled me to feel more of the Savior's love in my own life and enables others to feel my love for them. ■

Julio Meza Michel, Chihuahua, Mexico

*I felt relaxed and unhurried as I drove home. Then, all of a sudden, I heard the repeated blaring of a car horn.*





By Elder  
Claudio R. M. Costa  
Of the Seventy

## Pay Attention to the Prophets

*What a great blessing it is to have prophets in our day!*

I am a convert to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Before I made the decision to be baptized in the Church, I studied extracts from the history of Joseph Smith. I prayed after carefully reading each paragraph. If you would like to do this yourself, it may take you 14 hours.

After I read, pondered, and prayed, the Lord gave me the assurance that Joseph Smith was His prophet. I testify to you that Joseph Smith is a prophet, and because I have received this answer from the Lord, I know that all of his successors are prophets too. What a great blessing it is to receive the word,



commandments, and guidance of the Lord in these difficult days of the earth! The prophets can be inspired to see the future for the benefit of mankind.

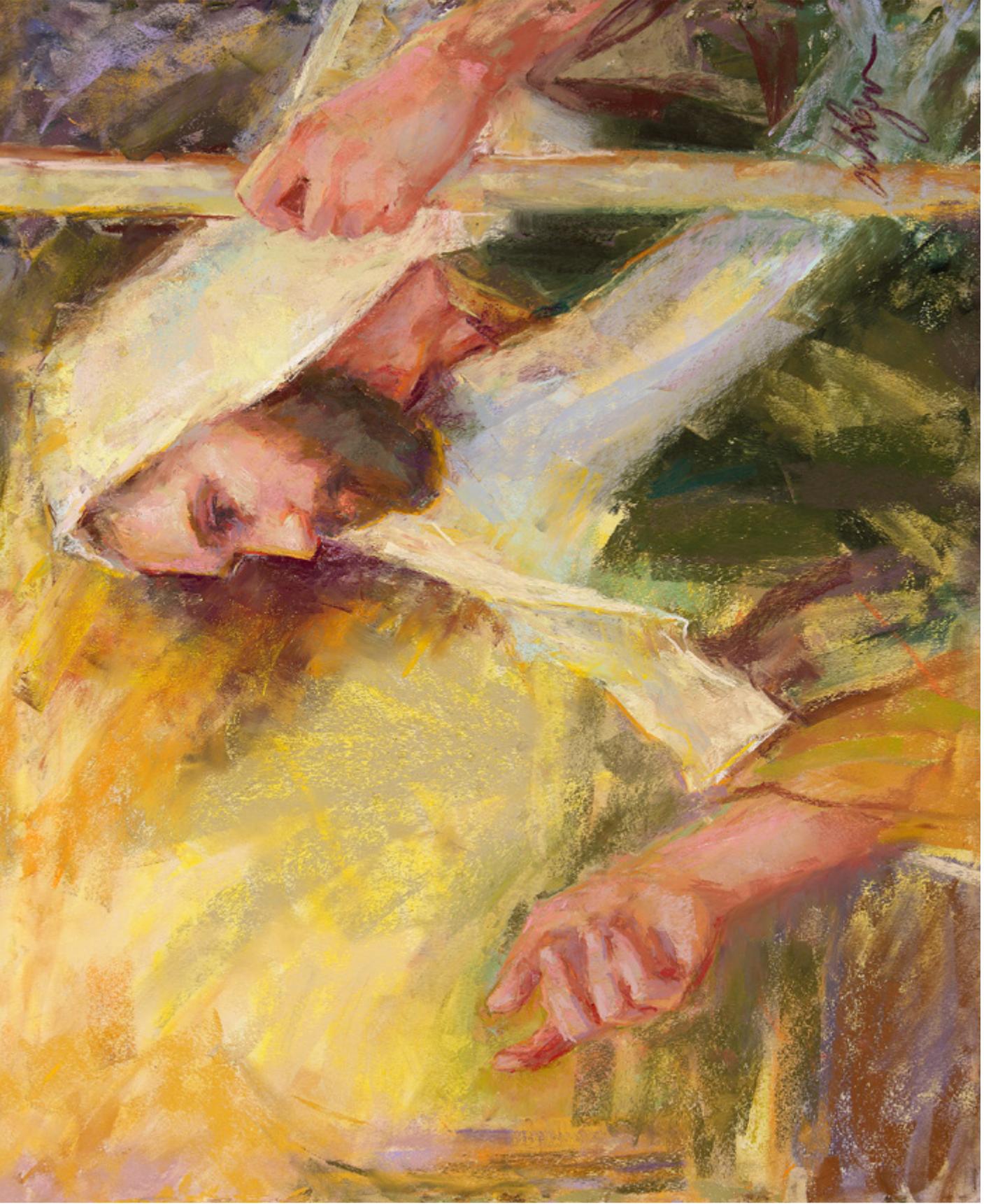
We are told that “surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). We learn from this scripture that the Lord will reveal to His prophets absolutely anything that He feels is necessary to communicate to

us. He will reveal His will to us, and He will instruct us through His prophets.

The Lord promised us that if we believe in the holy prophets, we should have eternal life (see Doctrine and Covenants 20:26). In the sixth article of faith, we declare that we believe in prophets. To believe means to have faith and confidence in them and to follow and do what the prophets ask us to do.

We are privileged to have the words of our living prophets, seers, and revelators during this wonderful general conference. They will speak the will of the Lord for us, His people. They will transmit the word of God and His counsel to us. Pay attention and follow their instruction and suggestions, and I testify to you that your life will be completely blessed. ■

*Adapted from “Obedience to the Prophets,” Ensign, Nov. 2010, 11–13.*



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**Come, Follow Me**  
Julie Rogers

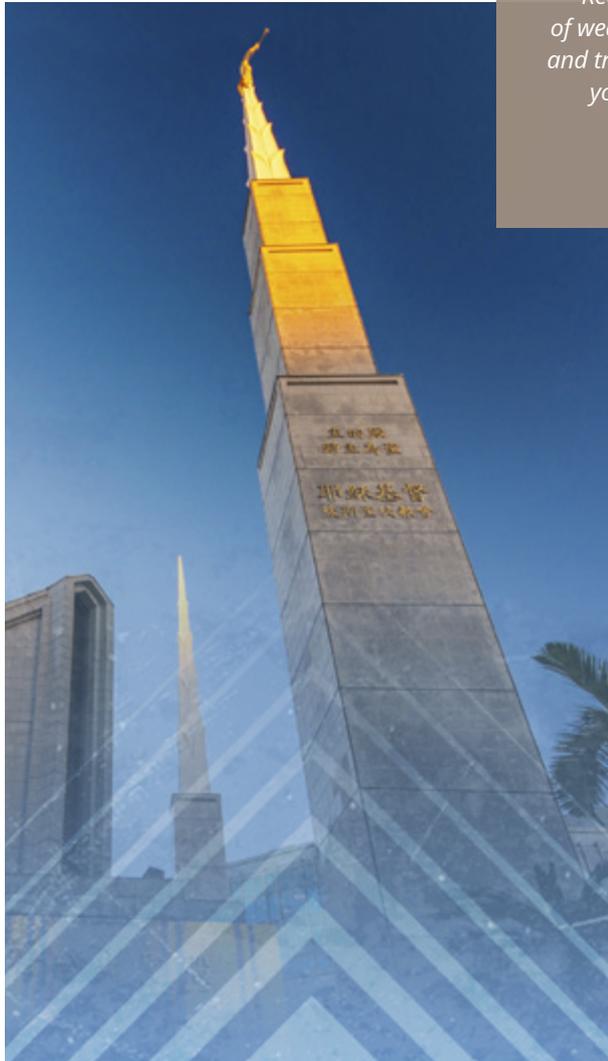
*"And if my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place" (Doctrine and Covenants 124:45).*

YOUNG ADULTS

**WORSHIPPING IN  
THE TEMPLE**

*Read about the blessings  
of wearing the temple garment  
and trying to better understand  
your temple covenants.*

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THE CHURCH OF  
**JESUS CHRIST**  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

