

# Ensign

A man in a red t-shirt and safety glasses is focused on his work in a factory. He is using a yellow and black angle grinder on a metal beam, which is producing a large amount of bright sparks. The background shows industrial equipment and a well-lit workshop environment.

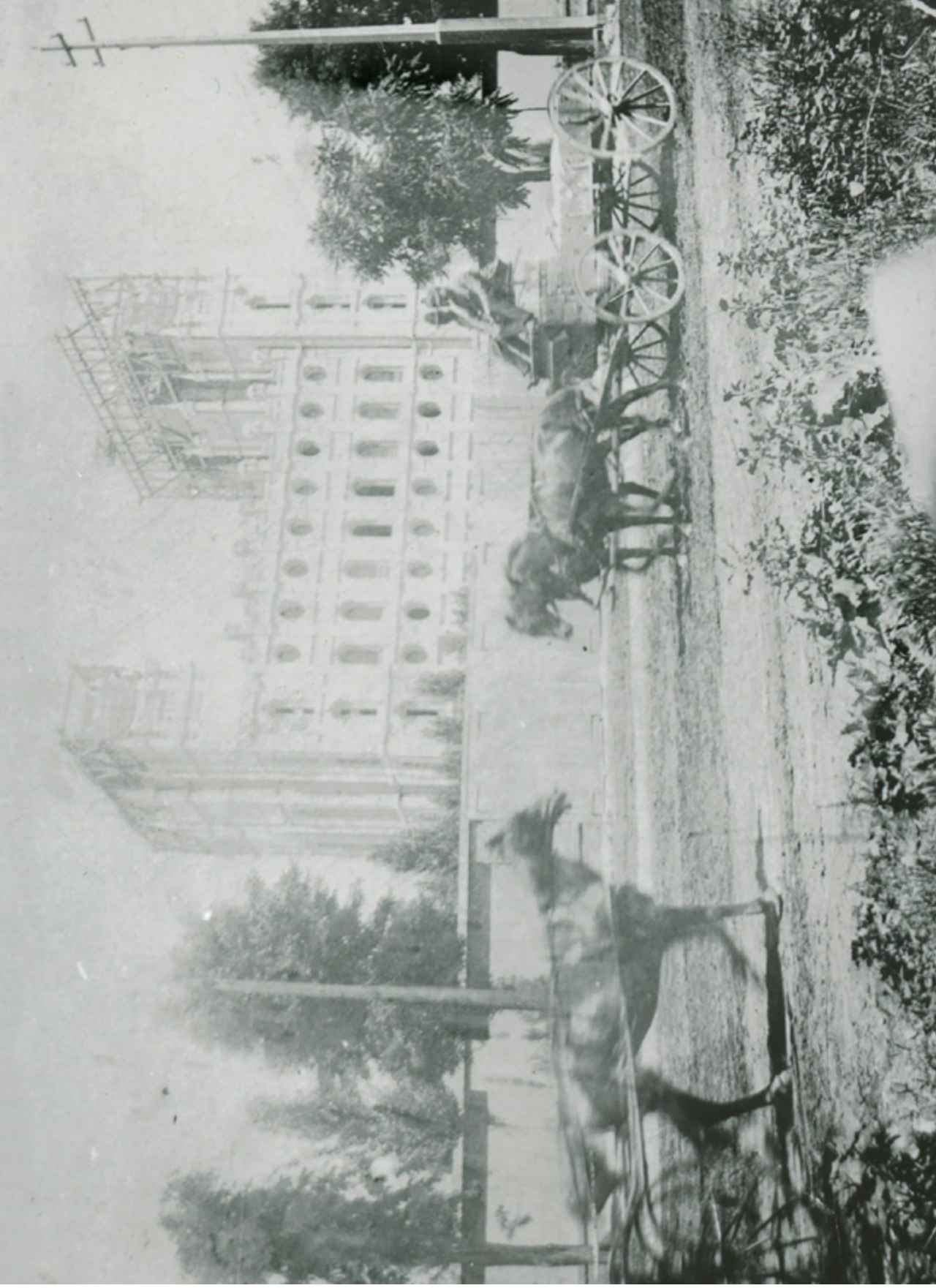
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*Horse-drawn vehicles pass by the Salt Lake Temple, shown here in about 1891. Wilford Woodruff (1807–98) was President of the Church when the Salt Lake Temple was dedicated in 1893. He taught, “We are held responsible for . . . building temples to the Most High, wherein we can enter and attend to ordinances for the salvation of our dead” (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff [2004], 94).*

Photograph courtesy of Church History Library

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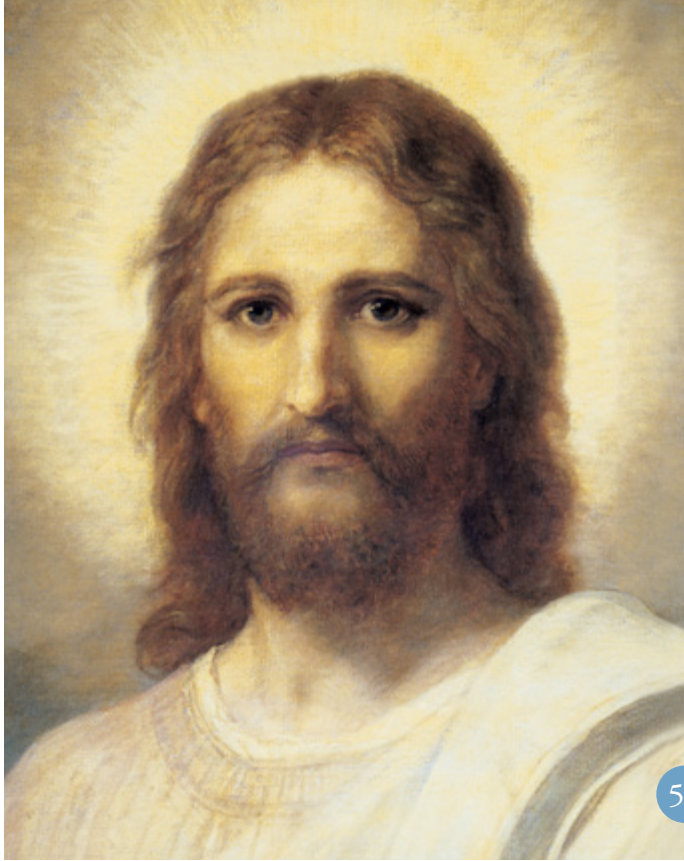
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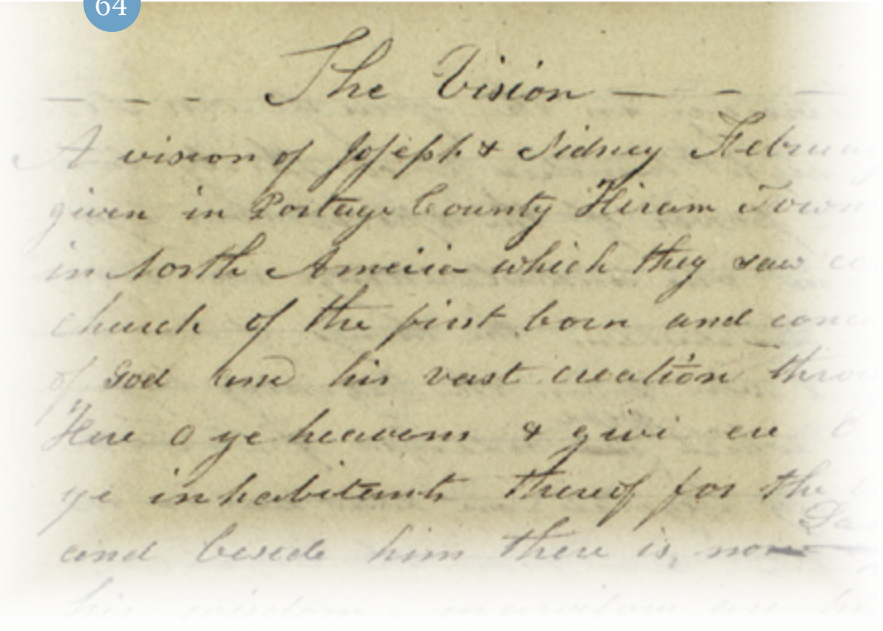
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# Ensign

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October 2017 Volume 47 • Number 10

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## MORE ONLINE



ICONS FROM GETTY IMAGES

### YOUNG ADULTS AND SELF-RELIANCE

The Church's self-reliance initiative is blessing the lives of members worldwide (see pages 42, 48, 76). Find out how young adults seeking independence can also benefit: [lds.org/go/initiativeE1017](http://lds.org/go/initiativeE1017).

### MANAGING ANGER IN MARRIAGE

Learning to control anger can help husbands and wives resolve their conflicts (see page 28). Read some sample tips for cooling down at [lds.org/go/conflictE1017](http://lds.org/go/conflictE1017).

### FIRST-TIME TEMPLE BAPTISMS

Are you going to the temple for the first time to do baptisms for the dead? The article on page 40 offers practical tips to help you be prepared. Find article highlights at [lds.org/go/baptismsE1017](http://lds.org/go/baptismsE1017).

Find these and other digital-exclusive articles at [ensign.lds.org](http://ensign.lds.org) or in the Gospel Library app in the *Liahona* under "2017 Digital Articles."



**By President  
Henry B. Eyring**

First Counselor in  
the First Presidency

## BECOMING TRUE DISCIPLES

**I**n every sacrament meeting, we have the privilege of promising Heavenly Father that we will always remember the Savior and keep His commandments so that we may have His Spirit to be with us (see Moroni 4:3; 5:2; D&C 20:77, 79). Remembering Him will always come to us naturally as we take His name upon us. We do so in many ways but especially when we serve others in His name, read His holy words, and pray to know what He would have us do.

It happened for me when I performed the baptism of a young man. I knew that I had been called by the Savior's ordained servants as a missionary to teach His gospel and to testify of Him and of His true Church. My missionary companion and I had promised the young man that he would be cleansed through the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ as he repented with faith in the Savior and was baptized by one of His authorized servants.

As I lifted the young man out of the waters of the baptismal font, he whispered in my ear, "I am clean, I am clean." In that moment, I remembered the Savior's baptism by John the Baptist in the river Jordan. Even more, I remembered that I was doing the saving work of a resurrected and living Savior—attended by the Holy Ghost, as John had been.

For me and for each of us, remembering the Savior can be more than relying on a memory of our knowledge and experiences with Him. We can make choices every day that draw us closer to Him in the present.

The simplest choice may be to read the scriptures. By doing so, we can gain the feelings of being close to Him. For me, closeness comes most often when I read in the Book of Mormon. In the first minutes that I read in the chapters of 2 Nephi, I hear in my mind the voices of Nephi and Lehi describing the Savior as if they knew Him personally. A feeling of closeness comes.

For you, other places in scripture may especially draw you to Him. But wherever and whenever you read the word of God, with humble and real intent to remember the Savior, you will increase your desire to take His name upon you in your daily life.

That desire will change the way you serve in the Lord's Church. You will pray to Heavenly Father for help in magnifying even what appears to you to be a small calling. The help you will ask for is the ability to forget yourself and focus more on what the Savior wants for those you are called to serve.





I have felt His hand and His closeness in my service with our children when I prayed to know how to help them find the peace that only the gospel brings. At such moments, I cared less about being seen as a successful parent, but I cared deeply about the success and well-being of my children.

The desire to give to those we serve what the Savior would give to them leads to prayers that are *pleading* to Heavenly Father, truly in the name of Jesus Christ. When we pray in that way—in the Savior’s name, with faith in Him—the Father answers. He sends the Holy Ghost to guide, comfort, and encourage us. Because the Spirit always bears witness of the Savior (see 3 Nephi 11:32, 36; 28:11; Ether 12:41), our capacity to love the Lord with all our heart,

mind, and strength increases (see Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27; D&C 59:5).

The blessings of daily and present remembering will come slowly and steadily as we serve Him, feast on His word, and pray in faith on His

name. And this remembering will shape us to become true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ in His kingdom on this earth—and later with His Father in the glorious world to come. ■

#### TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

**P**resident Eyring counsels us to remember the Savior always by making daily choices to draw closer to Him. With those you teach, you might read the sacrament prayers, which outline the covenant to always remember Him (see Moroni 4:3; 5:2; D&C 20:77, 79). Consider

inviting those you teach to write a list of things they could do each day to remember the Savior. You might also consider inviting them to pray to Heavenly Father for each other’s success and well-being. Consider praying for them in the same manner.

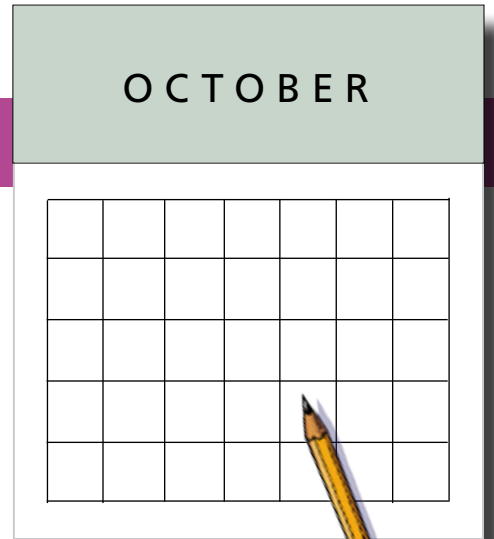


## Remembering the Lord Every Day

**F**riends, chores, homework, TV—there are so many things that ask for our attention. But every week, we promise Heavenly Father “that [we] do always remember [His Son, Jesus Christ]” (D&C 20:79).

President Eyring says that we can “make choices every day” that help us remember the Savior. Consider making a goal this month to remember the Savior more each day. You could make a calendar and commit to doing one

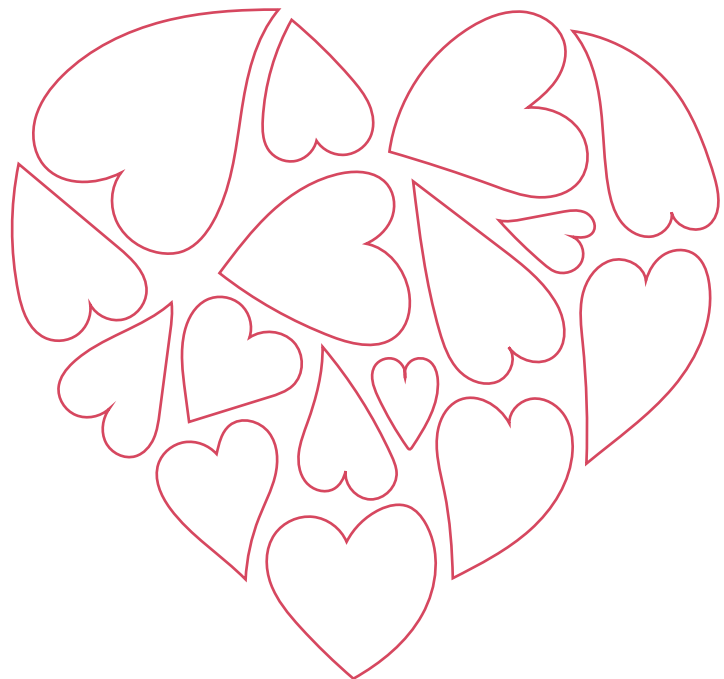
thing per day. President Eyring lists things like reading the scriptures, praying in faith, and serving the Savior and others. There’s also journaling, attending Church meetings, listening to general conference, going to the temple, singing hymns—the list goes on! As we remember the Savior daily, President Eyring promises that “the blessings . . . will come slowly and steadily . . . [and] will shape us to become true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.”



## CHILDREN

### Lots of Love

**W**hen we read the scriptures or pray, we can feel how much Heavenly Father and Jesus love us. Color in a heart each time you pray or read your scriptures. What else can you do to feel close to Heavenly Father and Jesus?





# Enfolding with Love Those Who Stray

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

“The reality is that there are no perfect families . . .,” said President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency. “Whatever problems your family is facing, whatever you must do to solve them, the beginning and the end of the solution is charity, the pure love of Christ.”<sup>1</sup>

Of those who are not participating fully in the gospel, Linda K. Burton, former General President of the Relief Society, said: “Heavenly Father loves all His children. . . . No matter where they are—on or off the path—He wants them back home.”<sup>2</sup>

“However wayward [your children] might be, . . . when you speak or talk to them, do it not in anger, do it not harshly, in a condemning spirit,” taught President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918). “Speak to them kindly.”<sup>3</sup>

Elder Brent H. Nielson of the Seventy reiterated the Savior’s



Faith  
Family  
Relief

instruction to those who have 10 pieces of silver and lose one: “Search until you find it. When the lost one is your son or your daughter, your brother or your sister, . . . after all we can do, we love that person with all of our hearts. . . .”

“May you and I receive the revelation to know how to best approach those in our lives who are lost and, when necessary, to have the patience and love of our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, as we love, watch, and wait for the prodigal.”<sup>4</sup>

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, said: “I have prayed with faith that someone I loved would seek and feel the power

of the Atonement. I have prayed with faith that human angels would come to their aid, and they came.

“God has devised means to save each of His children.”<sup>5</sup>

## Additional Scriptures and Information

Matthew 18:12; Alma 31:35;  
3 Nephi 13:32; D&C 121:41–42  
[reliefsociety.lds.org](http://reliefsociety.lds.org)

## NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “In Praise of Those Who Save,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 79, 80.
2. Linda K. Burton, in Sarah Jane Weaver, “Sister Burton, Sister Wixom Visit Church’s Pacific Area,” *Church News*, Apr. 2, 2013, [lds.org/church/news](http://lds.org/church/news).
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 254.
4. Brent H. Nielson, “Waiting for the Prodigal,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 103.
5. Henry B. Eyring, “To My Grandchildren,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 71.



## Consider This

How can we continue to show charity to those who do not want to live the principles of the gospel?

# A VISITING TEACHING LESSON FROM LOIS

By Dayle King Searle

*I had often heard that everyone has something to offer. But was it true of an elderly sister who was homebound by severe health problems?*

While I was expecting my fifth child, my visiting teacher was an older woman named Lois. She had not been active in the Church for most of her life but had come back a few years earlier. She had a great enthusiasm and love for the gospel, particularly for the temple and visiting teaching.

Because of years of smoking, her health was in decline. She had to be on oxygen all the time, and she was almost completely homebound. Lois was heartbroken at the prospect of not being able to visit teach, so our Relief Society presidency came up with a plan: instead of Lois coming to our homes, we would go to hers. I enjoyed visiting with Lois. Each time I went, I was impressed by her sincerity and humility.

When I was six months along in my pregnancy, the Braxton Hicks contractions I normally felt in my pregnancies became steadier and

stronger. Because of problems I'd had in previous pregnancies, my doctor became concerned. He prescribed some medicine that would help stop the contractions but told me that it would be better to take it easy.

I knew he was right, but as I left his office, I thought about the week ahead. In addition to the normal activities of caring for my young family, I was hosting a baby shower for a friend. We were having carpet installed in our home, and the room it was going in needed to be painted first. It was also harvest season, and my husband, a farmer, was leaving each morning before dawn and not returning until after dark. I took most of his meals to him in the field. As much as I knew I needed to be cautious, "taking it easy" just wasn't feasible.

Unfortunately, the pills I had been prescribed made me feel jittery, nervous, and drained, and if I exerted

myself too much, I still experienced contractions. I had to rethink my plan.

My husband began taking sack lunches. I simplified my plans for the baby shower and involved my children in the cleaning before the event. And I hired a neighbor girl to help with the painting.

Even so, the week was emotionally trying as I struggled to know my limits. I had to take things a day at a time. "If it's this bad at six months," I wondered, "what will it be like at seven or eight?"

In the midst of this, Lois called me to ask when I was going to come to her home so that she could visit teach me. I normally visited Lois early in the month, but with all of our busyness, Lois now seemed like just another demand on me.

"It's been a hectic week," I said. "I might be able to come Thursday or Friday." When she asked what time, I told her I would call her on





Thursday to tell her if it would work out.

When I hung up the phone I felt a lot of self-pity. I thought, “Aren’t visiting teachers supposed to help the women they visit? I go to Lois for *her* benefit, not *mine*. I may end up on bed rest, and what could my visiting teacher possibly do for me?”

On Thursday morning I had to go to town. I called Lois and let her know that I would be coming to see her.

Lois invited me in and we sat at her kitchen table. She read the visiting

teaching message to me, as she did each month, in her labored, breathless voice. Afterward, we visited for a few minutes. Lois asked how my pregnancy was going, and I explained the situation.

“Have you put your name in the temple?” Lois asked.

Her words surprised me. “No,” I replied. In all of my worrying, I hadn’t even thought of it.

“Would you like me to call and put your name in?” she offered.

I was humbled. Here I had thought that I went to see Lois for her benefit

and that there was nothing she could do for me. Now I realized what she had to offer was of greater worth than all the meals or housework another visiting teacher might have provided. Lois was offering me her faith. I left her home that day feeling comforted and more confident than I had all week.

Not long after this incident, Lois passed away. Many years later I still remember the lesson I learned at her kitchen table: all of God’s children have something to offer. ■

*The author lives in Idaho, USA.*

# IT'S NOT TOO LATE FOR A SECOND CHANCE

By Amber Jensen

*The father of one of my struggling students told his daughter, "It's not too late for you to succeed." The Lord gives us the same message.*

Sandra was a student in my advanced English class. Several weeks into the year, she hadn't done any of the homework or projects. She just daydreamed at her desk. She made up excuses for why she hadn't completed her assignments, and she demonstrated neither the attitude nor the work necessary for success in such a demanding course.

Her counselor and I decided to schedule a conference with Sandra, her father, and some of her other teachers to determine what direction she should take: should she drop her advanced courses and take standard ones instead? Most substantial was the unspoken question weighing on all of our minds: could we find a way to help Sandra succeed?

Believing that Sandra had been given many chances to succeed but instead had chosen to fail, I went into the meeting feeling very discouraged. Secretly I hoped she would decide to drop my class so that I wouldn't have to worry about her anymore. I felt I

had done all I could and that it was already too late.

In the meeting, Sandra's body language revealed that she too doubted her ability to succeed. She stared at the table as I recounted her failure in English class. As her history teacher confirmed that Sandra was failing his class as well, her body slumped lower in her chair and I could see tears streaming down her face.

Mustering compassion, I explained to her and her father that if Sandra wanted to succeed in these challenging courses, she was going to have to change the behavior that had gotten her so deeply into this hole and that it was going to be very difficult.

## **A Message from Her Father**

The counselor then turned to Sandra's father, a man with little education who seemed uncomfortable in the school setting. The counselor asked him if he had any questions for the teachers. He said he didn't and thanked us for what we had done for

Sandra. But then he said he had something to say to his daughter.

My heart tightened. I had been a part of some parent-teacher conferences where the parents had verbally rebuked their children in front of teachers and counselors, berating them for their laziness, inattentiveness, and lack of motivation. I braced myself to hear it again.

What I heard instead surprised me. Sandra's humble father turned to his tearful 16-year-old daughter who was weighed down by shame and regret and said to her, "It's not too late. It's not too late for you to succeed. It really is not too late."

I left that meeting grateful for his loving reaction but concerned that he had no idea what it would take for his daughter to pass at this point. It seemed impossible. Word came later that she had decided to drop her history class but not my English class.

Later that day as I knelt in prayer, considering my own shortcomings and asking my Heavenly Father for





forgiveness, I realized how much I had to learn from Sandra's father. Insecurities and feelings of inadequacy had at times in my own life made me wonder if I was worthy or deserving of a second chance. In those moments, the Lord, like Sandra's father, chose not to berate me but instead to reassure: "It's not too late, my daughter. It's not too late."

### The Message of the Gospel

How often have we believed the message of the adversary that we are beyond hope? But the prophets tell us otherwise. Isaiah proclaims, "Let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy unto him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah

55:7). Mormon adds his witness, "As oft as they repented and sought forgiveness, with real intent, they were forgiven" (Moroni 6:8). The joy of the gospel is that it is never too late. For as often as we seek forgiveness, the Lord's redemption will allow us to start anew.

Sandra, with motivation to start again, made slow but significant changes. The transformation was not easy—it required daily effort to overcome her bad habits—but she saw the rewards of her efforts as her grade gradually improved.

From a gospel perspective, our final grade will not take into account how long we faltered or how deeply we dug ourselves into a hole. Instead,

the Lord will judge our lives based on what direction we're heading, how we have repented, and how much we have relied on the Lord's Atonement.

In my limited understanding, I had doubted Sandra's ability to overcome the mistakes of her past. In contrast, our perfect Father never loses hope in His children's capacity to achieve salvation by being perfected in Christ. It does not matter how far gone we are; He will always seek after the one. The Lord beseeches us to no longer wander as strangers in sin but instead to seek Him in hope and enjoy the blessings of His infinite Atonement. Indeed, it is never too late. ■

*The author lives in Virginia, USA.*

# AN ELEPHANT IN THE CLASSROOM

*Teacher council meetings aren't just changing the way we teach; they're changing the way we learn.*

By **Jessica Griffith** and  
**Richard M. Romney**  
Church Magazines

**M**zwakhe Sitole faces a challenge. As ward Sunday School president, he has a God-given responsibility to help improve gospel learning and teaching in the ward.<sup>1</sup>

But the members of his ward in Johannesburg, South Africa, have, in some cases, vastly different backgrounds and expectations. Some are well educated; others are not. Many have been taught that a student's place is to listen, not to talk. Others face an uphill cultural battle in understanding that *both* men and women should be involved in teaching at church and at home.

"We also have people who speak different languages," Brother Sitole says. "But the Spirit wants to prompt each one."

When teacher council meetings and *Teaching in the Savior's Way* were introduced last year, wards and branches throughout the Church began holding teacher council meetings to discuss, learn about, and practice what it means to teach in the Savior's way.

That's when Brother Sitole began to see how teacher council meetings could bless his ward. Cultural challenges could be addressed, class participation could be increased, and different perspectives of members could become blessings.

Like many others around the world, Brother Sitole realized that the Lord isn't using teacher council meetings just to change how we teach; He's using them to also change how we learn.

## **An Elephant with a Twist**

One of the most interesting discoveries for Brother Sitole was that as teachers empower students to participate in their own learning, everyone benefits from the expanded view that different perspectives provide.

That understanding came to Brother Sitole during a teacher council meeting, when a ward member shared the parable of the blind men and the elephant, only with a twist. The

**Rope**



**Wall**



**Fan**



parable tells how six blind men each describe an elephant differently (a leg is like a pillar, the tail is like a rope, the trunk is like a water spout, and so forth) because each is touching a different part.<sup>2</sup>

“But suppose the elephant represents gospel teaching,” Brother Sitole says. “Then we need to enable each class member to share their perspective, so that together we come to a common understanding of how the gospel blesses us all.”

That’s why teachers in Brother Sitole’s ward always sit around a table during teacher council meeting—to facilitate discussion. “It reminds us that everyone has an equal voice,” he says.

### According to *Their* Needs

In Tokyo, Japan, Natsuko Soejima doubted she could teach well. “When I was called to be a youth Sunday School teacher,” she says, “I told the bishop I would be scared. But he said the call was from God, so I accepted.”

As a group, the class intimidated her because of the individual challenges they presented. Two of the youth had hearing disabilities. Some class members who had moved to Japan from other countries spoke only English. She also feared the age difference between her and her class members.

Then, in a teacher council meeting, Sister Soejima found an answer. “We talked about loving each class member, learning their names, praying for them

one by one, and teaching—guided by the Spirit—according to *their* needs,” she explains, “so that’s what I began to do.” She also did something else she’d learned in the council: “I used language that conveyed my love.”

The result? “My heart changed. I began to feel affection for my students. I cared about those who were missing and prayed for them too. As soon as one lesson ended, I started preparing for the next, to have time to think about teaching opportunities. I was overflowing with joy.”

### Specific Answers

Brad Wilson, a Sunday School president in Minnesota, USA, makes sure teachers in the teacher council

**Pillar**



**Hose**



**Spear**





meeting don't leave until they've discussed how they're going to change because of what they've learned.

"We follow the outline provided in *Teaching in the Savior's Way*," says Brother Wilson. "We discuss teachers' experiences, then we discuss one of the suggested topics. As a facilitator, I ask questions and summarize thoughts. Then we practice implementation. We break into small groups and discuss, 'What am I going to do differently because of our meeting today?'"

Ron Goodson, a deacons quorum

instructor in the same ward, says he's impressed to see how Brother Wilson "coaches" the council. "We talk about how the Savior would teach," he says. "Then as you feel the Spirit, you think, 'This is something I should try with my class.' Thinking about the Savior changes your approach. It becomes less of 'I've got to prepare a lesson,' and more about, 'What do these deacons need and how can I help give them that?'"

He remembers writing in his journal, "I attended teacher council

meeting today, and here's what I need to do." In fact, his journal is full of such notes. He now prepares in advance: "Start early and you get promptings all week long." He asks the deacons what's going on in their lives: "I'm more effective in helping them when I know them better." And he's inviting deacons to help teach: "As they do, they learn better too."<sup>3</sup>

### **I Kept Singing**

"In our council, we talked about how music can invite the Spirit," says



### **MORE INFORMATION**

To learn more about teacher council meetings and *Teaching in the Savior's Way*, visit [teaching.lds.org](https://teaching.lds.org).

Jocelyn Herrington, a Primary teacher in the same Minnesota ward. “Later, I was teaching the Sunbeams. I thought, ‘I’ll sing while they’re coloring, and it will be nice.’ I started to sing, and they all stopped and listened. So I kept singing. It did bring the Spirit, and when I was done, they were reverent, waiting for me to speak. We had talked about that [in council] too, to bear your testimony when the opportunity comes. So I bore testimony in words they could understand.”

Sister Herrington says she appreciates Primary teachers being included in council meetings. “We talk about teaching adults,” she says, “but then Brother Wilson will say, ‘What about teaching youth? What about teaching children?’ He brings it back to our attention that all the different age ranges are there.”

### From Council to Council

Adam Martin, a ward Sunday School president in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, says he appreciates suggestions from the ward council. “The Relief Society president or the elders quorum president will say, ‘We’d like teachers to focus on this,’ so we bring that up in teacher council [meeting],” he says.

When teacher council meetings first started, teachers weren’t sure what to expect, so he extended lots of personal invitations and introduced training materials available at [teaching.lds.org](http://teaching.lds.org). “Now the ball is rolling,” he says. “They know it’s a place to discuss what’s going on.”

## CHANGES TO SUNDAY MEETINGS IN 2018

Beginning in January, changes are coming to Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society meetings. These changes build on what members have learned in teacher council meetings. An explanation of the changes, including new lesson materials, will be provided—starting next month—in conference editions of the magazines, on the Gospel Library app, and on [LDS.org](http://LDS.org).

One recent meeting focused on following the Spirit. “We talked about preparing well but not worrying about covering everything,” he says. “One sister said she had always felt she needed to talk about every item in her lesson plan. You could see the light go on for her when we talked about following inspiration as you guide a discussion.”

### Finding Solutions Together

Each teaching situation includes its own opportunities, challenges, and potential blessings. That’s why councils are effective, because they allow teachers, with help from the Spirit, to seek and find answers to *their* specific challenges.

Geoffery Reid, a stake Sunday School president in Arizona, USA, says teacher council meetings work best when teachers understand that their purpose is to counsel: “Then they see that they can help each other.”

The stake, he says, is focusing on helping teachers to shift from thinking, “Am I performing well?” to thinking, “How is the message being received?”

Marisa Canova, a Primary teacher in the stake, says that in response to a prompting she felt in teacher council, she now encourages her Valiant 8 class members to pray for each other. That was effective, but it might not work the same way for an adult class. “Praying for every member in a large Gospel Doctrine class might be overwhelming,” she says. “Fortunately, those teachers say, ‘How do you think we can adapt that for our class?’ And we find solutions together.

“What I appreciate about teacher council meetings,” she says, “is that they give us time to reflect on how we’re doing and what we’re doing. It’s helpful having support and feedback, feeling that you’re all working toward the same goal. I also like the different perspectives that multiple people bring to the table. It helps me consider things I definitely wouldn’t have considered on my own.”

As we participate and share in teacher council meetings, our vision of the elephant called “gospel teaching” begins to become clearer. Like Brother Sitole in Africa, many members around the Church are finding that as our ability to teach in the Savior’s way improves, it changes not only the way we teach but also the way we learn. ■

#### NOTES

1. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 12.2.2.
2. The parable is included in Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “What Is Truth?” (Church Educational System devotional for young adults, Jan. 13, 2013), [broadcasts.lds.org](http://broadcasts.lds.org); and Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “What Is the Truth?” *Friend*, Mar. 2017, 2.
3. For more suggestions, see Brian K. Ashton, “Helping Youth Teach,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2016, 66–67.

## A LOVE

GREATER THAN  
TERMINAL ILLNESS

By Leah Welker

A few years ago, Nate Richardson found himself in a college science class in which the teacher brought up the subject of cystic fibrosis (CF)—a chronic and progressive disease that affects the body's ability to produce or break down substances like mucus, sweat, or digestive juices. CF can severely affect the quality of life of the patient, and currently there is no cure. The students began a discussion of whether it would be a good idea for people with that disease to have children. Since CF is genetic, there is a possibility that the parent could pass the disease along to the child if the other parent is a carrier, thus affecting the child and ensuring that the disease would remain within the human gene pool.

There were people in the class on both sides of the issue, but Nate remained silent. He was so upset by the question that he would not speak, because he knew someone with CF. In fact, she was his wife, Megan.



**Megan and Nate Richardson will tell you that happiness doesn't come from your circumstances—it comes from your faith.**

Cystic fibrosis demands a rigorous treatment schedule and frequent appointments with many different specialists—anywhere from three to five in a typical week. Megan has to do respiratory therapy twice a day, which involves putting on a vest that fills with air pockets that essentially pound her until the mucus in her lungs becomes easier to cough up.

Because she gets sick easily—and when she gets sick, she generally has to be hospitalized—she wears a mask in most public places. She can't do sports that involve running, and she has to be careful about not overexerting herself. She and Nate love to go hiking together, but depending on how sick she is, she might have to carry along an oxygen tank at the same time.

*Note:* The bar illustration next to the article title represents chromosome 7, with the cystic fibrosis gene in green.







*Reflecting on the blessings of the temple, Megan says, "It's wonderful to know that families are forever, that we will continue on through the eternities. Whatever children we are able to have will be able to be with us forever. That's a wonderful promise."*

Nate and Megan Richardson decided to marry knowing full well that Megan had CF. She was diagnosed at two years old and had spent most of her life dealing with the disease. What's more, Megan and Nate had been good friends since high school. They knew as well as anyone could the struggles that lay ahead of them. "It's probably harder than I thought it would be," Nate says. "But," he adds firmly, "most good things are that way."

Megan says, "I think everyone kind of envisions the fairy-tale ending: you

get married and then everything's all perfect. And then it's *not* perfect. But it's wonderful in its own right."

In the end, the blessings they have received match and even surpass the trials they have faithfully and joyfully endured—together.

#### **Friends First**

Megan and Nate went to the same middle school and briefly to the same high school in Payson, Utah, even though they didn't know each other then. Then their senior year of high

school, they both went to an interschool debate competition. Nate remembered Megan from his old high school, and he had a feeling that he should talk to her. He said hello, and the two of them sat down and began talking. They were close friends from that moment on.

While Nate was on a mission, Megan pursued her education at a private liberal arts college in Utah, graduating with a degree in creative writing. Her academic success came after a lot of hard work and sacrifice. When she was in the hospital, she often had to



videoconference in order to “attend.” However, she made it to graduation with stellar grades in a field she is passionate about and continues to pursue.

Meanwhile, Nate returned home from his missionary service and gave Megan a call. He was surprised by her enthusiastic response, and they went on their first serious date soon afterward. When Nate brought Megan to meet his family, his brother told him, “I don’t know who else you’re dating, but she needs to be in the top three.”

Nate certainly agreed. As they continued dating, Nate began to pray about their relationship, and every time, he felt that it was “definitely, *definitely* a good thing.”

### A Step of Faith

Those promptings helped Nate have the faith to propose. But by that point he knew Megan so well and loved her so much, it was a fairly straightforward decision for him. “I got the courage to marry into an illness because of the waves of joy that came to me when I was with Megan. Isaiah 48:18 refers to one’s righteousness being as the waves of the sea. That is how I felt with Megan; her goodness hit me like a wave.”

In the end, he was overcome with the certainty that marrying her was a good path. In fact, he says, “I felt that if I refused to marry the woman I loved on grounds of her physical health, I would have to answer to God for it. God loves all His children, even the frail ones.”

Of her own decision to marry, Megan said, “I always knew that I *wanted* to get married, but when I was born, the life expectancy was 19 or 20. And then, as I got older, I thought, ‘Okay, well, I’m living this long—what am I going to do with this life I have?’”

She says, “I think the hardest part for me was processing through what would happen if my husband were to get *remarried* after I passed away. The life expectancy is currently 35, so that would give him a long time to be alone. But would I be OK with someone else coming in?”

Then her aunt Terri passed away in a tragic accident, leaving behind her husband and children. Megan’s uncle remarried, and it was encouraging

for Megan to see how well his new wife fit in. “And it just made me think, ‘Well, it can’t be that different.’”

When Nate and Megan got engaged, Nate’s family members were supportive, but they wanted to make sure he knew what he was doing. Some of them pointed out to him that they might not be able to have children. “I told them that we would try to have children, and if they came, good. If not, then we would still serve the Lord. And in whatever form they came, we would love them.”<sup>1</sup>

Nate’s family also had concerns about his finances. He had not been home from serving a mission for very long, and he didn’t have much. With Megan’s medical bills to consider,



**Nate says, “Basically any time we get to be together is a good time—whether or not she’s feeling well or in the hospital. It’s always good to be around her.”**





***“Megan is the joy of my life,” explains Nate. “I felt that if I refused to marry the woman I loved on grounds of her physical health, I would have to answer to God for it. God loves all His children, even the frail ones.”***

money would be a real issue for them both. However, still feeling like they were making the right decision, Nate and Megan went forward with faith and joy.

### **Joy Greater than the Pain**

Things were still far from being easy. Because the disease is progressive, Megan’s health has only gotten worse over the time she and Nate have been married. When she was a kid, Megan only had to be hospitalized every few years. Now it’s typically every four months. She sometimes has new issues come up, whether from CF or the medications used to treat CF. When it seems like they have solved one problem, another comes along.

And yet, always cheerful and laughing, Megan is quick to point out the good parts of her life. “I think I’ve grown a lot because of CF. You take the Lord for granted a lot

when things are going hunky-dory. So when things in your life aren’t going hunky-dory very often, it makes you turn to the Lord more. And then when they are, you’re super grateful that they’re going great!”

Nate says, “Megan is the joy of my life. I’ve long said that there are compensatory spiritual blessings of joy which the Lord gives to Megan to balance out the difficulty of her illness. These cause me to watch in wonder at how happy and optimistic she is. But since our marriage, I’ve also been taxed by this illness, perhaps more than I thought possible. Now I’ve also come to see those compensatory blessings of the Lord come into my life. Jesus Christ is the central figure of our lives. We lean on Him every hour.”

Nate has thought a lot about the discussion in his science class, and he, at least, is convinced the world would lose something



precious without people like Megan. “I should have spoken up, but I didn’t. I was too frustrated that we were even having that conversation. The world needs more people like my wife, so I hope we have a dozen children just like her, in sickness or in health. The illness doesn’t define who she is.”

### Life Is Better Together, Forever

Overall, Megan and Nate both agree that life together has been “better all around.” Nate says, “We make wiser financial decisions as a couple; we think in the long term more as a couple.” Together they make the most of each moment they have. “Basically any time we get to be together is a good time—whether or not she’s feeling well or in the hospital. It’s always good to be around her.”

They take a lot of comfort each day from their temple covenants. Nate says, “I see Megan as those covenants describe she can be someday. Of course, I’m amazed at how much progress she’s already made. But that gives me the frame that I put her in: this is my eternal

companion who will be by my side throughout all of our endeavors.”

Megan says, “The temple helps us to make our lives and the time we have more meaningful as well. When we pledge to consecrate all we have to the building up of the Lord’s kingdom, it makes me much more eager to say, ‘Yes, I will bring so-and-so dinner, even though I’m *super* tired today,’ because it’s something I *can* do, especially with His help.” Nate agrees: “We have too much work to do to have time for pity.”

She adds, “And it’s wonderful to know that families are forever, that we will continue on through the eternities. Whatever children we are able to have—whether it’s now or in the hereafter—will be able to be with us forever as well. That’s a wonderful promise, and I take courage knowing that.”

Nate says that often the secret to their courage is focusing on those eternal blessings and the joy they are being given here and now. “In some ways, I can say *we* have cystic fibrosis; I know I can’t understand all she goes through, but it’s become a major part of my life. I’ve long loved what Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught, that as our lives have increasing trials, our cups of joy are filled accordingly to match the level of trial, even until they are overflowing.” ■

*The author lives in Maryland, USA.*

#### NOTE

1. In recent times, Nate and Megan have been able to adopt children.



### SWALLOWED UP IN THE JOY OF CHRIST

“When we reach a point of consecration, our afflictions will be swallowed up in the joy of Christ. It does not mean we won’t have afflictions, but they will be put in a perspective that permits us to deal with them. With our steady pursuit of joy and with each increasing measure of righteousness, we will experience one more drop of delight—one drop after another—until, in the words of a prophet, our hearts are ‘brim with joy’ (Alma 26:11). At last, the soul’s cup finally runs over!”

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Brim with Joy” (Brigham Young University devotional, Jan. 23, 1996), 9, [speeches.byu.edu](https://speeches.byu.edu).



# Five Lessons for Young Adults from Young Apostles

By Matthew C. Godfrey  
Church History Department

**T**hey were between the ages of 23 and 35, yet they helped change the world. The first

Apostles of the restored Church were young. Some felt inadequate. Some made mistakes. But they all made a difference. Here are five lessons we can learn from their experiences.

## 1. You Don't Have to Feel Good Enough to Be Good Enough

Heber C. Kimball felt inadequate when he received his call to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in February 1835. He had been in the Church less than three years and was just 33 years old.

"It was far from my expectation," Heber

later recalled.<sup>1</sup> But he was willing to accept the calling, and in his ordination blessing he was told "that many millions" would "be converted by his instrumentality."<sup>2</sup>

As an Apostle he served two highly successful missions to England. He converted a host of individuals whose descendants may very well number in the millions today. For Heber, going forward even when he felt he had little to give blessed him and many others.

**What can we learn today from the experiences of the first Apostles of the Restoration?**







ILLUSTRATIONS BY ELIZABETH THAYER

## 2. We Are Defined by Decisions, Not Circumstances

Thomas B. Marsh ran away from home in New Hampshire at age 14. He worked as a farm laborer in Vermont; as a waiter in Albany, New York; at a hotel in New York City; then as a servant on Long Island. His circumstances were unstable until he met and married Elizabeth Godkin.

He and Elizabeth were eventually led by the Spirit to western New York. There, they heard about the Book of

Mormon. Thomas saw copies of the first 16 pages as they came off the press, and the printer allowed him to read the proof sheet. Believing the book to be of God, Thomas chose to join the Church. He was baptized on September 3, 1830.<sup>3</sup>

Thomas preached the gospel in various areas. He endured tribulation when the Saints were ejected from Jackson County, Missouri, in November 1833. He was an original member of the Missouri high council when it

was organized in July 1834. After his calling as an Apostle at age 34, he served as President of the Quorum of the Twelve. Though he had earnestly defended Joseph Smith against dissenters in the past, Thomas himself eventually became disillusioned. In 1838 he chose to leave the Church.<sup>4</sup>

From Thomas Marsh we can learn that unstable circumstances don't need to keep us from the blessings of the gospel—or from blessing the lives of others.

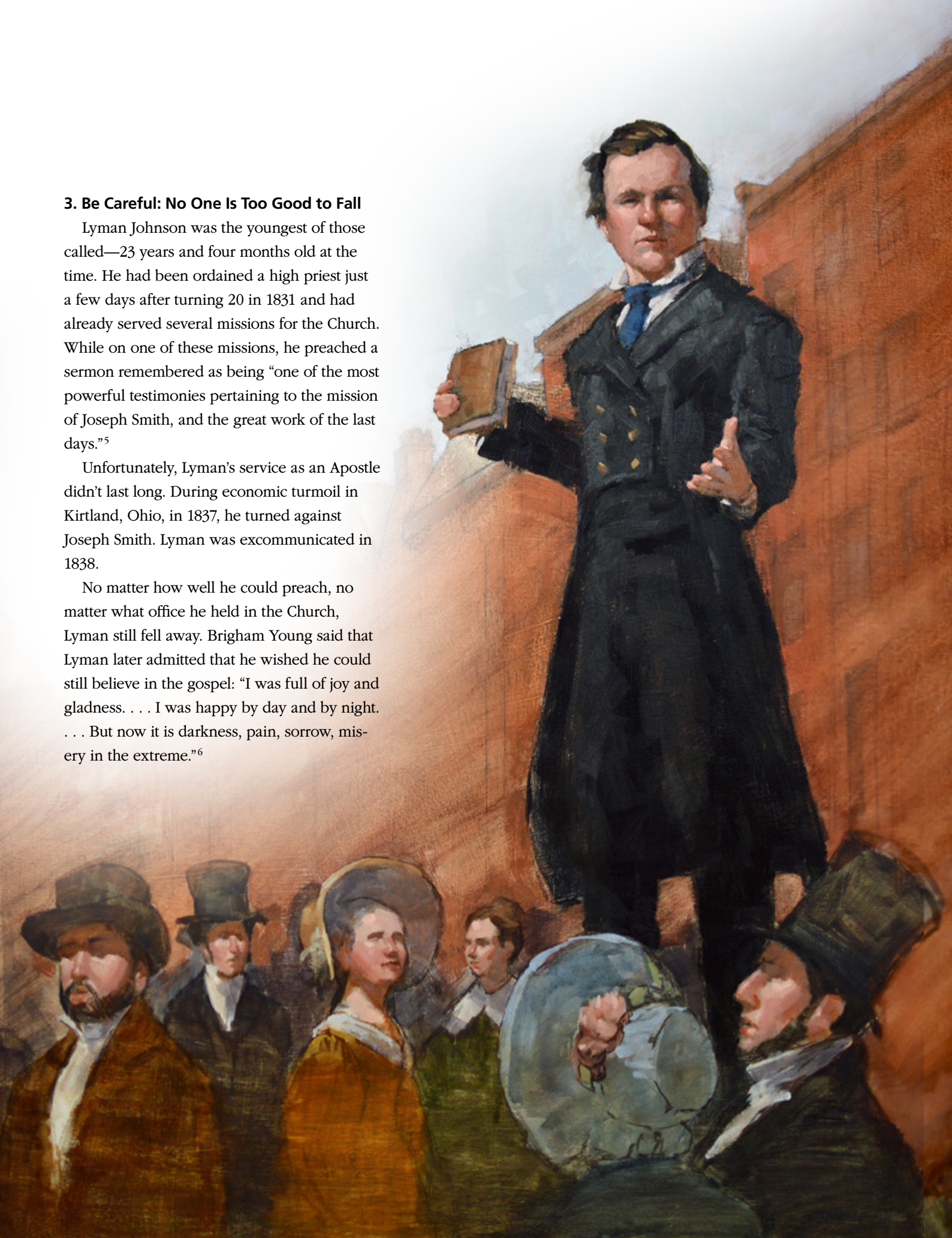


### 3. Be Careful: No One Is Too Good to Fall

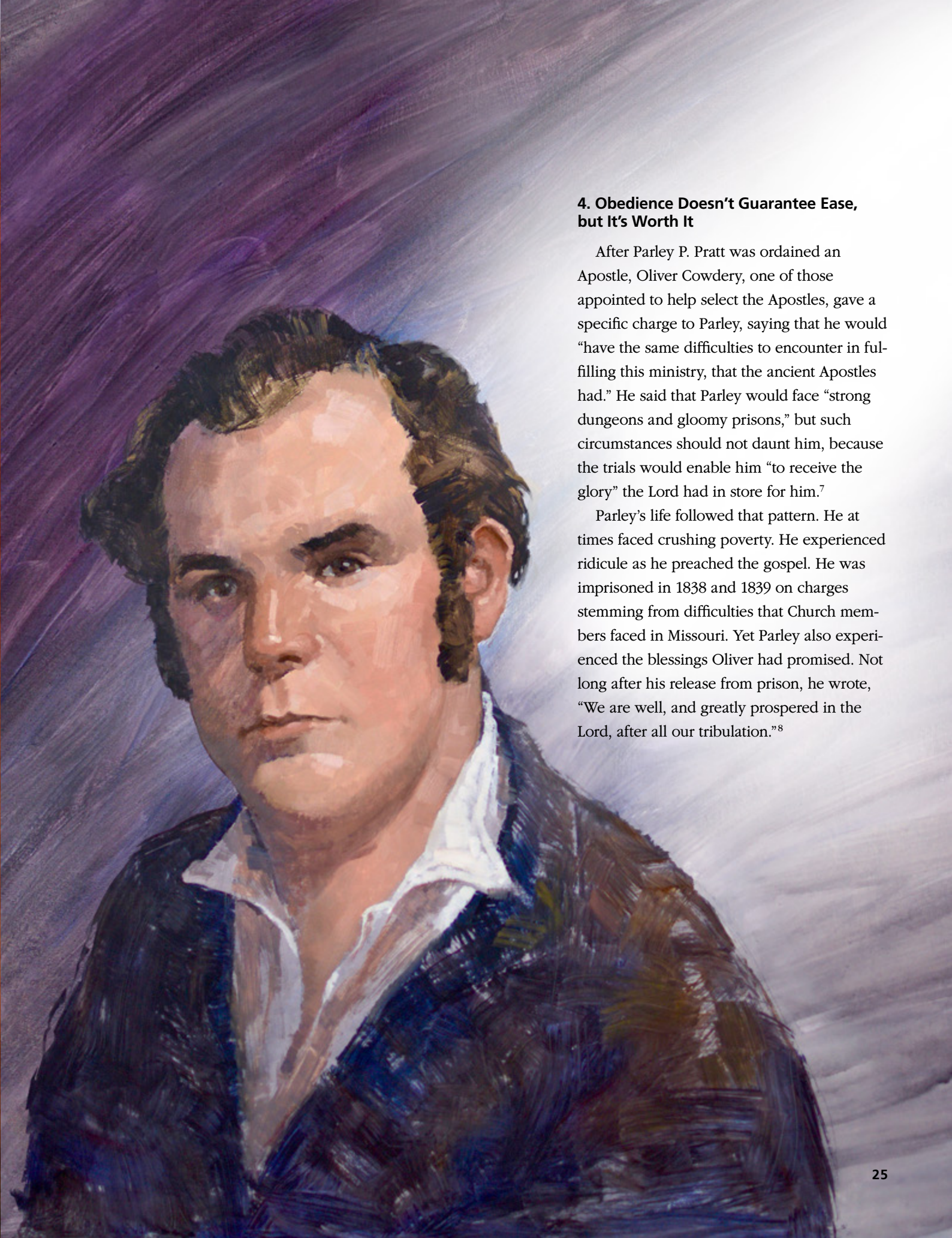
Lyman Johnson was the youngest of those called—23 years and four months old at the time. He had been ordained a high priest just a few days after turning 20 in 1831 and had already served several missions for the Church. While on one of these missions, he preached a sermon remembered as being “one of the most powerful testimonies pertaining to the mission of Joseph Smith, and the great work of the last days.”<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, Lyman’s service as an Apostle didn’t last long. During economic turmoil in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1837, he turned against Joseph Smith. Lyman was excommunicated in 1838.

No matter how well he could preach, no matter what office he held in the Church, Lyman still fell away. Brigham Young said that Lyman later admitted that he wished he could still believe in the gospel: “I was full of joy and gladness. . . . I was happy by day and by night. . . . But now it is darkness, pain, sorrow, misery in the extreme.”<sup>6</sup>







#### **4. Obedience Doesn't Guarantee Ease, but It's Worth It**

After Parley P. Pratt was ordained an Apostle, Oliver Cowdery, one of those appointed to help select the Apostles, gave a specific charge to Parley, saying that he would “have the same difficulties to encounter in fulfilling this ministry, that the ancient Apostles had.” He said that Parley would face “strong dungeons and gloomy prisons,” but such circumstances should not daunt him, because the trials would enable him “to receive the glory” the Lord had in store for him.<sup>7</sup>

Parley's life followed that pattern. He at times faced crushing poverty. He experienced ridicule as he preached the gospel. He was imprisoned in 1838 and 1839 on charges stemming from difficulties that Church members faced in Missouri. Yet Parley also experienced the blessings Oliver had promised. Not long after his release from prison, he wrote, “We are well, and greatly prospered in the Lord, after all our tribulation.”<sup>8</sup>



## 5. Age Doesn't Matter as Much as Faith

Orson Pratt, Parley's brother, was the second youngest of the Apostles. Ordained at 23, he was only a few weeks older than Lyman Johnson. The service that Orson had already rendered to the Church provides an excellent example of how young adults can be a force for good.

Orson was baptized on September 19, 1830—his 19th birthday. Shortly after, Joseph Smith received a revelation for him that said that Orson was God's son, that he was blessed because he believed, and that his responsibility was to preach the gospel (see D&C 34:3–6). Accordingly, Orson served numerous missions, including one with Lyman Johnson in 1832 in which they baptized nearly 100 individuals and ordained several elders.

When Orson was called as an Apostle, he was not in Kirtland.

On April 23, 1835, in the city of Columbus, he learned that his presence was required at a meeting in Kirtland on April 26th.

Not knowing the purpose of the meeting, he immediately made his way there. Unaware that he had been called as an Apostle, he walked in while the congregation was “praying, and wishing for his arrival.”<sup>9</sup> Feeling the support of the Saints, Orson accepted his call.

As an Apostle, he prepared a pamphlet that contained the earliest printed account of Joseph Smith's First Vision. As a pioneer in 1847, he kept a detailed record of the trek west. He also wrote many missionary pamphlets and was a strong defender of the Book of Mormon.

### Today Is Different . . . or Is It?

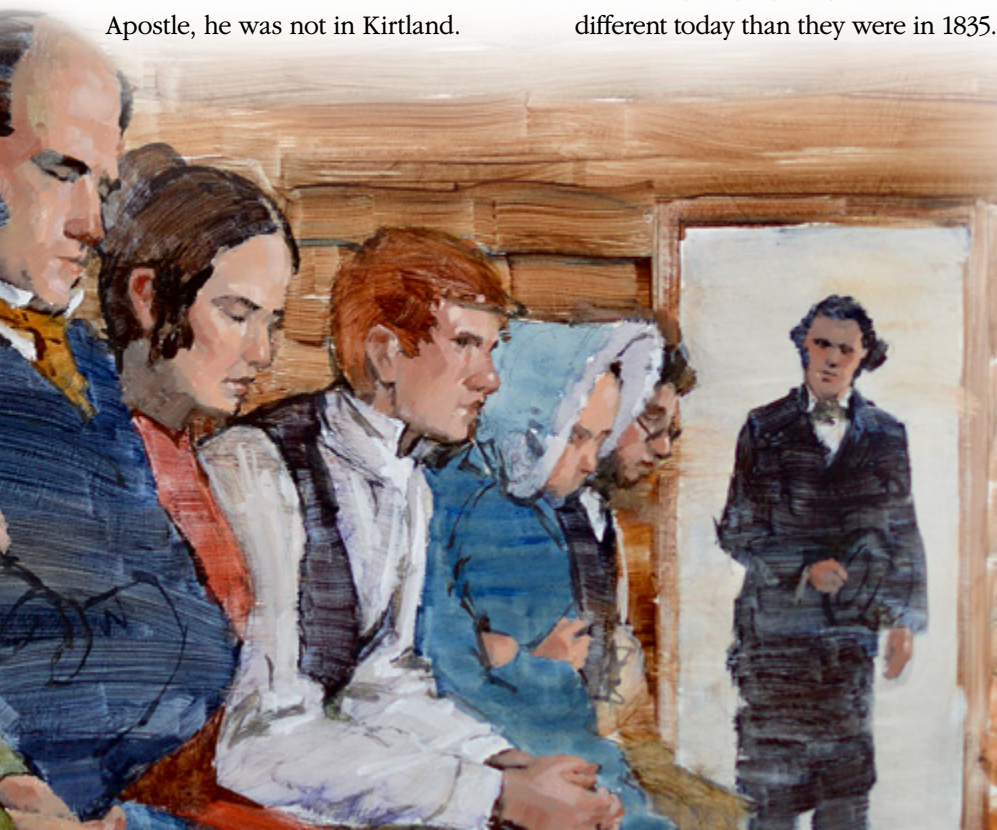
In many ways, young adults *are* different today than they were in 1835.

And yet these lessons can help young adults today in their efforts to live up to their potential. Here's a summary:

- If you feel inadequate, move forward anyway.
- Everyone has challenges. You can overcome yours.
- You'll be happier if you stay active in the Church.
- Stay committed. Be obedient and faithful. Blessings will come.
- You've got something important to give. The Lord is counting on you. ■

### NOTES

1. “Extracts from H. C. Kimball's Journal,” *Times and Seasons*, Apr. 15, 1845, 868.
2. “Minutes, Discourse, and Blessings, 14–15 February 1835,” in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835*, ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others (2016), 229.
3. See “History of Thos. Baldwin Marsh,” *Deseret News*, Mar. 24, 1858, 18.
4. See “History of Thos. Baldwin Marsh,” *Deseret News*, Mar. 24, 1858, 18; Kay Darowski, “The Faith and Fall of Thomas Marsh,” in *Revelations in Context: The Stories behind the Sections of the Doctrine and Covenants*, Matthew McBride and James Goldberg, eds. (2016), 57–59.
5. Edward W. Tullidge, *Tullidge's Histories* (1889), vol. 2 (supplement), 175.
6. Lyman Johnson, in Brigham Young, “Discourse,” *Deseret News*, Aug. 15, 1877, 434.
7. Oliver Cowdery, in “Minutes and Blessings, 21 February 1835,” in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835*, 240–41.
8. “Letter from Parley P. Pratt, 22 November 1839,” [josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-from-parley-p-pratt-22-november-1839/1](https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-from-parley-p-pratt-22-november-1839/1).
9. “Extracts from H. C. Kimball's Journal,” *Times and Seasons*, Apr. 15, 1845, 869.



# The Calling of the Restoration's Original Apostles

On February 8, 1835, Joseph Smith asked brothers Brigham and Joseph Young to sing to him. The Prophet then received a revelation that it was time for the Twelve Apostles to be called.<sup>1</sup>

Joseph Smith asked Brigham to send out a notice that a conference would be held the following Saturday. He told Brigham that he would be one of the Twelve.<sup>2</sup>

Six days later, the Saints gathered. Joseph Smith said that one of the primary purposes of the meeting was for the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon—Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris—“to choose twelve men from the church as Apostles.”<sup>3</sup> Oliver and David had previously received that assignment in June 1829, but although they had “sought the Lord by fasting and prayer” to identify the Twelve, the time had not yet been right.<sup>4</sup> Now, Joseph said, the time had come.

The Twelve (in the order presented at the meeting) were Lyman Johnson, age 23; Brigham Young, 33; Heber C. Kimball, 33;

Orson Hyde, 30; David W. Patten, 35; Luke Johnson, 27; William E. McLellin, 29; John F. Boynton, 23; Orson Pratt, 23; William Smith, 23; Thomas B. Marsh, 34; and Parley P. Pratt, 27. All had previously served missions. Eight had accompanied Joseph Smith on the Zion’s Camp expedition the previous summer.<sup>5</sup>

After their designation, each of the Apostles was ordained.<sup>6</sup> Their ordination blessings were filled with promises of missionary success. Heber C. Kimball later remembered that the blessings “predicted many things which should come to pass, that we should have power to heal the sick, cast out devils, raise the dead, give sight to the blind, . . . remove mountains, and all things should be subject to us through the name of Jesus Christ.”<sup>7</sup>

Oliver Cowdery also emphasized the difficulties they would face: “Be prepared at all times to make a sacrifice [*sic*] of your lives, should God require them in the advancement and building up of his cause.” Oliver encouraged the Apostles to seek personal knowledge of Jesus Christ so

that they could testify of His existence with surety: “Never cease striving until you have seen God, face to face.”<sup>8</sup>

Beginning in May 1835, the Apostles undertook several proselyting missions for the Church, and their general leadership also blessed many individuals. ■

## NOTES

1. See “History, 1838–1856 (Manuscript History of the Church), volume B-1 [1 September 1834–2 November 1838],” addenda, note A, page 1, [josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-b-1-1-september-1834-2-november-1838/304](http://josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-b-1-1-september-1834-2-november-1838/304).
2. See Joseph Young, *History of the Organization of the Seventies* (1878), 1.
3. “Minutes, Discourse, and Blessings, 14–15 February 1835,” in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835*, 224–28.
4. “Minutes and Blessings, 21 February 1835,” in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835*, 242, 243.
5. The four who were not part of the camp were David W. Patten, Thomas B. Marsh, William E. McLellin, and John F. Boynton.
6. Only nine of the Twelve were present at the meeting on February 14, 1835. Parley P. Pratt was ordained on February 21, 1835, while Thomas B. Marsh and Orson Pratt were both ordained on April 26, 1835.
7. “Extracts from H. C. Kimball’s Journal,” *Times and Seasons*, Apr. 15, 1845, 868.
8. “Minutes and Blessings, 21 February 1835,” in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835*, 244.

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To learn more about the calling of the original Twelve Apostles in this dispensation, visit [history.lds.org](http://history.lds.org).

# Resolving Conflict

in Your  
Marriage





**By S. Brent Scharman**

Retired counselor, LDS Family Services

**M**att and Margaret (all names have been changed) turned off the television following the concluding session of general conference. The messages had been inspiring, and they had enjoyed the positive atmosphere that had permeated their home that weekend.

Nobody could have been more disappointed than Matt and Margaret were when, less than 24 hours later, they were having a heated argument over whether to save an unexpected bonus Matt had received at work or spend it on school clothes for the older kids. The debate was not resolved, and Matt and Margaret each moved on to other tasks feeling misunderstood.

To create a lasting, happy marriage, couples must learn how to resolve conflicts so that each individual feels understood and decisions are made that involve acceptable compromise.

*Wonderful  
blessings flow  
from resolving  
conflicts in  
an atmosphere  
of love.*



### **Spiritual Warning and Guidance**

Scriptures and words of prophets and apostles provide ample cautions about contention. In 3 Nephi we read, “He that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention” (3 Nephi 11:29). Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that Satan “works to drive a wedge of disharmony between a father and a mother. He entices children to be disobedient to their parents. . . . Satan knows that the surest and most effective way to disrupt the Lord’s work is to diminish the effectiveness of the family and the sanctity of the home.”<sup>1</sup>

Differences of opinion, habit, or background are inevitable, but we have ample resources to help us know how to cope. Doctrine and instruction taught in Sunday worship and Church publications can help and can be supplemented with quality professional information as needed. Couples can learn methods for dealing with conflict. Inspiration can lead to changing hearts that soften each spouse from the inside.

President Thomas S. Monson cautioned: “Some of our greatest opportunities to demonstrate our love will be within the walls of our own homes. Love should be the very heart of family life, and yet sometimes it is not. There can be too much impatience, too much arguing, too many fights, too many tears.”<sup>2</sup>

When troubles persist and become destructive to family life, there can be more serious causes of conflict, including immaturity, selfishness, desire to win power struggles, and pride. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) taught: “I have long felt that the greatest factor in a happy marriage is an anxious concern for the comfort and well-being of one’s companion. In most cases selfishness is the leading factor that causes argument, separation, divorce, and broken hearts.”<sup>3</sup>

Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–94) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles also commented: “When one considers the bad feeling and the unpleasantness caused by contention, it is well to ask, ‘Why do I participate?’ . . .

“ . . . It is important to recognize that we choose our behavior. At the root of this issue is the age-old problem of pride.”<sup>4</sup>

Whatever the cause, we need to learn new skills and soften our hearts when problems persist.

## Causes of Conflict

There are many causes of conflict, ranging from superficial personal biases to deeper ingrained communication styles. In addition to overcoming selfishness and immaturity, couples will face other common causes of conflict, including factors such as the following:

Newlyweds learning to adjust to one another’s styles	Natural differences between men and women	Irritability prompted by exhaustion	Different opinions on how to best raise children or manage finances
Children learning to use agency	Different likes and dislikes	Overreactions to stress	Lack of understanding or skill in resolving conflict



## Cautions about Anger

Many marital or family conflicts arise because of uncontrolled anger. If we're not careful, we can follow an angry incident with constant thinking about how we were wronged. The longer we ruminate, the more reasons we can generate to justify our perspective. This brooding can prevent us from calming down, and when a second wave of anger emerges before the first is resolved, hormonal reactions can lead to additional outbursts.

For example, in a counseling session, Marilyn described how frustrating it had been to lie in bed after she and her husband had yelled at each other. "I knew

I was in the right," she said. "I knew he was going to flip on the light and apologize, but he never did. The more I thought about it, the madder I got. When I heard him start to snore, I couldn't stand it—I jumped out of bed and yelled at him some more and then went downstairs. Can you believe that he still didn't apologize?" Marilyn's experience is a good example of how not to deal with angry feelings.

Habits, even short-term ones, can seem hard to break. But spouses can learn skills to help. Here are some useful practices:



### Challenge thoughts quickly.

In our example, Marilyn could have said to herself, "It seems like I'm right, but I'm blowing it out of proportion. My relationship with my husband matters more to me than what we're arguing about."



### Let it out in productive ways.

Yelling about your feelings won't help you "get it out of your system." The more you vent in an angry manner, the more intense your feelings will become.



### Find a distraction.

Choose to think about something else or take a walk.



**Listen to calming music**  
or read uplifting literature.



### Start over.

Catch yourself in the beginning of a disagreement. Research has shown that the first three to five minutes of a conversation lays the foundation for what is likely to follow. Say, "This is going in a bad direction. Let's start over."



**Allow your emotions to calm**  
before you try tackling a problem. Wait out the chemical reaction that may be taking place.



### Write down your thoughts.

For some, this helps to increase self-awareness.



## Steps to Resolving Conflict

*Strengthening Marriage*, an LDS Family Services manual, recommends three steps for resolving conflict: (1) expressing views, (2) exploring concerns, and (3) selecting mutually satisfying solutions.<sup>5</sup> These steps are based on a communication and sharing model that is cooperative and addresses the issues of all concerned.

1. Expressing Views	2. Exploring Concerns	3. Selecting Mutually Satisfying Solutions
<p>Each individual shares views in an honest but non-attacking manner. Sometimes thoughtful reflection resolves the problem as it becomes clear the disagreement was merely a misunderstanding. For example, a wife who thinks her husband is selfishly insisting that she attend a high school basketball game with him instead of going out to dinner for a date might come to understand that he is less interested in basketball than in showing attention to a player who has stopped attending his Sunday School class.</p>	<p>Couples explore concerns at a deeper level. The focus is on understanding and accepting one another's concerns. Continuing the basketball example, the wife, while understanding her husband's concern for the student, might believe that he is developing a pattern of always putting the needs of others before those of the marriage. In this case, a more thoughtful discussion must be held in which each expresses feelings in a sensitive manner and opposition gives way to cooperation.</p>	<p>Couples brainstorm and decide on mutually satisfying solutions. The focus is on what each individual can do to address the concerns rather than on what their spouse can do. Such negotiation can test maturity and patience but, over time, lead to a belief that there is safety in expressing feelings and confidence that each person's desires will be addressed. Our couple may agree to spend one Friday night together at a basketball game, one Friday night in which the husband attends the game alone, and two Friday nights doing couple activities. It is not as important how the couple chooses to spend Friday night as it is that the quality of the decision-making process is satisfying to both.</p>



## Results of Resolving Conflict

Wonderful blessings flow from resolving conflicts in an atmosphere of love. These include security; personal growth, which leads to inner peace; increased faith; enhanced character; and personal righteousness.

When conflicts are resolved, new patterns can take their place. The door then opens for spouses to express positive thoughts and demonstrate support. Sister Jean B. Bingham, Relief Society General President, said: “Words have surprising power, both to build up and to tear down. We can all probably remember negative words that brought us low and other words spoken with love that made our spirits soar. Choosing to say only that which is positive about—and to—others lifts and strengthens those around us and helps others follow in the Savior’s way.”<sup>6</sup>

Couples who have made long-term progress in resolving conflict reap desirable rewards. A husband of a previously troubled relationship said, “It’s hard for me to look back on how it used to be and believe that it was real. How could I have treated my wife the way I did? I’m grateful for the Spirit getting my attention and for the patience my wife has shown to me.”

### Conclusion

Overcoming conflict takes conscious effort and follow-through. The very next thing you say or do can start more positive communication patterns in your marriage. You too can reap the fruits of the Spirit as experienced by the Nephites: “There was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people.

“And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults . . . ; and surely there could not be a happier people” (4 Nephi 1:15–16). ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

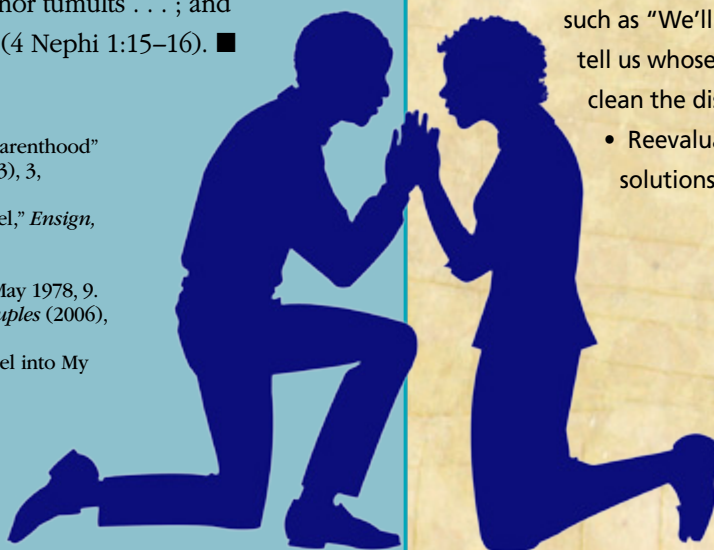
### NOTES

1. M. Russell Ballard, “The Sacred Responsibilities of Parenthood” (Brigham Young University devotional, Aug. 19, 2003), 3, [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Love—the Essence of the Gospel,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 92.
3. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Loyalty,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 59.
4. Marvin J. Ashton, “No Time for Contention,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 9.
5. See *Strengthening Marriage: Resource Guide for Couples* (2006), 19–20.
6. Jean B. Bingham, “I Will Bring the Light of the Gospel into My Home,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 7.

## Rules for Discussing Problems

Listed below are some ideas that increase the likelihood of successful conflict resolution:

- Seek spiritual help.
- Decide on a time and a place to talk if there is a serious history of problems.
- Seek to understand instead of argue.
- Let your spouse talk.
- Speak softly and be kind.
- Take a break as needed.
- Use appropriate language.
- Stay on topic. Discuss only the current concern.
- Never use violence.
- Do not threaten divorce or separation.
- Find measurable solutions, such as “I’ll initiate family prayer, and you conduct family home evening.”
- Plan on exceptions.
- Agree on neutral reminders, such as “We’ll let the calendar tell us whose turn it is to clean the dishes.”
- Reevaluate and revise solutions as needed.







*"Many [spirits] are anxiously looking forth to their friends who are still living to administer for them in the temples," my deceased great-grandfather said when he appeared to my grandfather A. C. Nelson.*





# Open THE Heavens

THROUGH TEMPLE AND  
FAMILY HISTORY WORK



By President  
Russell M. Nelson

President of the  
Quorum of the  
Twelve Apostles  
And by Wendy W.  
Nelson

*During their 2017 RootsTech presentation, President Russell M. Nelson and his wife, Wendy, invited Latter-day Saints to prayerfully consider what kind of sacrifice they can make in order to do more temple and family history work.*

**P**resident Nelson: When my grandfather A. C. Nelson was a young husband and father, just 27 years old, his father died. About three months later, his deceased father, my great-grandfather, came to visit him. The date of that visit was the night of April 6, 1891. Grandfather Nelson was so impressed by his father's visit that he wrote the experience in his journal for his family and friends.

"I was in bed when Father entered the room," Grandfather Nelson wrote. "He came and sat on the side of the bed. He said, 'Well, my son, as I had a few spare minutes, I received permission to come and see you for a few minutes. I am feeling well, my son, and have had very much to do since I died.'"

When Grandfather Nelson asked him what he had been doing, his father answered that he had been busy teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ in the spirit world.

"You cannot imagine, my son, how many spirits there are in the spirit world who have not yet received the gospel," he said. "But many are receiving it, and a great work is being accomplished. Many are anxiously looking forth to their friends who are still living to administer for them in the temples."

Grandfather Nelson told his father, "We intend to go to the temple and get sealed to you, Father, as soon as we can."



**A. C. Nelson, grandfather of President Russell M. Nelson.**

My great-grandfather responded: “That, my son, is partly what I came to see you about. We will yet make a family and live throughout eternity.”

Then Grandfather Nelson asked, “Father, is the gospel as taught by this Church true?”

His father pointed to a picture of the First Presidency hanging on the wall of the bedroom.

“My son, just as sure as you see that picture, just as sure is the gospel true. The gospel of Jesus Christ has within it the power of saving every man and woman who will obey it, and in no other way can they ever obtain salvation in the kingdom of God. My son, always cling to the gospel. Be humble, be prayerful, be submissive to the priesthood, be true, be faithful to the covenants you have made with God. Never do anything that would displease God. Oh, what a blessing is the gospel. My son, be a good boy.”

**Sister Nelson:** I just love all those B’s. “Be humble, be prayerful, be submissive to the priesthood, be true, be faithful to the covenants you have made with God. . . . Be a good boy.” Six B’s brought to you by your departed

great-grandfather. He certainly sounds a lot like President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) with his six B’s.<sup>1</sup>

**President Nelson:** He does, doesn’t he? It’s so precious to me that my grandfather would leave that record for us. We learned that his father’s children were subsequently sealed to him. So the reason for his visit was accomplished.

### The Spirit of Elijah

**President Nelson:** A name of great significance in the scriptures explains why the family is so important. That name is Elijah. EL-I-JAH in Hebrew literally means “Jehovah is my God.”<sup>2</sup> Think of it! Embedded in Elijah’s name are the Hebrew terms for both the Father and the Son.

**Sister Nelson:** Elijah was the last prophet to hold the sealing power of the Melchizedek Priesthood before the time of Jesus Christ. Elijah’s mission was to turn the hearts of the children to the fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children, so they could be sealed, or else “the whole earth would be *utterly wasted* at his coming” (Joseph Smith—History 1:39; emphasis added). That’s pretty strong language.

**President Nelson:** I like to think about the spirit of Elijah as “a manifestation of the Holy Ghost bearing witness of the divine nature of the family.”<sup>3</sup> According to the Bible Dictionary, “The power of Elijah is the sealing power of the priesthood by which things bound or loosed on earth are bound or loosed in heaven” (“Elijah”).



**Sister Nelson:** So when we say that the spirit of Elijah is moving upon people to encourage them to seek after their kindred dead, we're really saying that the Holy Ghost is prompting us to do those things that will allow families to be sealed eternally.

**President Nelson:** It's wonderful to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers by telling important family history stories in ways that are accessible and memorable. Perhaps having family history documents, stories, photos, and memorabilia always before our eyes can strengthen our testimonies (see Mosiah 1:5). As we place them on our walls, our tables, our computers, our iPads, and even our cell phones, maybe we will be prompted to make better choices and draw closer to the Lord and to our families.

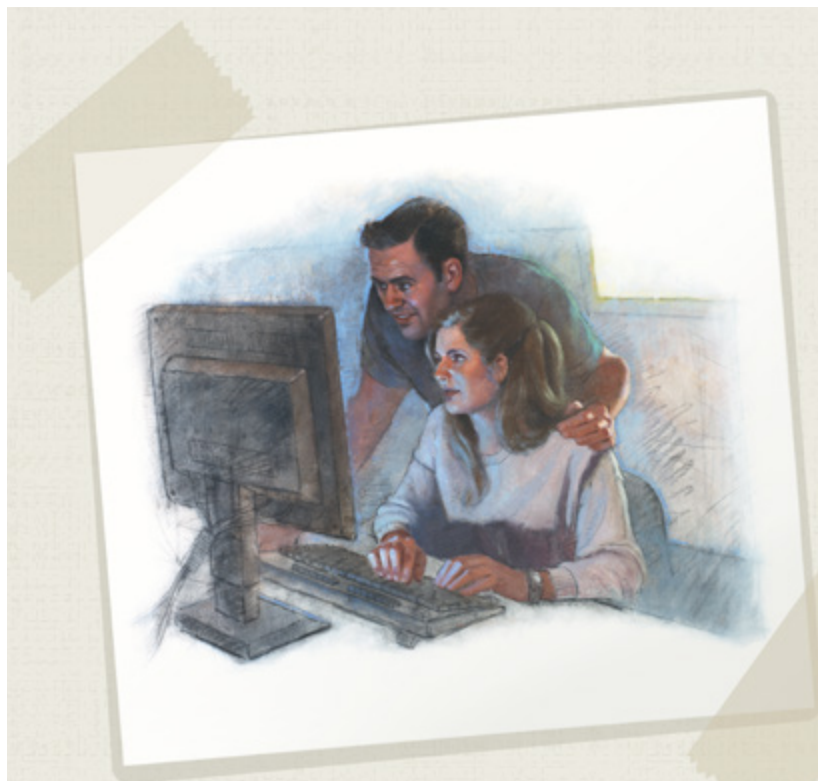
If we leave it at that level, however, we really haven't done enough. As Church members, our interest in family history work has been motivated by instruction from the Lord that our ancestors cannot be made perfect without us and that we cannot be made perfect without them (see D&C 128:15). That means we are to be linked together by the sacred sealing ordinances of the temple. We are to be strong links in the chain from our ancestors to our posterity. If our collections of stories and photos should ever become an end point in themselves—if we know who our ancestors are and know marvelous things about them, but we leave them stranded on the other side without their

ordinances—such diversion will not be of any help to our ancestors who remain confined in spirit prison.

**Sister Nelson:** Preserving ancestral stories is important, but it should never be at the expense of completing our ancestors' ordinance work. We need to make time for our ancestors' ordinance-qualifying information.

**President Nelson:** And that means sacrificing time we normally spend on other activities. We need to be spending more time in the temple and in doing family history research, which includes indexing.

**Sister Nelson:** Sacrifice does indeed bring forth the blessings of heaven.<sup>4</sup> I have been blessed to find many ancestors who I feel confident were ready to make covenants with God and to receive their essential ordinances. Over time, I realized that if I was working on





an overwhelming project and I was out of time, energy, and ideas, if I would make a sacrifice of time by finding the ordinance-qualifying information for some ancestors or by going to the temple to be proxy for them, the heavens opened and the energy and ideas started flowing. Somehow I had enough time to meet my deadline. It was totally impossible, but it would happen every time. Temple and family history work bring me a joy that is truly not of this world.

### Family History and Missionary Work

**President Nelson:** If I were a missionary today, my two best friends in the ward or branch where I served would be the ward mission leader and the ward temple and family history consultant.

People have an inborn desire to know something about their ancestors. That becomes a natural opportunity for our missionaries. As missionaries learn to love the people they teach, they will naturally ask about their families. “Are your parents living? Are your grandparents living? Do you know your four grandparents?” Conversations flow easily when those who are drawn to speak with the missionaries are invited to talk about the people they love.

At that point it can be natural for the missionaries, including member missionaries, to ask, “Do you know any of your great-grandparents? Do you know their names?” The probability is that investigators will not know the names of all eight of their great-grandparents.

Then the missionaries can make this suggestion: “I have a friend at our church who can help. If we could find the names of some or maybe even all of your great-grandparents, would it be worth a couple of hours of your time to find out who your great-grandparents are?” That friend at church, of course, is the ward temple and family history consultant.

**Sister Nelson:** I think it can be comforting for missionaries to know that they are never alone when they are finding and teaching those who are receptive to the truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. President George Q.



Cannon (1827–1901), who served as a counselor to four Presidents of the Church, taught that in these latter days, those who are joining the Church are joining precisely because their ancestors have been praying for one of their posterity to join the Church so that they, the ancestors, can receive their essential ordinances by proxy.<sup>5</sup>

### Exaltation: A Family Affair

**President Nelson:** Exaltation is a family affair. Only through the saving ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ can families be exalted. The ultimate end for which we strive is that we become happy as a family—endowed, sealed, and prepared for eternal life in the presence of God.

**Sister Nelson:** Each Church class we attend, each time we serve, each covenant we make with God, each priesthood ordinance we receive, everything we do in the Church leads us to the holy temple, the house of the Lord. There is so much power available for a couple and for their children through the sealing ordinance when they keep their covenants.

**President Nelson:** Every day we choose where we want to live eternally by how we think, feel, speak, and act. Our Heavenly Father has declared that His work and His glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of His children (see Moses 1:39). But He *wants* us to choose to return to Him. He will not force us in any



way. The precision with which we keep our covenants shows Him just how much we want to return to live with Him. Each day brings us closer to or farther from our glorious possibility of eternal life. We each need to keep our covenants, repent daily, and seek to be more like our Savior. Then and only then can families be together forever.

**Sister Nelson:** It is my testimony that however fabulous your life is right now, or however discouraging and heartbreaking it may be, your involvement in temple and family history work will make it better. What do you need in your life right now? More love? More joy? More self-mastery? More peace? More meaningful moments? More of a feeling that you're making a difference? More fun? More answers to your soul-searching questions? More heart-to-heart connections with others? More understanding of what you are reading in the scriptures? More ability to love and to forgive? More ability to pray with power? More inspiration and creative ideas for your work and other projects? More time for what really matters?

I entreat you to make a sacrifice of time to the Lord by increasing the time you spend doing temple and family history work, and then watch what happens. It is my testimony that when we show the Lord we are serious about helping our ancestors, the heavens will open and we will receive all that we need.

**President Nelson:** We can be inspired all day long about temple and family history experiences others have had. But we must do something to actually experience the joy ourselves. I would like to extend a challenge to each one of us so that the wonderful feeling of this work

can continue and even increase. I invite you to prayerfully consider what kind of sacrifice—preferably a sacrifice of time—you can make in order to do more temple and family history work this year.

We are engaged in the work of Almighty God. He lives. Jesus is the Christ. This is His Church. We are His covenant children. He can count on us. ■

*From a presentation at the RootsTech 2017 Family History Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, on February 11, 2017. To watch a recording of the presentation, visit [lds.org/go/1017Nelson](https://lds.org/go/1017Nelson).*

#### NOTES

1. See Gordon B. Hinckley, "A Prophet's Counsel and Prayer for Youth," *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 2–11.
2. Bible Dictionary, "Elijah."
3. Russell M. Nelson, "A New Harvest Time," *Ensign*, May 1998, 34.
4. See "Praise to the Man," *Hymns*, no. 27.
5. See *Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of President George Q. Cannon*, comp. Jerreld L. Newquist, 2 vols. (1974), 2:88–89.



# KNOW BEFORE YOU GO: Temple Baptisms

*There is no need to wait. All worthy members, including youth and new members, can serve in the temple now.*

**By Heather J. Johnson**  
Church Magazines

“Let us truly be a temple-attending and a temple-loving people,” said President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95). “We should hasten to the temple as frequently . . . as our personal circumstances allow. We should go not only

for our kindred dead but also for the personal blessing of temple worship, for the sanctity and safety that are within those hallowed and consecrated walls” (“A Temple-Motivated People,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1995, 5).

This counsel applies to all members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—even if you are a recently

baptized member. As long as you are worthy, there is no waiting period before you can attend the temple. As soon as you are baptized and confirmed, you can obtain a limited-use temple recommend.

This recommend allows you to enter the temple to perform proxy baptisms and confirmations for deceased ancestors. As you serve and worship in the temple, you can strengthen your testimony of the gospel.

Of her first experience in the temple, Natalia Lorena Figueroa from Argentina said, “In the temple baptism, I watched a brother be baptized for my grandfather and my uncles. Then I was baptized for my grandmother and aunts. The joy I felt was incredible. Tears fell from my eyes, and I felt the burning in my breast as never before.” Similar blessings await those who qualify for and use limited-use temple recommends. ■





## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### How do I get a limited-use recommend?

- You must be age 12 or older and be a worthy member of the Church. Men must receive the Aaronic Priesthood, which can normally be done within a week of their baptism.
- To receive a recommend, your bishop or branch president interviews you. The interview is similar to the one you had before your baptism. You will discuss your testimony of the gospel and your observance of the commandments.
- The recommend is valid for a year.

### What are some of the blessings of having a limited-use recommend?

- You can serve your deceased ancestors and others who have died by performing proxy baptisms and confirmations in their behalf.
- You can be reminded of your own baptism and confirmation and the covenants you've made.
- Even if you can't attend the temple often, you can carry your recommend with you as a constant reminder of the temple and your commitment to be worthy to attend.
- Living worthy of a limited-use recommend helps you prepare to receive your own temple ordinances of endowment and sealing.

### How should I plan a visit to the temple?

- Ask a ward or branch leader, such as the ward mission leader or Relief Society president, for help in planning a visit to the temple.
- The schedules for each temple baptistry are posted online at [temples.lds.org](https://temples.lds.org). You can also call the temple for information.
- If you are attending for the first time, you can call the temple to schedule an appointment. This way they will be prepared to welcome you and explain what you will do in the temple.



- Wear your Sunday best to the temple.
- Bring with you a change of white underclothing. Some temples provide white underclothing, but some do not. The temple will provide a white jumpsuit and towel.

### What should I expect when I attend the temple to perform proxy baptisms and confirmations?

- When you enter the temple, you will first come to the recommend desk. A temple worker will check your recommend.
- Men and women then go to separate dressing rooms to change. Private locker spaces are provided to change from your clothes into a provided white jumpsuit.
- The temple workers will direct you where to go to perform proxy baptisms and confirmations.
- The baptisms and confirmations you take part in will be similar to your own baptism and confirmation, but you will be acting on behalf of a deceased person.
- After you have finished participating in the ordinances, you will go back to the dressing room and change into your own clothes.
- There is no need to be nervous about attending the temple. Temple workers are available everywhere you go in the temple. They will help you.



# LET US BE **SELF-RELIANT** AND INDEPENDENT

*As Latter-day Saints throughout the world embrace the principles and doctrines of the Church's self-reliance initiative, they are reaping the blessings of "greater hope, peace, and progress."*

**B**efore he became a member of the Church, Peter Uglow had spent most of his adult life chasing financial success. By all outward appearances, he seemed to have found it. After all, he had owned and run several businesses.

When a local Church leader in West Midlands, England, asked Peter to join a personal finances group offered through the Church's self-reliance initiative, he doubted that the course could teach him anything. Once Peter started attending the group, however, he quickly realized how much he still had to learn.

"The course is not just about finances; that is only half of the story," he says. "The most important thing for me was learning to have faith in Heavenly Father—how He provides us all temporal blessings and opens the door to true self-reliance if we follow His spiritual guidance."

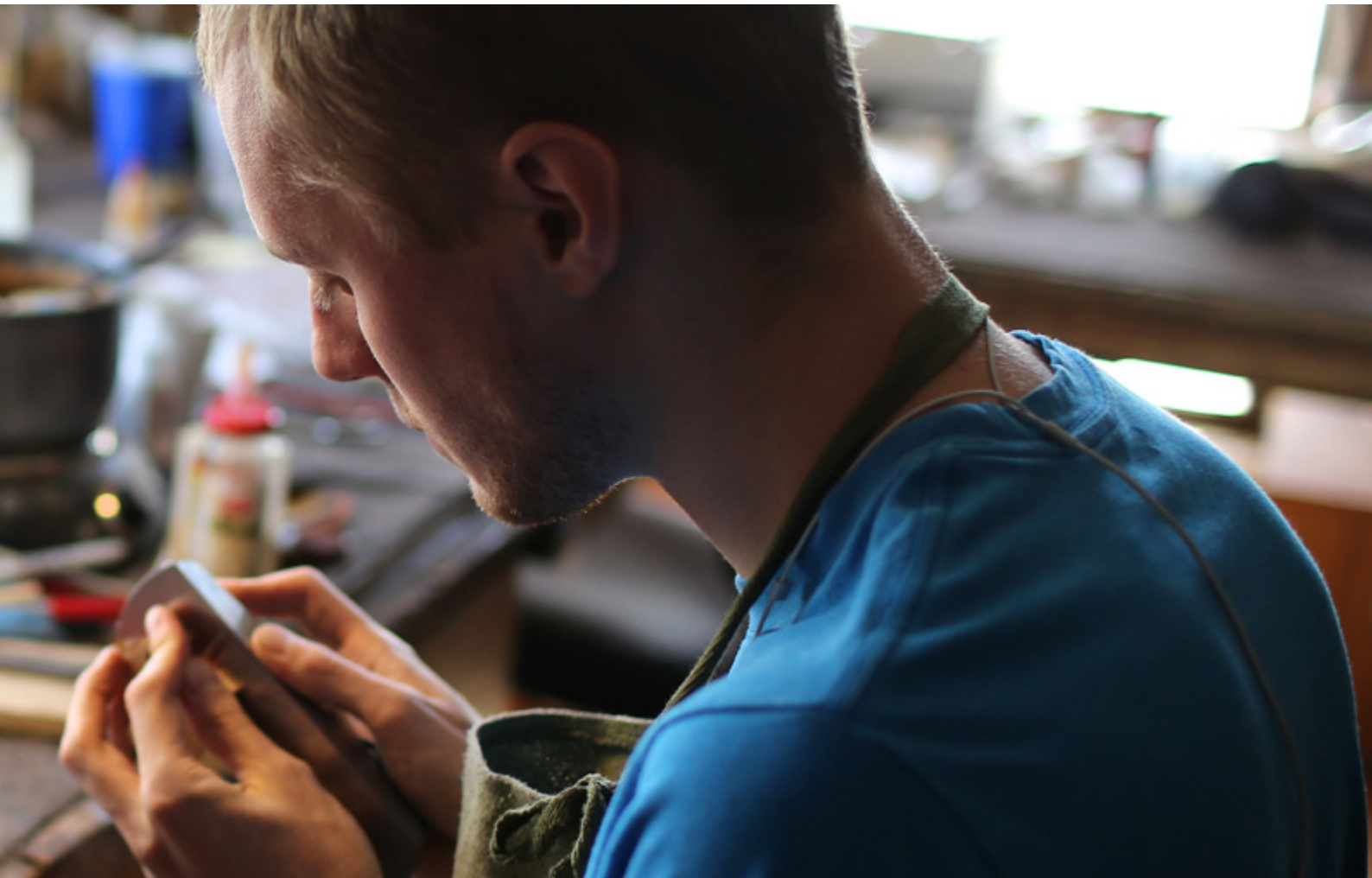
As a member of a personal finances group, Peter learned practical skills such as tracking family spending, creating and living on a budget, reducing debt, and saving for the future. Using these skills, along with exercising faith in Jesus Christ and working hard, Peter and his wife repaid a large debt.

"I am feeling significantly lighter and freer without the fear associated with debt and financial disorganization," he says. "I am feeling the abundant blessings of Heavenly Father in a way I have never felt before. I have learned how to petition Him and listen to His answers when I need help with my temporal affairs."

## **Self-Reliance Initiative**

Self-reliance is more than having a good job, food storage, or money in the bank. Rather, it is "the ability, commitment, and effort to provide the spiritual and temporal necessities of life for self and family. As [Church] members become self-





reliant, they are also better able to serve and care for others”<sup>1</sup> as they enthrone work as a ruling principle in their lives.

President Thomas S. Monson has taught: “*Self-reliance* is a product of our work and undergirds all other welfare practices. It is an essential element in our spiritual as well as our temporal well-being. . . . ‘Let us work for what we need. Let us be self-reliant and independent. Salvation can be obtained on no other principle. Salvation is an individual matter, and we must work out our own salvation in temporal as well as in spiritual things.’”<sup>2</sup>

Under the direction of local priesthood leaders, more than 500,000 Latter-day Saints in more than 100 nations have participated in the self-reliance initiative since 2014. The Church is now introducing the initiative throughout North America.

The initiative includes courses and resources “to help members of the Church learn and put into practice principles of faith, education, hard work, and trust in the Lord.

Accepting and living these principles,” the First Presidency says, “will better enable [us] to receive the temporal blessings promised by the Lord.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Happy and Hopeful**

Maria Edilene Romão had lost hope. She couldn’t find a job, she was a single mother, and she had several children to feed.

That’s when two members of her ward in Santa Catarina, Brazil, invited her to a self-reliance devotional. At the end of the devotional, Maria joined a group to help her find a job.

“For the first time in my life, I believed in a future where I could take care of my family,” she remembers. “I believed that the self-reliance group was going to help me change my life.”

It did.

## YOU'RE INVITED

The path to greater self-reliance starts with an invitation to a My Path to Self-Reliance devotional. At the devotional, you'll be encouraged to evaluate your current situation, establish a plan for moving forward, and then take your plan to the Lord. At the end of the devotional, you'll be invited to choose a self-reliance group that can help you:

- Find a job or improve your employment situation.
- Better manage your personal and family finances.
- Choose an education path and succeed in school.
- Start or grow your small business.

In your self-reliance group, you will:

- Attend a weekly two-hour group meeting for three months.
- Develop and act on personal commitments to achieve self-reliance goals.
- Learn from, counsel with, and support other group members.
- Gain greater faith in Jesus Christ and in His power to help you help yourself become self-reliant.

A self-reliance group functions like a council.

Participants help each other and are accountable to each other. Group facilitators invite interaction, encourage participation, show training videos, and help self-reliance groups follow the process as outlined in related materials.

Members can find videos and materials used in self-reliance training at [srs.lds.org](https://srs.lds.org) or on the Gospel Library mobile app.



During the next 12 weeks, Maria dedicated herself to her group, her studies, and her commitments. She worked with newfound energy toward her goals. She practiced job-interviewing techniques. Within two weeks, she secured a promising job interview. That interview landed her a job.

“My life is changed forever,” says Maria, who no longer struggles to feed her family. “Now I am happy, excited, patient, and hopeful. I believe that Heavenly Father lives and loves me. I know that when I exercise my faith in Jesus Christ, I am blessed.”

### “The Most Fantastic Tool”

Self-reliance is a means to a higher end, said Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Our ultimate goal is to become like the Savior, and that goal is enhanced by our unselfish service to others. Our ability to serve is increased or diminished by the level of our self-reliance.”

Only when we become self-sufficient, Elder Hales added, “can we truly emulate the Savior in serving and blessing others.”<sup>4</sup>

Sergio Galbuchi learned that truth for himself when he started his own business shortly after the stake presidency called him as a stake self-reliance specialist. Armed with faith, skills, and knowledge he had gained as a member of the committee, Sergio and his wife, Silvia, opened a shop in Buenos Aires featuring “crafts and flavors” of Argentina.

“I think becoming self-reliant is a way to apply faith,” says Sergio. Early on, he and Silvia did not enjoy the success they had hoped for, so faith remained central to their endeavor. But while they waited on financial fruits, they worked hard and blessed customers with their products *and* their missionary efforts.

“We get to know many people,” Sergio says. “And we’ve had the chance to give away copies of the Book of Mormon.”

Initially, the stake self-reliance committee identified 10 members in Sergio’s stake who needed help with self-reliance. But then the bishops got involved.







## REVELATION AND SELF-RELIANCE

Stake and district presidencies implement, direct, and guide the Church's self-reliance initiative. They do this by working closely with the Relief Society and by organizing a self-reliance committee.

The committee includes a member of the stake high council, a member of the stake Relief Society presidency, the chairman of the bishops' welfare council, and stake self-reliance specialists. The committee trains and encourages ward councils to pray about and invite members to participate in the initiative. They organize self-reliance groups and work with the local Self-Reliance Services manager to gather and share community resources.

"The aim of the Church's self-reliance initiative is to help individuals receive personal revelation through obedience to key gospel principles. Facilitators are called to create an environment [through interactive discussion] where such revelation can occur, because it is the Holy Ghost, not a teacher, who can teach someone 'all things what ye should do' (2 Nephi 31:3; 32:5)."<sup>5</sup>

Priesthood leaders and members can find out more information at [srs.lds.org](http://srs.lds.org).

"Now we know of 35 individuals in need," said Sergio as the effort grew. "Their bishops invited them individually to participate in groups."

Their faith blossomed, they made needed changes, and they employed new skills.

"Every time I talk with priesthood leaders, I try to express to them that this is the most fantastic tool we've ever received from the First Presidency," Sergio adds. "It's better than any money that could be given to aid someone, and its teachings are clearer than much of the material that I learned when I was a university student."

Most important, those who complete their 12-week self-reliance courses become better disciples of Jesus Christ and learn how to use their skills to build the kingdom of God.



## SELF-RELIANT AND INDEPENDENT

"The Church and its members are commanded by the Lord to be self-reliant and independent. (See D&C 78:13–14.)

"The responsibility for each person's social, emotional, spiritual, physical, or economic well-being rests first upon himself, second upon his family, and third upon the Church if he is a faithful member thereof."

*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball (2006), 116.*



“This [self-reliance] group doesn’t just focus on our business; it focuses on our relationship with God and others,” Sergio says. “We become better disciples of Jesus Christ during our three months spent in this group. After all, maybe a business will help us become more self-reliant, but the ultimate purpose is to serve.”

### Growth and Action

“It has always been a cardinal teaching with the Latter-day Saints,” said President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918), “that a religion which has not the power to save people temporally and make them prosperous and happy here, cannot be depended upon to save them spiritually, to exalt them in the life to come.”<sup>6</sup>

We should not be surprised, then, that by strengthening the temporal, we also strengthen the spiritual. Elder David and Sister Theresa Nish, who served as self-reliance missionaries in the Solomon Islands, saw that correlation firsthand among members of the Church there.

“Spiritual growth and temple attendance are clearly attributed to the principles, skills, and habits taught in *My Foundation* and to the comprehensive explanation in *My Path to Self-Reliance*,” they say of the initiative’s booklets. “[They] are helping people make spiritual as well

as temporal progress, leading to spiritual and temporal self-reliance.”

Cheryl Redd, a self-reliance facilitator in Utah, USA, explains how the initiative’s spiritual principles have helped her progress temporally: “I realized that these principles and foundations can apply to all aspects of our lives. These workshops have helped me become more focused on my responsibilities as a wife and mother. I now have the tools to better understand family finances. I see how working together with our spouses to manage finances is, in a way, a business. We need these tools for our families to succeed.”

Throughout the Church, this increased vision is translating into increased faithfulness and spiritual strength. As a result, members have increased their commitments to attend church, pay tithes, and remain temple worthy.

“It caught my attention,” says new member George Echevarría of the self-reliance initiative. George, who drives a taxi in Peru, says the initiative helped him gain a testimony of the gospel while filling him with a desire to improve himself. Now he hopes to become an electrician, fixing the small moto-taxis he has driven for years.

“We shouldn’t sit and wait for things to happen to us,” he says. “We should be proactive.”



### “Your Life Will Be Blessed”

Latter-day Saints throughout the world are reaping the Lord’s promised blessings as they diligently learn, live, and apply the principles of spiritual and temporal self-reliance. While everyone can benefit, the initiative has especially blessed those who either lack or need strengthening in temporal and spiritual self-reliance. The Perpetual Education Fund supports the self-reliance initiative by helping those who have a plan for educational training to access necessary resources.

The scriptures promise the Lord’s help as we work toward self-reliance. He has said, “It is my purpose to provide for my saints” (D&C 104:15).

Commenting on that purpose, the First Presidency has declared: “This revelation is a promise from the Lord that He will provide temporal blessings and open the door of self-reliance, which is the ability for us to provide the necessities of life for ourselves and our family members.”

As we study, apply, and teach these principles to family members, the First Presidency promises, “your life will be



### THE ESSENCE OF OUR RELIGION

“Like two sides of a coin, the temporal and spiritual are inseparable. . . .

“This work of providing in the Lord’s way is not simply another item in the catalog of programs of the Church.

It cannot be neglected or set aside. It is central to our doctrine; it is the essence of our religion.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Providing in the Lord’s Way,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 53, 55–56.

blessed. You will learn how to act on your path toward greater self-reliance. You will be blessed with greater hope, peace, and progress.”<sup>7</sup> ■

#### NOTES

1. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 6.1.1.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Guiding Principles of Personal and Family Welfare,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1986, 3; see also Marion G. Romney, in Welfare Services Meeting Report, Oct. 2, 1976, 13.
3. First Presidency, in *My Foundation: Principles, Skills, Habits* (booklet, 2015), 2.
4. Robert D. Hales, “A Gospel Vision of Welfare: Faith in Action,” in *Basic Principles of Welfare and Self-Reliance* (booklet, 2009), 2.
5. *You’re Invited: An Overview of Self-Reliance Services for Priesthood Leaders* (booklet, 2016), 11.
6. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 164.
7. First Presidency, in *My Foundation*, 2.



"My daughter has been inactive for 10 years, and I thought I'd never get her back, but I asked her to do the first lesson with me in *My Foundation*, and now **she wants to do all the lessons and wants to come back to church with me.**"

— UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

"Being in the self-reliance group is a **joy that I have never known.** It is light. It changes my relationship with my weaknesses—I know they will soon be my strengths!"

— UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

"A neighbor was invited to one of the self-reliance classes. They loved it so much. **For years we tried to teach them the gospel, but not until they came to our self-reliance classes were they interested.** Their extended family was skeptical, but they are now all investigating the Church."

— HAITI

"I think that **self-reliance is the Noah's ark of the present times.** If we aren't self-reliant spiritually or temporally, we're going to struggle."

— ECUADOR

"I know that this comes from Christ. I have worked with this; I have lived it. I have seen miracles. It's important that we **continue to move forward.**"

— VENEZUELA

"I trusted the process the moment I studied the manuals and material. . . . **The basis of the self-reliance initiative is working as a team,** with everyone helping each other. . . . It is truly inspired and has to come from the Lord."

— SCOTLAND

"A husband is now treating his wife and children better, and their business has progressed because he is applying what he learned at the self-reliance group about **becoming one and working together.**"


— CAPE VERDE

"The program is inspired, and **the Lord's hand is behind it** because it has been blessing the members. I have never seen anything like this. I have also applied the principles in my life and in my family to help them."

— BRAZIL

## SELF-RELIANCE PARTICIPANTS' QUOTES FROM AROUND THE WORLD





"Every day in the self-reliance course, **I am motivated to follow Christ more intensively.**"

— GERMANY

"After attending the group meetings, **my income increased** by almost seven times."

— RUSSIA

"**I started a small vehicle-parking business** and also increased my beehive business from 16 to 63 beehives."

— ARMENIA

"We can call ourselves truly self-reliant only when we are able to extend a hand to **lift the sick and needy.**"

— GHANA

"Many people think they are self-reliant when they are not. This booklet, *My Path*, **will awaken everyone.**"

— DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

"The self-reliance initiative has helped me **build my confidence to go back to school**, because going back after not having gone to school in a long time can be really scary. Through the Spirit and because of this initiative, I know that I have nothing to fear."

— BOTSWANA

"The courses galvanize and unite the ward. Members are talking to each other, serving each other, infusing each other with the **success each is having.**"

— SOUTH AFRICA

"**The Lord has prepared a way to help us in every challenge in life.**

He wants us to overcome all of them so when we look back on our lives, we can see how meaningful our lives have been."

— HONG KONG

"It's different than I thought it would be. It's not about starting a business; it's about changing people inside out! **This initiative is changing people.** Once they are through the course, they get it!"

— PHILIPPINES

"Having this self-reliance course **helped me find my way when I felt lost** in my life. It gave me the foundation I needed to make something out of myself."

— NEW ZEALAND

"A couple came to the Starting and Growing My Business group because they were receiving fast-offering assistance. In just four weeks, they are now **excited, showing up early, and have started a business.**"

— AUSTRALIA







# Finding Help after Nancy's Death

*What did I need to do in order to activate  
Jesus Christ's healing power in my life?*

By Darren Wilcox

In February of 2016, my wife Nancy passed away after an 11-year struggle with breast cancer. The overwhelming grief I felt in the first months after she died would be impossible to describe to one who has not experienced this kind of a loss. Sorrow, anguish, misery, pain—none of these words do it justice. It was unbearable.

## The Savior's Healing Power

I have long understood that Jesus Christ “descended below all things” (D&C 88:6) so that He would be able “to succor [give relief or aid to] his people according to their infirmities” (Alma 7:12). This means that the power of the Savior's Atonement extends beyond providing for the Resurrection and for the redemption from sins. Through this power, He can also heal us in our times of suffering and need. In my grief, I urgently—almost frantically—tried to learn what I needed to do to activate this aspect of the Savior's power in my life. For weeks I searched the scriptures and talks by the General Authorities of the Church. I sincerely believed that, at the cost of considerable pain and sacrifice to Himself, the Savior knew the pain I was experiencing. But how did His knowing that help me? Since He suffered this *for* me, what did I need to do to receive the succoring that He thereby knows how to provide?

After much searching, study, prayer, and temple worship, I began to understand. First of all, I started to see more clearly that the Lord already had been succoring, comforting,

and supporting our family, especially in the weeks leading up to Nancy's death. There were marvelous spiritual experiences that I now recognize to be blessings that come from the healing and strengthening power available to us because of the Savior's Atonement. And just knowing that the Savior was already taking care of us in a very individualized way was, in and of itself, immensely comforting. Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego of old, He has been with us in the “fiery furnace” (Daniel 3:17) of our affliction.

## Trust in the Lord

I also learned that there are some things required of us in order to receive the Lord's comfort and healing. Most importantly, we have to trust in Him. That can be a difficult thing to do. Why should I trust in God when He could have prevented Nancy's death in the first place? In answer to this question, I continually ponder something that the Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“Ye cannot behold with your natural eyes, for the present time, the design of your God concerning those things which shall come hereafter, and the glory which shall follow after much tribulation” (D&C 58:3).

We were blessed with many signs that the manner and timing of Nancy's death were according to the Lord's will. I have come to understand that an omniscient and loving Father has allowed us to suffer these things because, in His perfect design for our family's exaltation, this affliction is



ILLUSTRATION OF ATLANTA GEORGIA TEMPLE

somehow necessary. Knowing that, I understand that my part in His design is not just to endure it but to “endure it well” (D&C 121:8). To the extent that I can consecrate this tribulation to Him, I will be not only succored but also sanctified. I have already experienced this in many ways.

I have counseled our children to do what I have learned in this process myself:

- Let the pain of hard experiences drive you toward greater discipleship.
- Pour out your heart in prayer.
- If you feel anger toward God for allowing tragedies to happen, beseech Him to replace that anger with faith and submission.
- Covenant that you will love Him and be faithful to the end.
- Drink from the word of God constantly—from the scriptures and talks and writings of modern prophets and inspired teachers.
- Go to the temple with a hunger to be taught the things of eternity.
- Find people for whom a personal crisis is becoming a crisis of faith, and strengthen them with your testimony of these doctrines.

### **An Apostolic Witness**

Approximately a month after Nancy’s death, there came a night when the grief I felt was absolutely crushing. I had been in very deep pain and sorrow all of that day. I remembered Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles teaching that “the path of salvation has always led . . . through Gethsemane.”<sup>1</sup> Though my suffering can’t be compared to the Savior’s, that night I was in the midst of my own “dark and bitter hours.”<sup>2</sup>

After experiencing this for some time and praying for help, there came into my mind something that I had read and bookmarked on my computer several years before. I located the document and scrolled down to what I was looking for. It was an interview with Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (1928–2015) in which he was asked about losing his wife, Jeanene, to cancer in 1995. Elder Scott responded, “First of all, . . . I didn’t lose her. She’s on the other side of the veil. We’ve been sealed in that holy ordinance of the temple, and we’ll be together forever.”<sup>3</sup>

That night those words came with a power that I have never felt before. It was like a lighthouse beacon being switched on in a dark night. I have never read something that had such a sudden and profound effect on me. The



darkness and the pain were gone. It was like Alma when he could “remember [his] pains no more” (Alma 36:19). This apostolic witness penetrated me to the very core. I marveled that a concept I had understood since childhood could suddenly seem so remarkable. I found myself wondering how it was possible that Elder Scott could know something like this. And in the moment, I realized that I know it too. If I am faithful, I can have all of the hope that Elder Scott had. While there has certainly been sadness and mourning since then, I have never again felt the depths of pain and sorrow that I experienced that night.

This is the power the Savior extends to us to succor us in our trials. I know that our family’s grief will never completely disappear, but it becomes swallowed up in what have been called the “strengthening” and “perfecting” blessings of the Savior’s Atonement.<sup>4</sup> We have drawn nearer to the Savior, have felt His assurances, and have been sustained by the certain foundation of our covenants. ■

*The author lives in Georgia, USA.*

**NOTES**

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Lessons from Liberty Jail” (Brigham Young University devotional, Sept. 7, 2008), 6, [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Encircled in His Gentle Arms,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2015, 5.
3. “A Sure Witness of Jesus Christ: Elder Richard G. Scott,” [lds.org/prophets-and-apostles](http://lds.org/prophets-and-apostles).
4. See Bruce C. Hafen and Marie K. Hafen, *The Contrite Spirit: How the Temple Helps Us Apply Christ’s Atonement* (2015), 34–52.



**After an 11-year battle with breast cancer, Nancy Jean Newton Wilcox passed away in 2016.**



**STRENGTHENED BY JESUS CHRIST**

“Isaiah taught that the Messiah would bear our ‘griefs’ and our ‘sorrows’ (Isaiah 53:4). Isaiah also taught of His strengthening us: ‘Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee’ (Isaiah 41:10). . . .

“And so we see that because of His Atonement, the Savior has the power to succor—to help—every mortal pain and affliction. Sometimes His power heals an infirmity, but the scriptures and our experiences teach that sometimes He succors or helps by giving us the strength or patience to endure our infirmities. . . .

“. . . Our Savior’s Atonement does more than assure us of immortality by a universal resurrection and give us the opportunity to be cleansed from sin by repentance and baptism. His Atonement also provides the opportunity to call upon Him who has experienced all of our mortal infirmities to give us the strength to bear the burdens of mortality. He knows of our anguish, and He is there for us. Like the good Samaritan, when He finds us wounded at the wayside, He will bind up our wounds and care for us (see Luke 10:34). The healing and strengthening power of Jesus Christ and His Atonement is for all of us who will ask. I testify of that as I also testify of our Savior, who makes it all possible.”

**Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Strengthened by the Atonement of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 62, 64.**



By Elder  
W. Craig Zwick  
Of the Seventy

# Jesus Christ:

## OUR SURE FOUNDATION

*I bear witness that the Savior lives, that He knows you, and that you can know Him as you listen to the Holy Ghost, nurture your faith, keep the commandments, and follow the prophets.*

Not long ago my wife and I took a road trip to southern Utah with our oldest son, Scott. Scott was born with special needs, but his happy spirit blesses our family.

Scott loves to have our attention. His personality is such that he always asks a lot of questions. But on this occasion, instead of being talkative, he became pensive and quiet. We observed that he was looking out a window, thinking. After a while, he said, “Dad, do you know Jesus?”

That’s a powerful question, which recognizes that part of life’s purpose and the lasting joy we experience in mortality has much to do with knowing Jesus (see D&C 101:36). In our premortal life, we were in His presence and in the presence of God the Father. We undoubtedly shed tears of joy and separation when we left Them after making our choice to come to earth.

Heavenly Father appointed a Savior to redeem us. “As the Lord God liveth,” Nephi said, “there is none other name given under heaven save it be this Jesus Christ, of which I have spoken, whereby man can be saved” (2 Nephi 25:20).

### A Sure Foundation

In the fifth chapter of Helaman we learn something about the powerful foundation of Jesus Christ: “And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must

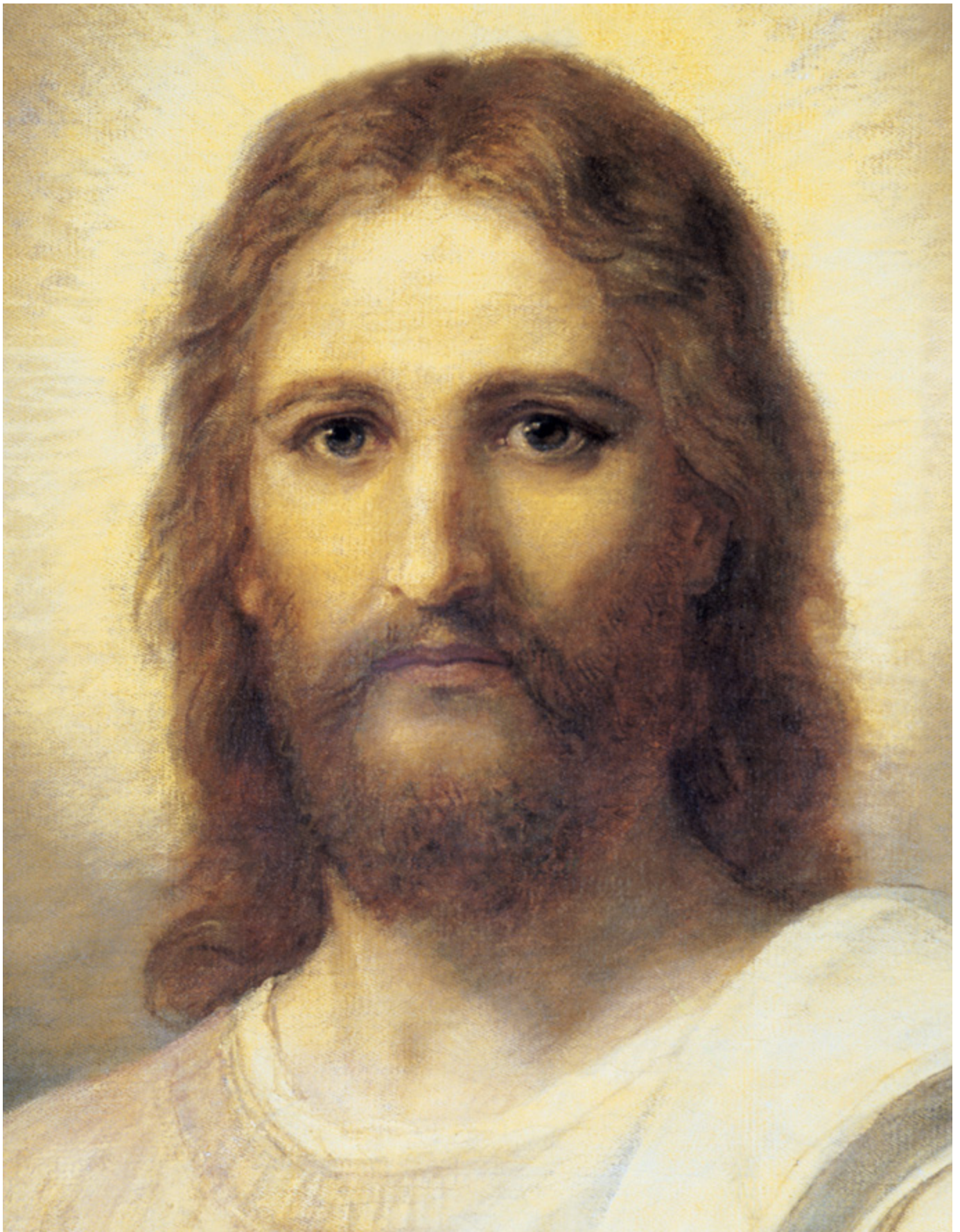
build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation” (Helaman 5:12).

Before my calling as a General Authority, I owned and operated a commercial construction company for many years. One of the projects we completed was the Portland Oregon Temple. When we began preparing that site to develop the foundation of the temple, Oregon was experiencing torrential rainfall. Nine inches of rain fell in a single day.

To build a structure as significant as the Portland temple required secure anchorage, even down to the bedrock. A common foundation would not have been adequate because the saturated soils would not accept the bearing of the building. So an adjustment was made in the design, and pilings were drilled all the way to “zero resistance”—that is, to the bedrock. It was on that solid foundation that the temple was built. The adjustment was critical.

I submit that now may be the time for you to make adjustments—perhaps minor, perhaps major—in your own foundation so that you can be anchored in such a way that your pattern of integrity and spiritual structural design will







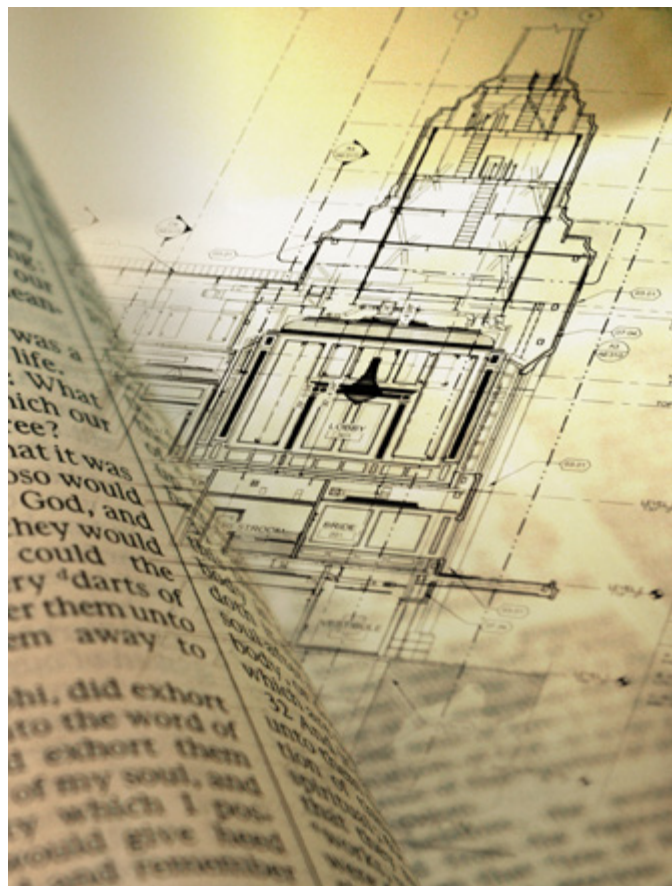
never fail. In that way, the wiles of the devil and any seismic motion in your life will have no impact or capacity to destroy you.

How can we build our lives upon the sure foundation of Jesus Christ? I'd like to discuss four critical ways we might create or strengthen that sure foundation.

### Listen to the Holy Ghost

We must seek the companionship of the Holy Ghost. I think the key element in doing so is to listen. Whether on your knees, in the temple, at church, in the scriptures, or during general conference, listen as the Holy Ghost testifies of Christ and gives you greater clarity about the necessary adjustments you need to make in your life.

“When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth



from the Father, he shall testify of me” (John 15:26).

Those are words of the Savior Jesus Christ—our sure foundation—encouraging us to know Him better by listening and responding to the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost gives insightful understanding into the attributes of the Savior, and as we listen to the Holy Ghost and study the Savior's life and attributes, we will gain an even greater witness of Him.

### Nurture Your Faith

Nurture your faith with daily prayer and daily scripture study. And while you're at it, nurture others.

I am grateful for the clear instruction in the Gospel of John: “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39). Once again the Savior gives us His own indication for making an adjustment: search the scriptures.

In the book of Helaman, the faithful people of Zarahemla are taught a clear principle. That principle—purifying our hearts and yielding them to God—happens a little at a time. Sanctification requires daily pondering, daily prayer, and daily engagement with the scriptures and the words of the prophets.

The faithful people of Zarahemla fasted and prayed often. As a result they “did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts, which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God” (Helaman 3:35).

Some 50 years ago, in 1967, I was a missionary in a remote little village called Chacopampa, Bolivia. My companion and I had little experience, but we were faithful, learned from the people, and did our best. Every day we prayed and sought counsel from the scriptures.

Late one evening we got a knock on the door of our adobe home. We opened the door to find Miguel, a faithful brother from the community but not a member of the Church, standing there. We could not easily identify him because his face and body were covered in blood.



We invited him in and could quickly see that he had suffered a severe head wound. We had never seen anything like it before and didn't know what to do. The closest city with any medical support was 25 miles away, and we had no transportation. I'd had a little first-aid experience, but the two of us had to depend on the Lord for guidance, so we prayed for His help. Then we opened our first-aid kit—for the first time—and found right on top a vial of topical pain reliever to numb the wound. We also found some fine line to sew up the wound. So that's what we did. We applied the pain reliever and stitched up Miguel's head.

Miguel appreciated the fact that we depended on the Lord. His life was saved—not because of the preparation or experience of two missionaries but because the Lord guided us and because Miguel's future in that first branch of the Lord's Church in Chacopampa was so critical.

### Keep the Commandments

Keep your thoughts clean and clear. Know what the Lord expects of you, and as you gain deeper insight into His expectations, be prepared and qualified to follow direction. You will become more like Him as you keep the commandments.

As we ponder and pray, as we nurture our faith and seek the Holy Ghost, and as we faithfully keep the commandments, we can actually receive the image of God in our countenances (see Alma 5:14).

I know that there are temptations all around us. But we must be faithful, and we must strengthen our foundation by worthily partaking of the sacrament each week. There is, in fact, protection in all of the ordinances, and we must participate worthily. I am grateful for 1 John 2:3: "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments."

### TO STRENGTHEN YOUR FOUNDATION

1. Listen to the Holy Ghost.
2. Nurture your faith.
3. Keep the commandments.
4. Follow the prophets.

### Follow the Prophets

It is our sacred privilege to raise our hands every six months during general conference to sustain President Thomas S. Monson, his counselors in the First Presidency, and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and reve-

lators. We know that the Lord has prepared these 15 men to lead His Church. I witness that this is true.

When you raise your hand to sustain the Lord's anointed, what enters your mind and heart? Think about that. Your foundation will not fail when you are diligent in following and sustaining the prophets.

I return to Scott's question: "Dad, do you know Jesus?"

Yes, I know my Savior. I bear witness that He lives, that He knows you, and that you can know Him as you listen to the Holy Ghost, nurture your faith, keep the commandments, and follow the prophets. ■

*From a devotional address, "Dad, Do You Know Jesus?" delivered at Brigham Young University–Hawaii on April 15, 2008. For the full address, go to [devotional.byuh.edu/archive](http://devotional.byuh.edu/archive).*



### CONSTRUCTING OUR LIVES UPON THE FOUNDATION OF CHRIST

"Ordinances and covenants are the building blocks we use to construct our lives upon the foundation of Christ and His Atonement. We are connected securely to and with the Savior as we worthily receive ordinances and enter into covenants, faithfully remember and honor those sacred commitments, and do our best to live in accordance with the obligations we have accepted."

**Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Therefore They Hushed Their Fears," *Ensign*, May 2015, 48.**

# The Gifts of a Broken Heart

*The pain in my broken heart was softened as spiritual gifts helped me heal.*

By Kim Webb Reid

I met Daniel on the school playground in sixth grade. After years of friendship, my feelings for him developed into love, and I was thrilled when I discovered he felt the same way about me. Following his mission, we dated, then started discussing marriage and tentatively selected a date. During the course of our relationship I had prayed, studied my patriarchal blessing, and received an unmistakable spiritual impression that Daniel was someone I could marry. Simultaneously, I felt a strong confirmation of Heavenly Father's love for me. I had never been so happy. I was certain my childhood friend would become my eternal companion.

The only problem was this: Daniel broke up with me.

For months I felt lost. No matter how hard I tried to get a grip, questions cycled through my mind: If Heavenly Father loved me, why did He guide me to marry Daniel and then allow the relationship to end so painfully? Could I trust my ability to discern the Spirit? Even though I understood the principle of agency superficially, deep down I still wondered why the Lord would not intervene and soften Daniel's heart.

Instead, the Lord softened mine. I gained valuable gifts from having a broken heart.

## The Gift of Empathy

I once heard a professor from Brigham Young University, James D. Stice, recount the story of helping his six-year-old daughter clean up her room. After trying for hours to clean it up by herself, she said "with big, tear-filled brown eyes, . . . 'Daddy, it's too hard.'" Reflecting on this experience, Professor Stice said: "The weight of a six-year-old's world can get very heavy—to a six-year-old. She did not want to hear me say, 'I could clean this room up in five minutes' or 'When I was your age . . . ' At that moment the weight was too much, and she needed relief."<sup>1</sup>

So did I. No matter how trivial my plight may have appeared to others, my sadness was real and I needed help. Such help came from understanding friends and family members. They assured me of my worthiness to understand spiritual guidance despite my confusion over the promptings I'd received. Their expressions of faith in the Lord and in my capacities were exactly the boost I needed.

At times loved ones showed concern because I wasn't "over it" yet. Though I know they simply wanted me to be happy, I felt that they didn't understand the depth of my sadness. I knew I'd reacted similarly with seeming apathy to friends' breakups in the past. Before experiencing it for myself, I had assumed that the ending of a dating







relationship was on the minor end of the trial spectrum.

I'm still far from being perfectly compassionate, but I know my heart is changing. In recent years I have been able to offer a more sincere listening ear to friends enduring sadness, illness, or loneliness. I'm grateful that breaking up taught me I may never fully understand the weight of someone else's burden. The best I can do is prayerfully try to help carry it.

### The Gift of Confidence

After knowing Daniel for almost 10 years, I had to reevaluate who I was without his influence in my life. It hurt to notice myself using expressions I'd picked up from him, hear music we'd enjoyed together, or see mutual friends. To stop reminding myself of the pain, I nurtured other friendships and immersed myself in studying the gospel.

In a way that didn't seem possible before, I developed a sense of worth and security independent from the acceptance of others. I came to value my personality and talents because God had given them to me and not because I believed they had earned someone else's love. This perspective helped me to be more courageous and optimistic in all facets of my life. Being given the opportunity to develop a stronger emotional foundation and a better relationship with the Lord made possible every good thing in my life since.

### The Gift of Patience

For months I prayed for instructions on how *I* could stop hurting and what *I* needed to do—in other words, how *I* could have more control over what was happening. I knew I was responsible for how I reacted to my trials, but I wanted to be responsible for more than my behavior. I also wanted to control

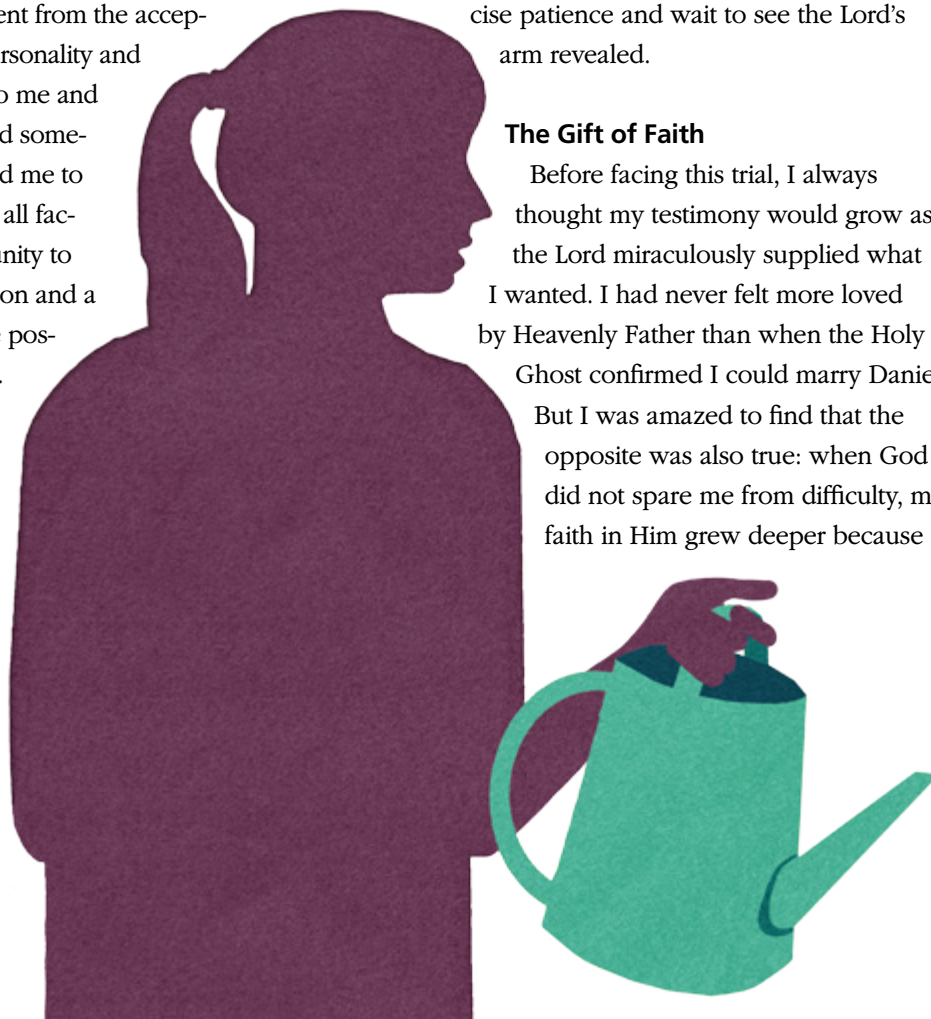
the pain. Many attempts to decide that I was all better only set me up for disappointment and a feeling of failure when I stumbled upon additional hard days.

Finally, one day as the Christmas season approached, I noticed how peaceful I felt. Over the weeks, that feeling grew. The instructions I had prayed for never came, but happiness did. Being healed was much like the changing of seasons, a patience-inspiring process I couldn't rush. I gained a testimony that the Savior truly grants peace that passes understanding (see Philippians 4:7) because at the appropriate time, He performed that miracle for me. I didn't understand what the passage of time was accomplishing in me, but all along the Lord was healing me. When my endurance yielded a small measure of patience, Heavenly Father's peace poured out upon me.

Now I realize I can't always perfectly control how I feel or plan every detail of my future. I'm more content to exercise patience and wait to see the Lord's arm revealed.

### The Gift of Faith

Before facing this trial, I always thought my testimony would grow as the Lord miraculously supplied what I wanted. I had never felt more loved by Heavenly Father than when the Holy Ghost confirmed I could marry Daniel. But I was amazed to find that the opposite was also true: when God did not spare me from difficulty, my faith in Him grew deeper because I







## HE WILL HEAL OUR BROKEN HEARTS

“When sore trials come upon us, it’s time to deepen our faith in God, to work hard, and to serve others. Then He will heal our broken hearts. He will bestow upon us personal peace (see John 14:27) and comfort (see Isaiah 40:1).”

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Jesus Christ—the Master Healer,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 87.

had to choose whether or not I would continue trusting Him. Hence my faith could no longer be dependent on the sandy foundation of life going smoothly. My testimony became more rooted in the Savior Himself, in trusting Him, and in accepting the will of my Heavenly Father.

As my faith grew stronger, I stopped wondering if I had misinterpreted spiritual communications. I knew I could not deny what the Spirit had impressed upon me, but I also realized that my personal revelation had not disclosed what Daniel’s choices would be or how the Lord would use them for my benefit. That information was beyond my sphere. I was entitled to receive instructions for only myself. Moving forward on following those promptings didn’t yield the kinds of blessings I was expecting, but it’s easy to see now that the Lord supplied even better blessings.

### The Gift of Forgiveness

As I was healed, genuine forgiveness filled my heart. I had spent many weeks examining both Daniel and myself to see who was more at fault for the end of our relationship. I wanted to find the answers and thus protect myself from making painful mistakes in the future. But as long as I sought to unravel what had gone wrong by assigning blame, I didn’t solve anything. I only made it harder to forgive Daniel, and I loathed myself because I was dwelling on my imperfections.

Welcoming forgiving feelings when they came allowed me to see both Daniel’s and my actions from a more charitable perspective. I forgave myself and understood Daniel better. I came to see our ended relationship not as a tragedy but as a success—a vital learning experience in which we both did

our best with the knowledge and experience we had at the time.

Now I better understand why the Lord requires us to forgive. When we learn not to focus on blame, we love others more *and* are kinder with ourselves.

### The Gift of Experience

Over the next five years, I became involved in a few more serious dating relationships. In each one, I felt that everything was going well on the surface, but I couldn't shake an inexplicable sense of emptiness that prevented me from moving toward marriage. Discouraged, I began wondering if I'd ever be able to recognize who was right for me.

Then I came across some of Daniel's old letters I thought I had thrown out. As I read them, I remembered the unparalleled spiritual, emotional, and intellectual compatibility I had experienced in that relationship. Those memories were pivotal in helping me approach dating with a much more prayerful attitude. I prayed to know how I could feel an equal or greater sense of compatibility with the right person than I had already felt with Daniel. Answers to those sincere prayers guided me to start dating someone new—a good friend I had overlooked because he was “just a friend.” We understood each other well. We valued the same things in life. We shared the same sense of humor. As our relationship deepened, we decided to share our lives together too.

I can't help but wonder if I would have known whom I should marry if the Lord had not given me opportunities to learn through my experiences first. Instead of finally discerning all the reasons Daniel was wrong for me, as I originally assumed would happen, my experiences led me to discern exactly why my husband, Russ, is the best match.

### A Softened Heart

I can testify of the Savior's ability to “bind up the brokenhearted” (Isaiah 61:1). My broken heart was not only softened; it was also strengthened. After my first

heartbreak, I received strength to love *more* and trust *more* than I had before, not less. This miracle is one of many evidences that teach me about the limitless power of the Savior's Atonement.

I would not have volunteered to learn vital qualities through pain, but I recognize valuable gifts that resulted from one unhappy experience. Heavenly Father knew what I was lacking and what I would need to serve Him better. He also prepared me to be a good spouse for my eternal companion. I'm grateful to Heavenly Father for tutoring me through a season of grief. The feelings of sadness are long past, but I know the gifts I received during that time can benefit me throughout my life. ■

*The author lives in Virginia, USA.*

#### NOTE

1. James D. Stice, “The Weight of the World” (Brigham Young University devotional, Oct. 2, 2001), 3, [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).







## Receiving Personal Revelation

By Sharon Nauta Steele

*A sweet breeze rustles the leaves  
of my quaking aspen tree.  
I see them flutter—  
silver ripples on white branches—  
and know that spring is moving  
into summer.*

*I am no newcomer  
to subtleties of season,  
and my reason for standing here  
near windows opening on sky  
is to feel and know God's whisperings—  
as soothing, soft, and kind  
as wafts of warm, fresh air.  
I feel His promptings in my mind  
and know beyond a shadow He is there.*





*"My traditions were such, that when the Vision came first to me, it was directly contrary and opposed to my former education. I said, 'Wait a little.' I did not reject it, but I could not understand it." —President Brigham Young*



# The Triumph and Glory of the Lamb

DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS 76

*“The Vision” is a dramatic witness to the expansiveness of Christ’s saving work.*

**By J. Spencer Fluhman**

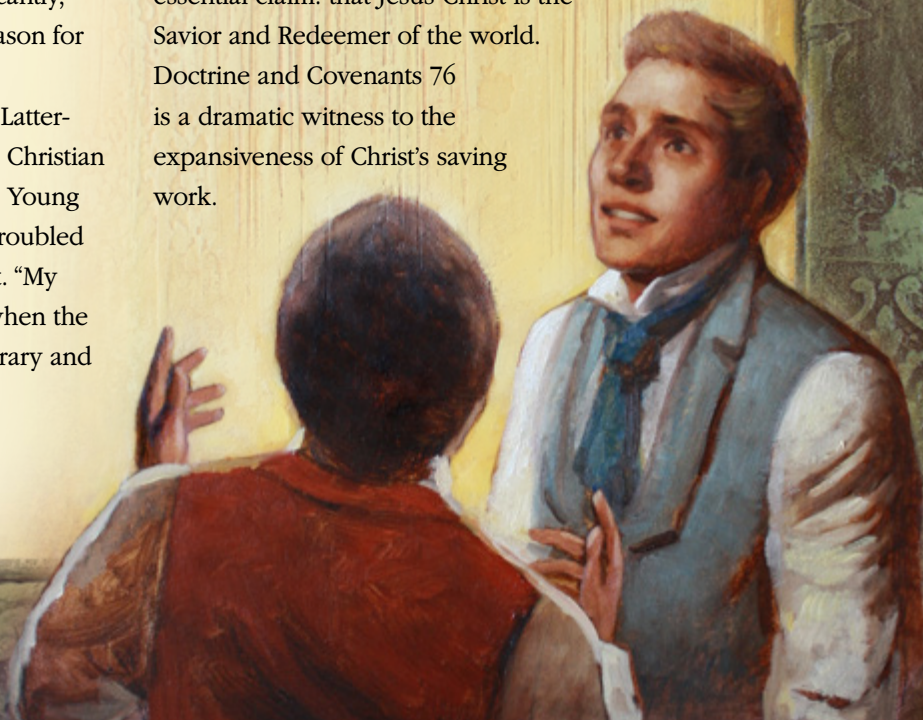
Executive Director, Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, Brigham Young University

**K**nown to many early Latter-day Saints simply as “the Vision,” the Church has long treasured Doctrine and Covenants 76 as a revelation of profound doctrinal significance. It frames our view of life after death and the eternities. It expands our sense of human possibilities. It raises our hope for immortality and eternal life. Most significantly, it establishes the Lord Jesus Christ as the reason for that hope.

Even so, the revelation challenged early Latter-day Saints because it overturned traditional Christian ideas about the afterlife. President Brigham Young (1801–77), for instance, admitted to being troubled by the revelation when first encountering it. “My traditions were such,” he confessed, “that when the Vision came first to me, it was directly contrary and

opposed to my former education. I said, ‘Wait a little.’ I did not reject it, but I could not understand it.”<sup>1</sup>

Understanding why the early Saints found the revelation to be such a departure from traditional conceptions can help us better appreciate the Vision as the gift it is. Moreover, coming to understand its historical and theological context helps underscore its central message, which is also the Restoration’s essential claim: that Jesus Christ is the Savior and Redeemer of the world. Doctrine and Covenants 76 is a dramatic witness to the expansiveness of Christ’s saving work.





## Theological Debates and the Smith Family

Drawing on biblical passages, traditional Christian communities were convinced of an afterlife where faithful believers would dwell with God in heaven. Even so, Christians disagreed about how one got to heaven or what existence there might entail. Among the most prominent early American Christians were those who traced their theological heritage to John Calvin (1509–64), the French Protestant reformer. Many Calvinists believed that before the world’s Creation, God “predestined” some for salvation in an act of divine favor, or grace. Some Calvinist theologians hesitated to declare with certainty who would be in heaven, leaving the question to God. Even so, many ordinary believers embraced a sovereign God who saved His creations in a heaven populated by only a select few. By 1800, the United States’ religious scene was diverse and changing, but Calvinists were among the most numerous and influential Christians.

Some American Christians disagreed with these main currents of Calvinist teaching, however. A grassroots movement known as Universalism came to different conclusions. For Universalist preachers, God’s power must be viewed in tandem with other divine attributes, such as His matchless patience, mercy, and love. Given these attributes, they argued, what would keep God from eventually saving *all* His creations? For the Universalists, Christ’s sacrifice effectively contradicted what they considered to be a dim, anxiety-ridden, and hope-sapping Calvinist position on heaven. Critics argued back that Universalists ignored divine justice,


discounted biblical passages related to hell, and downplayed moral responsibility with the idea of universal salvation.<sup>2</sup>

Joseph Smith Jr.’s family was not untouched by these theological disputes. For instance, his grandfather Asael Smith adopted Universalism. In 1799, Asael wrote of his religious convictions to his family, poignantly conveying the logic of Universalism in the language of Christ’s grace: “If you can believe that Christ [came] to save sinners, and not the righteous, Pharisees, or self-righteous, that sinners must be saved by the righteousness of Christ alone, without mixing any of their own righteousness with His, then you will see that He can as well save all, as any.”

Asael’s convictions influenced his son Joseph Smith Sr. as well. Joseph and his brother Jesse joined their father in petitioning the Tunbridge, Vermont, USA, town clerk for an exemption from ecclesiastical taxes in 1797 as members of the “Tunbridge Universalist Society.” While never as committed a Universalist as his father, Joseph Sr. nevertheless seemed before 1830 to share his father’s hesitations about institutional Calvinism. He read the Bible and experienced inspired dreams but kept regular church attendance at arm’s length. He attended a Methodist church in Vermont with his wife, Lucy Mack Smith, but stopped after his attendance sparked sharp disapproval from his father and brother.

Later, Lucy joined a Presbyterian church in New York with several of the Smith children. When Joseph Sr. declined to join, Lucy felt concerned about the state of her husband’s soul. She had experienced a vivid spiritual witness of Christ’s Atonement in 1803, was later baptized, and associated with various ministers and churches. By 1811, Lucy worried that Joseph Sr. would reject organized religion altogether.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, Joseph Smith Jr. and his siblings were brought



**CALVINISTS** believed that before the world’s Creation, God “predestined” only a select few to be saved.

French theologian John Calvin





### A Revelatory Forerunner

With this historical context in place, it is clear that the Restoration's early revelations came amid these heated controversies between the Calvinists and Universalists. In particular, the revelation now appearing as Doctrine and Covenants 19 indirectly addressed the Universalist controversy and thus functions as something of a theological forerunner to the more expansive doctrinal contributions of Doctrine and Covenants 76.

In Doctrine and Covenants 19:1–4, the Lord announces Himself as “Alpha and Omega” and describes Himself as “endless.” There follows an explanation of endlessness, with special attention to the endlessness of divine judgment and punishment.

What emerges from verses 4–12 is a dramatic departure from Calvinist readings of the “endlessness” of God's punishment, however. In those verses, God's punishment is

up in a home with varied religious influences. Their parents' experiences with spiritual manifestations (dreams and the like) marked them as religious seekers. The Prophet famously rehearsed his religious confusion in his retrospective history, now canonized as “Joseph Smith—History,” but it is clear that his parents were

yearning for spiritual certainty, much as he was. Tellingly, they joined their son's restored Church and found with other early Saints the spiritual home they had long been seeking.<sup>4</sup>



**UNIVERSALISTS** came to a different conclusion than the Calvinists. Emphasizing God's matchless patience, mercy, and love, Universalist preachers argued that God would eventually save all His creations.

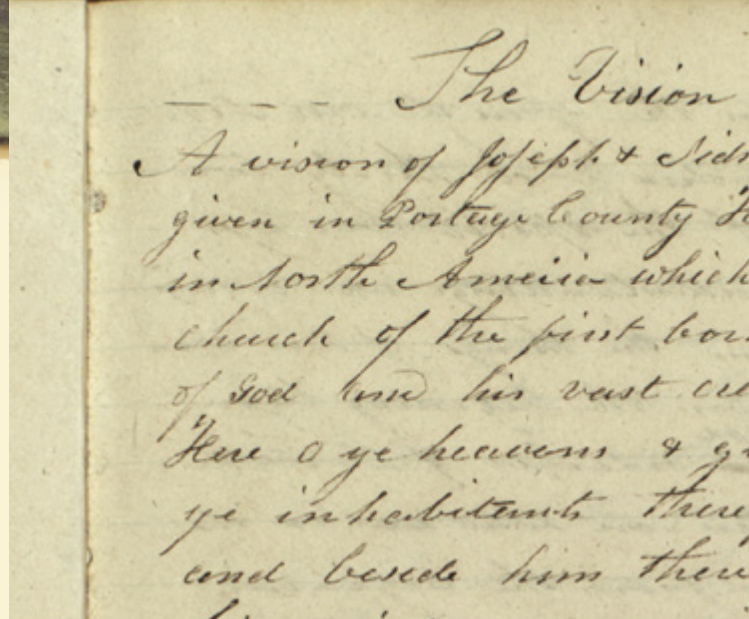
Universalist meetinghouse in Gloucester, Massachusetts



endless not because of its duration but because it issues from Him: “I am endless, and the punishment which is given from my hand is endless punishment, for Endless is my name” (verse 10). This revelation subtly upended the traditional Christian concept of “hell” by potentially limiting its duration. A temporary period of suffering for the wicked was a far cry from mainstream Calvinist understanding, in other words, and it resonated with Universalist convictions concerning the eventual salvation of all God’s children.

### The Vision

If the Lord’s revelation in Doctrine and Covenants 19 potentially shrank the traditional Christian hell, His revelation in Doctrine and Covenants 76 dramatically expanded the traditional Christian heaven. The net effect was an almost perfect inversion of Calvinist conceptions of the afterlife. Whereas generations of American Christians had envisioned a massive hell and a comparatively small heaven, early Latter-day Saints were heirs to a different vision: a heaven filled with almost the entire human family. Though the Vision directly engaged theological debates in Joseph Smith’s own culture, it has proven powerfully relevant in our day as well.



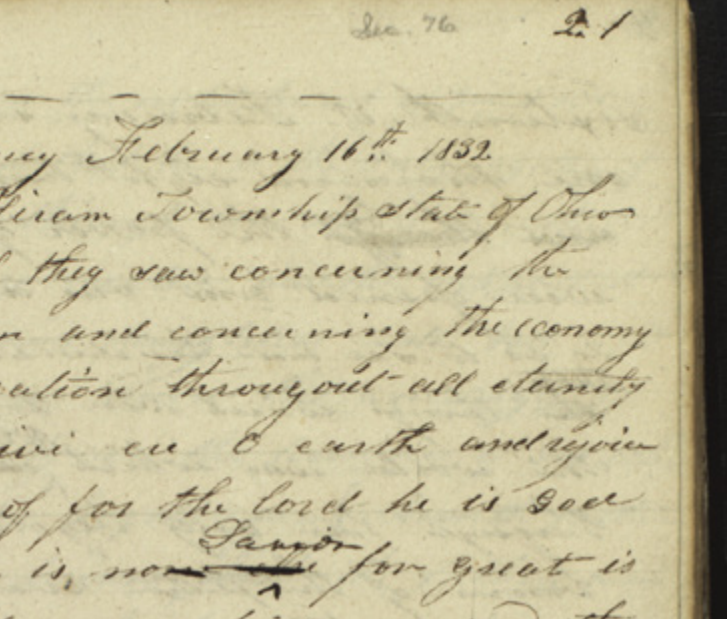
In what became Doctrine and Covenants 76, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon narrated their shared visionary experience of February 16, 1832. During that multi-hour vision, several other Church leaders looked on as the Prophet and his counselor described what they saw. (The Vision was prompted by the Prophet’s inspired translation of the New Testament, when he and Sidney were pondering the significance of John 5:29.) It remains unclear whether they wrote the revelation in pieces after each individual vision or at the conclusion of the experience in its entirety. According to the text, they were commanded to record the experience while “yet in the Spirit” (D&C 76:113).

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon bore witness to what they saw. The first of the visions was of the Son of God Himself. “We beheld the glory of the Son on the right hand of the Father . . . and saw the holy angels, and them who are sanctified before his throne, worshipping God, and the Lamb” (verses 20–21). Then they provided one of the prized testimonies in all of the Restoration’s sacred literature:

“And now, after the many testimonies which

*Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were pondering the significance of John 5:29 (about the Resurrection) when “the Lord touched the eyes of our understandings and they were opened, and the glory of the Lord shone round about” (D&C 76:19).*





To see a digital copy of the complete handwritten document, visit [josephsmithpapers.org](http://josephsmithpapers.org).

have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

“For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father” (verses 22–23).

What follows might seem out of place if read in isolation from the rest of the revelation. After the soaring language regarding Jesus Christ, the narrative plummets to describe “an angel of God . . . who rebelled against the Only Begotten Son.” The vision of Satan spans five verses, with chilling effect: “Wherefore, he maketh war with the saints of God, and encompasseth them round about” (verses 25–29). Immediately thereafter follows a similarly harrowing description of those who suffer “themselves through the power of the devil to be overcome, and to deny the truth and defy my power” (verse 31). These “sons of perdition” are detailed in verses 30–36.

Again, it might seem odd to crash from sublime heights to such depths were it not for what follows. In fact, those verses, 38–44, may constitute the Vision’s central message. Before the descriptions of the three

degrees of heavenly glory, which modern Saints often take as the stunning doctrinal contribution of the Vision, come what are—at least in historical context—possibly the more revolutionary teachings.

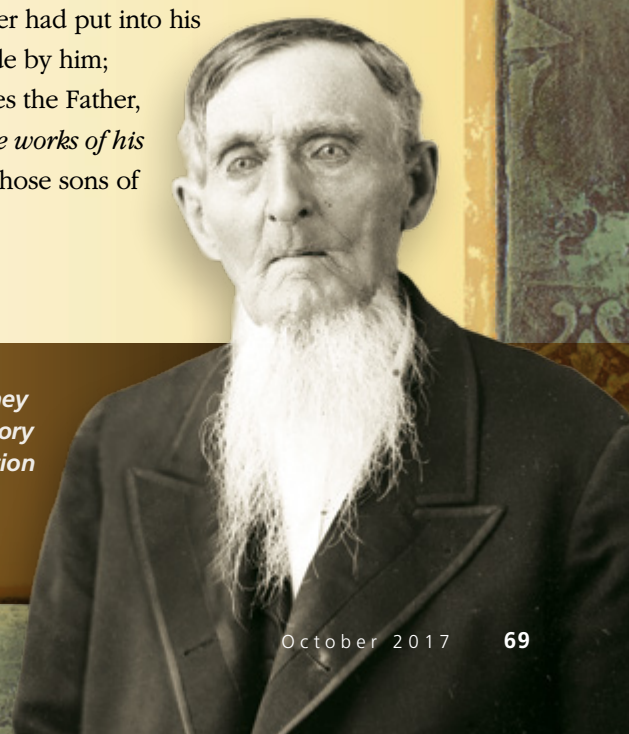
In short, the sons of perdition are a small exception to the glorious rule that nearly all of God’s children will enjoy a degree of glory in the next life. Verse 37 stresses that perdition’s sons are “the *only* ones on whom the second death shall have any power” (emphasis added). Verse 38 adds that they are “the *only* ones who shall not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord” (emphasis added). Finally, verse 39 concludes that all “shall be brought forth by the resurrection of the dead, through the triumph and the glory of the Lamb.” To underscore the magnitude of the Lamb’s “triumph and glory,” the language of the Prophet and his counselor again soars in testimony:

“And this is the gospel, the glad tidings, which the voice out of the heavens bore record unto us—

“That he came into the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness;

“That *through him all might be saved* whom the Father had put into his power and made by him;

“Who glorifies the Father, and *saves all the works of his hands*, except those sons of perdition. . . .



*Philo Dibble and as many as 12 others listened as the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon described what they saw. Brother Dibble recalled: “I saw the glory and felt the power, but did not see the vision. . . . Not a sound nor motion [was] made by anyone but Joseph and Sidney” (in Matthew McBride, “The Vision,” Revelations in Context [2016], 149).*

LEFT: ILLUSTRATION BY ANNIE HENRIE NADER; RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH OF PHILO DIBBLE BY GEORGE EDWARD ANDERSON, L. TOM PERRY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, HAROLD B. LEE LIBRARY, BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY, PROVO, UTAH



“Wherefore, *he saves all except them*” (verses 40–44; emphasis added).

Without a clear sense of the religious contexts in which the Smith family and other early Saints lived, we might not grasp the powerful effect of these passages. The verses describing the degrees of glory tease out the details of Christ’s saving work. Viewed from the early Saints’ perspective, the varied, individualized, and multi-tiered heaven of Doctrine and Covenants 76 is notable not so much in its segmented layers but in its breathtaking scope. Near-universal salvation in one of God’s kingdoms of glory is unquestionably the revelation’s priceless legacy.

Modern Saints understandably focus attention on the revelation’s heavenly “degrees” and tend to emphasize the description of celestial glory in verses 50–70. These verses provide Latter-day Saints a critical theological category in addition to salvation: exaltation. Doctrines related to exaltation found full expression in the Prophet’s last years and form some of the most distinctive LDS teachings. Doctrine and Covenants 76 is thus one of the texts grounding the LDS belief that women and men can become like their Heavenly Parents, an idea many traditional Christians find controversial in the extreme.

In the Vision, however, the idea is both proclaimed and *contained* by emphasis on Christ’s saving work. In verse 55, those who inherit celestial glory are described as those “into whose hands the Father has given all things.” In verse 58: “They are gods, even the sons of God.” Few Latter-day Saints at the time noted any particular shock at these verses, but within a few years, the Prophet’s subsequent teachings prompted Church leaders and writers to view these passages more literally and expansively.

As if to anticipate possible misapplication of them, however, verse 61 offers an interpretative caution: “Wherefore, let no man glory in man, but rather let him glory in God, who shall subdue all enemies under his feet.” A few verses later, that same point is made again, this time with reference to Christ’s Atonement. In a final stirring reference to the exalted, those who inherit celestial glory are described as “just men *made perfect through Jesus* the mediator of the new covenant, who wrought out this perfect atonement through the shedding of his own blood” (verse 69; emphasis added).<sup>5</sup>

Taken together, these unforgettable passages from the Vision amount to a distinctive yet recognizable doctrine of salvation. Like the early Universalists, we look forward to an expansive heaven where nearly all human beings are potentially encircled within the bounds of Christ’s saving work. Additionally, those who “overcome by faith,” who are “washed and cleansed from all their sins,” and who are “sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise” will be exalted and become like their

*“And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!”*

—Doctrine and Covenants 76:22







*The Vision frames our view of life after death and the eternities. It expands our sense of human possibilities. It raises our hope for immortality and eternal life. Most significantly, it establishes the Lord Jesus Christ as the reason for that hope.*

divine Parents (verses 52–53). They will be priestesses and queens, “priests and kings,” and will “dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever” (verses 56, 62). That the Latter-day Saints see exaltation in terms well beyond what most traditional Christians understand as “salvation” is clear enough. Even so, modern Saints inherit from Doctrine and Covenants 76 the conviction that even as we cling to a sense of human potential unique among the world’s Christians, we view that potential ever and

always in terms of the gifts earned for us through “the triumph and the glory of the Lamb” (verse 39). ■

#### NOTES

1. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 6:281; spelling, capitalization, and punctuation have been modernized.
2. For an overview of early American religion, see Peter W. Williams, *America’s Religions: From Their Origins to the Twenty-First Century*, 4th ed. (2015).
3. See “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1845,” 52–53, [josephsmithpapers.org](http://josephsmithpapers.org).
4. For more on the Smith family and the Asael Smith letter, see Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (2005), chapter 1. For Lucy Mack Smith’s perspectives, see “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1845,” [josephsmithpapers.org](http://josephsmithpapers.org).
5. For Latter-day Saint teachings on becoming like God, see “Becoming like God,” Gospel Topics, [topics.lds.org](http://topics.lds.org).



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

## “TEACH ME ABOUT THE TEMPLE”

Children have a natural affinity for beauty and love. No wonder their eyes light up when they see a temple—even before they understand much about the holy ordinances that take place there.

This month’s *Friend* will help your child look forward with joy and anticipation to the day when they can go inside the house of the Lord:

- “Teach Me about the Temple” (page 24). This beautiful new song will help parents and children alike keep their sights on preparing for the temple.
- “From Paris to Sapporo” (page 22). Children from Paris, France, and Sapporo, Japan, share their excitement and spiritual feelings as they watch new temples being built near their homes.
- This month’s CTR Challenge card (page 25) invites children to keep the temple in mind in four simple ways.
- “Finding Lydia” (page 32). Lydia looks forward to going to the temple even more when she finds the names of ancestors who need to be baptized.
- “Temple Trip Tips” (page 34). This loving, practical guide will help your child prepare for a temple experience without worry or apprehension.



Find stories, activities, and media about other gospel topics at [lessonhelps.lds.org](http://lessonhelps.lds.org). For past *Friend* Connection articles, visit [FriendConnection.lds.org](http://FriendConnection.lds.org).

### WORTHY, NOT PERFECT

The Mormon Tabernacle Choir sings a tender song that captures the welcoming invitation of a parent to a child:

*Come to my garden, rest there in my arms. . . .*

*Come to my garden, come, sweet child.<sup>1</sup>*

Sometimes people feel intimidated about going to the temple because they have the misperception that being worthy means being perfect. But we can help children understand from an early age that Heavenly Father is eager to welcome them to His holy house. They can see getting ready to go to the temple as a joyful and attainable process—much like going home to one’s own family.

Homes often have a rug or mat outside the door where we stop to make sure our feet are clean before going inside. The standards of worthiness are a check to make sure we are clean and ready to go inside and enjoy the comfort and peace of our Heavenly Father’s house—a home where we are loved and welcomed.

#### NOTE

1. Marsha Norman and Lucy Simon, “Come to My Garden” (1992).

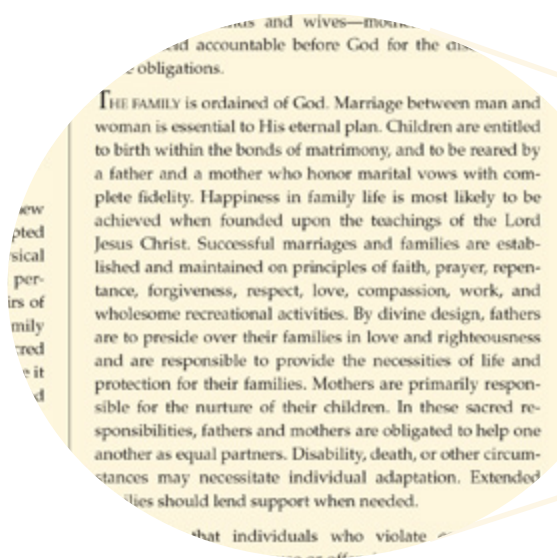


# TEACHING THE PROCLAMATION TO CHILDREN

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

## This Month's Selection

"The family is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities. By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed."



## How to Explain This to Children

Heavenly Father teaches us how families can be the most happy. He says children should be born to moms and dads who are married, love each other, and teach about Jesus Christ. Faith, prayer, kindness, and having fun together can all make your family stronger. Fathers and mothers both do important things. They work together to care for their families. Even if life doesn't go as planned, we should do the best we can to have a happy family.

## Activity Idea

Explain what "wholesome recreational activities" are, and then go do something fun!

### NOTE

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

Find other teaching tips and a copy of the family proclamation at [ProclamationKids.lds.org](http://ProclamationKids.lds.org).



*Service isn't always convenient, but as a father and a bishop, Ilir Dodaj has tried to show his children that it is always worth it.*

CODY BELL, PHOTOGRAPHER

## Ilir Dodaj

Durrës, Albania

An older sister in the ward had a tumor in her stomach and needed help every day because she could not move from her bed. Finally, she asked if just I would come, not another priesthood holder or any other person, because she was very sick and was going to die. She felt comfortable having her bishop help her.

One day I had an operation on my heart, and I was unable to visit her for a short time. When I went back to see her, she said, "Bishop, how can you come help me if you've just had an operation?"

I told her, "My calling is to serve others."

See more photos of Bishop Dodaj and his family at [lds.org/go/portraitsE1017](https://lds.org/go/portraitsE1017).

To learn more about the work of a bishop, visit [lds.org/topics/bishop](https://lds.org/topics/bishop).







## HEAVENLY FATHER CARES ABOUT MY BUSINESS

**A**s a single mother of five children, I felt the heavy responsibility of providing for my family. I am a domestic worker, but my job does not provide enough for my family. I joined a self-reliance group so I could learn how to improve my situation.

I was inspired by the “Starting and Growing My Business” group and decided that I could sew and sell insulated bags for slow cookers. I would sew the bags late into the night after

returning home from my day job.

I was working late one night on a large order that was due the next morning when my sewing machine stopped working. It was midnight, so no mechanics would be available to help. The machine came with a small tool kit, but I had never fixed a sewing machine before. I had no idea where to start.

Then the lesson in the *My Foundation* manual titled “Exercise Faith in

Jesus Christ” came to my mind. At that time, I knew that I needed to put my trust in the Lord. I sank to my knees and pleaded: “Heavenly Father, please help me fix this machine so I can make the order for my customer to collect in the morning. Heavenly Father, help me!”

Then I had the distinct impression to take the screwdriver from the tool kit and use it to push on a particular part of the sewing machine. I did so, relying completely on my faith. I held my breath as I switched the machine back on. It worked!

I was able to meet the deadline for the order. I discovered what it’s like to have Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ as business partners. I know I will continue to be blessed as I seek for opportunities to apply what I’ve learned in the self-reliance group. ■

Buyisile Zuma, KwaZulu-Natal,  
South Africa

I was working late one night on a large order that was due the next morning when my sewing machine stopped working.



ILLUSTRATION BY ALLEN GARRIS



# AN INSPIRED ANSWER AT A JOB INTERVIEW

After I was assigned to lead a stake self-reliance committee, I realized that I was underemployed myself. With this realization, I desired more from my professional life.

I felt a renewed desire to find a better job and asked for help to write a professional résumé. I sent my new résumé to several businesses and was soon called for interviews.

At one, the interviewer pointed out a line on my résumé that mentioned my work as a counselor in the stake presidency and asked, “Could you tell me in five seconds what this church service means?”

I said that I was in the leadership of an organization responsible for the guidance and welfare of more than 2,500 people. The interviewer became interested and said, “You have one minute to decide how to give me a five-second response to this question: how do you guide those 2,500 people?”

I knew that this would be the defining moment in the interview. I prayed

and asked my Heavenly Father for help and quickly remembered the lessons I had learned from the self-reliance group. I felt a surge of confidence.



After one minute, the interviewer asked, “How do you guide those 2,500 people?”

“We help them establish goals,” I answered.

I knew that these five seconds would be the defining moment in the interview. I prayed and asked my Heavenly Father for help.

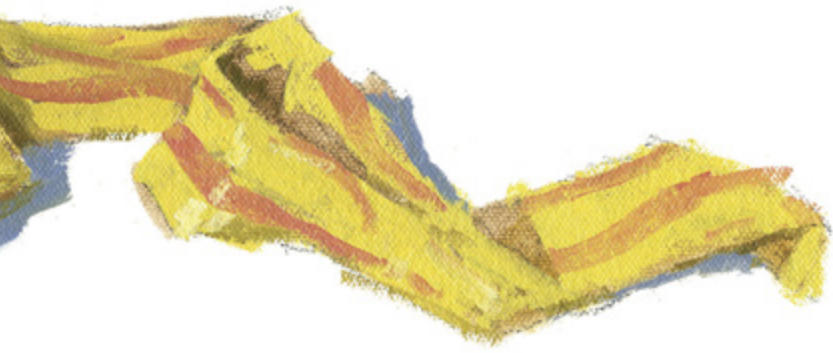
The interviewer stood, shook my hand, and said, “You’re hired.”

It is amazing how God took my hand and answered my prayer. I am grateful to my Savior for inspiring our leaders to create the self-reliance initiative. I have been personally blessed by it, and I have seen the simple, inspired processes of the self-reliance initiative bless many others in our stake. I am so convinced of the ability of self-reliance principles to lift lives that

when I became a leader over 15 employees in my new job, I began teaching them the principles of self-reliance.

I have grown and I am more capable than I thought I could be. I now earn a salary that sustains me and my family. This initiative helps us improve each day by helping us find greater self-reliance. ■

Gibrair Padilha Dos Santos,  
São Paulo, Brazil



## GROWING MY RICE CAKE BUSINESS

I wanted to send my son on a mission, but selling one kilo (2 lbs.) of *bibingka* (rice cakes) a week wasn't enough to be able to support him on a mission.

My son helped the family financially and was too worried about our financial condition to feel comfortable leaving. It was a constant struggle for our family to make money. I was proud of my 25-year-old son for his righteous desire to serve the Lord, but I realized that we would need some kind of miracle to make his dream of serving a mission come true.

I joined a self-reliance group. By being proactive and exercising my faith, I knew that my family would be blessed. During one meeting, I was prompted to go to a public market. There, I saw many women selling native snacks. I made a deal with one woman. I told her I would leave my products in the morning for her to sell and collect the profits at the end of the day. The arrangement was beneficial to both of us. I soon found more sellers. My business grew to 10 sellers during my time in the self-reliance group.

I learned to separate my personal money from my business money and pay myself a salary. I learned to stop spending time making products that didn't sell and focus instead on what was profitable. I also learned about marketing with social media. My action partner from the self-reliance group helped me create a Facebook account. From there, we learned about branding and packaging. My business eventually grew to the point that my husband could quit his physically





# GAINING SELF-RESPECT THROUGH SELF-RELIANCE

demanding job and work with me.

Someone recently asked me how my sales were going. I proudly told him I am now selling 12 kilos (26 lbs.) of rice cakes.

“12 kilos a week is great!” he said.

“No, brother,” I said. “I sell 12 kilos *per day*.”

My son later told me he was happy that my business could now provide for our needs.

“Looks like I can serve a full-time mission now,” he said.

He is now serving in the Philippines San Pablo Mission. I am so grateful for the self-reliance initiative. The Lord truly meant it when He said, “It is my purpose to provide for my saints” (D&C 104:15). ■

Lordita Yagomyom, Misamis Occidental, Philippines

**D**uring one self-reliance group meeting, I was prompted to go to a public market. I made a deal with one woman to sell my rice cakes.

I was married, I had three kids, and I was unemployed. A work drought left me feeling hopeless. I worried about the safety of my family, and I stopped believing in myself.

My wife, Carla, encouraged me to attend a self-reliance group. It was embarrassing for me to admit that I didn’t have work, but she encouraged me to attend the group so I could take care of our family.

I reluctantly gave it a try. While attending the group, I realized that my English skills could be a valuable asset in the job world. I had studied English on my mission, but I only knew how to speak about religion. I enrolled in English classes offered by the Church to improve my vocabulary. When I returned home from English class one day, Carla handed me the phone.

“Who is it?” I asked.

“I don’t know,” she replied. “They’re speaking in English.”

It was a human resources representative from one of the biggest

companies in Costa Rica asking to interview me. I was stunned, but the interview went remarkably well. I later learned that Carla had set up the interview.

I got the job, and I remembered how my self-reliance group had helped me. Then I thought about how I could better apply what I learned. I started looking for an even better job and got one. Then I worked toward starting my own construction business.

I can’t imagine where my family and I would be without the start we received from the self-reliance initiative. I learned to be humble and to ask the Lord for help. I also learned to allow those who wanted to help me to bless my life. We have so many blessings. I now have self-respect, and I can bless my family with the money I earn. I know the Spirit blesses us when we are humble. ■

José Alberto Navas (as told to Miriam Sweeney), San José, Costa Rica





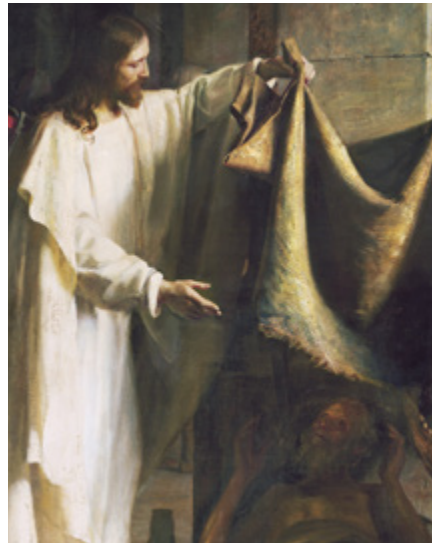
By President  
Thomas S. Monson

## HELP SOMEONE TODAY

*We are the Lord's hands. He is depending on us.*

I am confident it is the *intention* of each member of the Church to serve and to help those in need. At baptism we covenanted to “bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light” [Mosiah 18:8]. How many times has your heart been touched as you have witnessed the need of another? How often have you *intended* to be the one to help? And yet how often has day-to-day living interfered and you’ve left it for others to help, feeling that “oh, surely someone will take care of that need.”

We become so caught up in the busyness of our lives. Were we to step back, however, and take a good look at what we’re doing, we may find that . . .



too often we spend most of our time taking care of the things which do not really matter much at all in the grand scheme of things, neglecting those more important causes. . . .

. . . We are surrounded by those in need of our attention, our encouragement, our support, our comfort, our kindness—be they family members, friends, acquaintances, or strangers. We are the Lord’s hands here upon the earth, with the mandate to serve and to lift His children. He is dependent upon each of us. . . .

. . . May the words of a familiar hymn penetrate our very souls . . . :

*Have I done any good in the world today?  
Have I helped anyone in need?  
Have I cheered up the sad and made someone feel glad?  
If not, I have failed indeed.  
Has anyone’s burden been lighter today  
Because I was willing to share?  
Have the sick and the weary been helped on their way?  
When they needed my help was I there?*

[“Have I Done Any Good?” *Hymns*, no. 223.]

. . . May we ask ourselves the question . . . : “What have I done for someone today?” My counsel to members worldwide would be to find someone who is having a hard time or is ill or lonely, and do something for him or her today. ■

*From “What Have I Done for Someone Today?”*  
Ensign, Nov. 2009, 84–87.





**BLESSINGS,  
BY LOUISE PARKER**

*"And it is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine. . . .*

*"For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things"  
(D&C 104:15, 17).*

To learn more about self-reliance, see pages 42 and 76 in this issue.



# In Church Magazines

**Ensign:** “We are defined by decisions, not circumstances”: one of five lessons from the lives of the first Twelve Apostles of the Restoration—who happened to be young adults. Read about what other lessons we can learn from them (page 22).

**New Era:** This month, Elder David A. Bednar teaches how to develop essential elements of a Christlike character (page 2). Also, learn how to prepare for and learn from general conference (pages 14, 18).

**Friend:** This month is all about temples! Learn a new song about temples (page 24), make a temple handkerchief (page 35), and read about two new temples (page 22). What can you do to help your children look forward to going to the temple someday?

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