

LINES, LEVELS, AND LIVING THE GOSPEL

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After my husband and I finished some remodeling on our house, we decided to paint our daughter's bedroom. She requested that we paint the top half pink and the bottom half purple. I never imagined that such a simple task would teach me so much about the gospel.

On the day I wanted to start painting, I couldn't find a tape measure to mark the dividing line. I used painters' masking tape instead and decided to eyeball the line. After all, how hard is it to tape a straight line across a wall? After I had one wall taped, it looked so good that I thought I'd find a level and check my work. Initially, the line started out even, but to my surprise, it moved fractionally downward. By the time I got to the opposite corner, the difference was about half an inch (1 cm). Although the difference may seem insignificant, if I'd continued on all four walls, the ending line would have been at least two inches (5 cm) below the beginning line!

After discovering my mistake, I found a yardstick and measured from the ceiling to the desired height on the wall, marked the measurement in several places, and then connected the marks by drawing a straight line with the yardstick and a pencil. I repeated the process on all four walls.

As I worked, it occurred to me that living the gospel of Jesus Christ is similar to painting a room. Sometimes we

use our "tools" to keep us on the strait and narrow, while at other times we go through our days "eyeballing" our spirituality. We have the tools we need to stay on a straight course—scriptures, church, daily prayer, family home evening, counsel from Church leaders—but we don't always use them. We often think that we are faster and better off doing the task on our own.

Painting my daughter's room, however, showed me that I wasted time by not using the proper tools in the first place. Instead of making an even line on my first attempt and finishing the job faster, I had to fix the mistake and then finish the other three walls correctly.

We can also be the tools to help others. As home and visiting teachers, we have the responsibility to help both those who are struggling and those who seem to be fine. As teachers, we can prepare our lessons prayerfully and in advance, allowing the Lord to work through us. We can serve our families and others by being an example of one who strives to live the gospel.

As a Latter-day Saint in these troubling times, I have learned that I can't get by with just eyeballing my spirituality. I need to use all the resources and tools I've been given to constantly check my bearings and remain on, or return to, the straight path that leads back to Heavenly Father. ■

