

Ensign



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“KNOWING THAT OUR
**HEAVENLY PARENTS PLANNED
FOR OUR ULTIMATE HAPPINESS
AND EXALTATION**

PROVIDES US WITH PERSPECTIVE,
GIVES US IDENTITY AS BELOVED
CHILDREN OF DIVINE PARENTS,
AND INCREASES OUR
CONFIDENCE IN THE LORD.”

ELDER QUENTIN L. COOK

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Ensign

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HOLDING ON TO FAITH AND TESTIMONY

If we hold to our testimony of Jesus Christ, it will sustain us as we wait for additional knowledge from God (see page 20). Learn how one young adult held to her faith in God after following a difficult prompt to break up with her boyfriend: [lds.org/go/faithE1018](https://www.lds.org/go/faithE1018).

HELPING THE BISHOP

Bishops preside over, care for, and attend to the needs of an entire ward (see page 40). That's a big job! Learn five ways you can help your bishop help you: [lds.org/go/bishopE1018](https://www.lds.org/go/bishopE1018).



LESSONS FROM THE PROPHET

Joseph Smith learned to trust in the Lord as he faced great challenges in translating and publishing the Book of Mormon (see page 64). Read about four more lessons we can learn from Joseph's experience: [lds.org/go/lessonsE1018](https://www.lds.org/go/lessonsE1018).

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PORTRAITS OF FAITH

“Sickness can do a lot of good things,” says Michael, who is suffering from kidney failure. Because his illness has increased his gratitude for the gospel, he says, “it is a good trial.”

LESLIE NILSSON, PHOTOGRAPHER

Michael Isaac

Bydgoszcz, Poland

At first I was angry.

“Why me?” I prayed. “I have served you, Lord.” After a while, I understood. The scriptures say, “He that hath faith in me to be healed, and is not appointed unto death, shall be healed” (Doctrine and Covenants 42:48).

Church members keep praying for me, but my health is getting worse. They think their prayers are not heard, but they are heard because they become better people and because I feel the love they show to me.

Even if I was healthy, how much time would be left at my age? Still, a lot is before me.

I have the Church. I have a way of contacting God through prayer, through fasting, through all the things we do. What else do I need?

Sometimes I say to myself, “Maybe that’s why I am sick—so that I could understand what a great thing I am in, what a great cause this is.”

FIND MORE

Learn more about facing life’s challenges with the power of hope from President Russell M. Nelson at lds.org/go/10185.

Find more Portraits of Faith at lds.org/go/18.

Ministering Principles

GETTING HELP TO HELP OTHERS

How do we involve others when we need help in our efforts to minister?

Participate in ministering interviews and first-Sunday council meetings.

When multiple sclerosis confined Kathy to a wheelchair, she found she needed assistance each night getting from her chair to her bed. The job was too big for any one member. So the elders quorum counseled about her situation and decided to make a schedule to help her each evening.¹

As we come to know the needs and strengths of those we serve, we may find that we need help to help meet their needs. Ministering interviews and first-Sunday council meetings are two opportunities to discuss how to appropriately involve others.

Ministering Interviews

These quarterly interviews between ministering sisters and the Relief Society presidency or ministering brothers and the elders quorum presidency are the only *formal* report we make regarding

those we minister to. The interview is an opportunity on at least a quarterly basis to (1) counsel about the strengths, needs, and challenges of assigned families and individuals; (2) determine what needs the quorum, Relief Society, or ward council might assist with; and (3) learn from leaders and be encouraged in ministering efforts.

The elders quorum president and the Relief Society president communicate important needs directly to the bishop and will receive counsel and direction from him.

You can find more information about ministering interviews at ministering.lds.org.

Making Ministering Interviews Meaningful

In supporting President Russell M. Nelson's statement that the ministering program will be a hinge point on which the course of the Church will swing, Elder

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



JESUS INVOLVED OTHERS

Jesus fed a multitude of 5,000 people from five barley loaves and two small fishes. Read John 6:5–14 to identify how many times the Savior involved others in this act of ministering.



Gary E. Stevenson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, “The realization of his vision . . . might be predicated upon how well ministering brothers and sisters are taught and engaged in the ministering interview.”²

Four tips for ministering brothers and sisters:

- Go to the interview seeking counsel. Be ready to learn.
- Be prepared to discuss needs that you may need help meeting.
- Focus on the individual’s strengths and abilities, not just needs.
- Contact the presidency to counsel between quarterly interviews as needed.

Five tips for leaders:

- Interviews don’t need to be long, but schedule enough time to visit in a place that allows for a meaningful conversation.
- Take the opportunity to minister to the ministering brother or sister.
- Don’t ask questions that give the impression you’re simply counting visits or checking off a contact (“Did you get your ministering done?”). Do ask questions that reinforce desired behaviors (“What prompting have you felt as you’ve prayed for the family? What

happened when you acted on those promptings?”).

- Sincerely listen and take notes.
- Counsel together. Ministering companionships are entitled to revelation for those to whom they are assigned to minister.³

Questions and Answers about Ministering Interviews

What is a ministering interview?

It is a discussion between ministering brothers and a member of the elders quorum presidency or between ministering sisters and a member of the Relief Society presidency in a setting that allows them to seek and receive inspiration from the Holy Ghost. As a result, ministering brothers and sisters can be inspired to watch over, love, teach, and comfort in the Savior’s way.

Do these quarterly interviews need to be in person?

Typically they are conducted in person, but they could be held by phone or online when meeting face to face is impractical. Generally, both companions would participate in the interview when appropriate.

What is the purpose of a ministering interview?

Ministering interviews are an opportunity for ministering brothers and sisters to review current situations, make future plans, and get needed help to the individuals or families they minister to. It’s a chance to talk about what resources the quorum and Relief Society can provide.

How do I deal with confidential or sensitive issues?

Ministering brothers and sisters share confidential information only with the elders quorum or Relief Society president—or directly with the bishop. Confidential or sensitive information should not be shared in first-Sunday council meetings.

You can watch training videos showing ministering interviews at ministering.lds.org.

Counseling about the needs of others is at the heart of ministering interviews. See the Ministering Principles article “Counsel about Their Needs” in the September 2018 issue.



First-Sunday Council Meetings

In addition to ministering interviews, first-Sunday council meetings are another way to involve others in ministering. In Relief Society and elders quorum meetings, inspiration can come to those in attendance through the Spirit and from others in the group.

The purpose of a council meeting is to:

- “Counsel together about local responsibilities, opportunities, and challenges;
- “Learn from each other’s insights and experiences; and
- “Plan ways to act on impressions received from the Spirit.”⁴

Council meetings are more than discussions: the meetings lead us to act as individuals or as a group as inspired by the Spirit. Members can feel a desire to accomplish the Lord’s work as a result of these meetings.

Invitation to Act

“Our prayer today,” said Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “is that every man and woman—and our older young men and young women—will [be] more deeply committed to heartfelt care for one another, motivated only by the pure love of Christ to do so.”⁵ ■

NOTES

1. See *Mormon Messages* video “Lift,” [lds.org/media-library](https://www.lds.org/media-library).
2. Gary E. Stevenson, in “Ministering Interviews” (video), [ministering.lds.org](https://www.ministering.lds.org).
3. See Russell M. Nelson, “Ministering,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 100.
4. *Come, Follow Me—For Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society*, in *Ensign*, Nov. 2017, 140; also available at [comefollowme.lds.org](https://www.comefollowme.lds.org).
5. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Be With and Strengthen Them,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 103.

WHERE TITHING MONEY GOES

What happens to the money you pay for tithing?



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You give your tithing to a member of your bishopric or branch presidency or submit it online at donations.lds.org.



At Church headquarters, the First Presidency, Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and Presiding Bishopric are the Council on the Disposition of the Tithes (see Doctrine and Covenants 120). As directed by the Lord, they make inspired decisions on how these sacred tithing funds will be used.

TITHING MAY BE USED FOR:



Constructing and maintaining temples, churches, and other Church-owned buildings



Operating Church-education programs



Printing scriptures and other materials



Doing family history research



Providing welfare and humanitarian efforts



Doing missionary work



Providing Church activities for fellowship among ward or branch members

LEARN MORE

- Elder David A. Bednar, "The Windows of Heaven," October 2013 general conference
- Malachi 3:7-18
- "Tithing," *True to the Faith* (2004), 180-82

I felt a darkness settle over my life. And then I realized I needed to talk with my bishop.

The **First Step** **Toward** Repentance

By Aurilas Peterson

I remember setting my baptism date with the missionaries. They asked me if I was ready to make this covenant with our Heavenly Father. Without even thinking about it and with a heart full of joy, I said, “Yes!” I wanted to accept the special gift my loving Father had given me, and I knew that I wouldn’t be as happy without the Savior in my life. But I really wasn’t sure what the future held for me.

Finally, the big day came. It was unforgettable, and I was so happy.

Dark Days

After my baptism and confirmation, days suddenly seemed dark. I was dealing with family issues, and I was struggling to obey all of God’s laws. I didn’t know what to do, and I wanted to give up on everything. It seemed like nobody understood me.

I had always loved reading the Book of Mormon, but during that time I set it aside. One day, as I was home alone, I felt the sweetness of

the Spirit prompting me to read the Book of Mormon. I prayed beforehand, wanting to find an answer that could bring solace to my suffering. I opened directly to Alma chapter 5. Verse 27 reads: “Have ye walked, keeping yourselves blameless before God? Could ye say, if ye were called to die at this time, within yourselves, that ye have been sufficiently humble? That your garments have been cleansed and made white through the blood of Christ, who will come to redeem his people from their sins?”

Finally, I felt touched by these words. I knew that I needed to repent, so I made an appointment to see my bishop. I was undeniably scared, but I forced myself to go and visit with him.

Understanding God’s Promise

When I arrived at the bishop’s office, I felt so guilty that I wanted to just turn back around. But I prayed to have the courage to say everything I needed to. The bishop welcomed me into his office, and then he said

a prayer to receive God's help. He spoke to me as if I were his son and showed his love for me through his words. He gave me advice and asked me to do certain things in order to receive God's forgiveness and then to come back to meet with him.

I was so glad for this opportunity. I followed his advice and eventually came to understand God's promise of forgiveness to Alma: "If he confess his sins before thee and me, and repenteth in the sincerity of

his heart, him shall ye forgive, and I will forgive him also" (Mosiah 26:29). After sincerely repenting, I knew that God had forgiven me. I finally was able to feel Heavenly Father's love in my heart, and the darkness lifted. I was happy and proud of myself.

The Bishop Is There to Help

The bishop is the Lord's representative for the ward. Know that he is there to help you find the true happiness that God has in store for you.

Trust him. If you have problems or need to repent, go and find him. He will help you.

I know it is not an easy thing to go see him sometimes. But as President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901) explained about our Heavenly Father's eternal plan: "I daresay that in the [premortal] spirit world, when it was proposed to us to . . . pass through the experience that we are now receiving, it was not altogether pleasant and agreeable. . . . Yet there is no doubt that we saw and understood clearly there that, in order to accomplish our exaltation and glory, this was a necessary experience." He went on to say, "We were willing to conform to the will of God, and consequently we are here" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow* [2012], 110).

Repentance is part of conforming to God's will. So rather than being scared of the bishop, make him your friend. He was chosen by God, and he can help you repent and heal your soul through coming unto Jesus Christ. The Lord wants to help us, but we need to take that first step toward repentance. That way we can see the promise in Isaiah 1:18 fulfilled: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." And for that, the bishop is there to help.

I testify that God lives and that Jesus Christ is our Savior. They both love us very much! ■

The author lives in Ovest, Haiti.



**Three skills
I learned from
playing basketball
can help each of
us get past hard
days and still
have a great life.**

Missing Shots and Grabbing Rebounds

By Eric D. Richards
Seminaries and Institutes

In high school I was on my school's basketball team. I wasn't the best player, so most games found me sitting on the bench, cheering on my teammates. As I observed basketball games from the sidelines, I started noticing three reasons players would miss shots: (1) not aiming correctly, (2) being distracted by the crowd, and (3) being fouled while shooting the ball.

These three reasons for missing a shot in basketball also reminded me of the mistakes, distractions, and discouragement we may experience in life. As we seek to improve our "shooting skills," trying to avoid or ignore distractions that take our eyes off our eternal goals, we can overcome challenges in this life and one day return to our "courts above."¹ Ultimately, pursuing the path to eternal life in Heavenly Father's kingdom really can't be equated with playing an earthly game, but perhaps looking at a few similarities can provide some helpful lessons.

1. Aiming Correctly

Each of us will "miss shots" in our lives by breaking commandments or through simply making mistakes. But there is a vast difference between missing a good shot (making mistakes) and deliberately trying to miss a shot (sinning). Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, "The Lord sees weaknesses differently than He does rebellion."² Rarely do good coaches bench players for missing good shots.

In life, our missed shots, or mistakes, can sometimes lead to miracles. Failure is not the opposite of success; it is part



of success. President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, taught: “We should seek to avoid mistakes, since some mistakes have very painful consequences. But we do not seek to avoid mistakes at all costs. Mistakes are inevitable in the process of growth in mortality. To avoid all possibility of error is to avoid all possibility of growth.”³

Every player will miss shots as they are learning to become better shooters. When a player misses a shot, there is an opportunity to learn from the experience and then to practice and improve—just as we can grow through our experiences by repenting. President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained, “Save for those few who defect to perdition after having known a fulness, there is no habit, no addiction, no rebellion, no transgression, no offense exempted from the promise of complete forgiveness.”⁴ The prophet Isaiah recorded: “Wash you, make you clean. . . . Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:16, 18). Be grateful for what your missed shots have taught you!

2. Overcoming Distractions

Stew Morrill was the head basketball coach at Utah State University for 17 years. During his tenure, his basketball teams lost only 32 times while playing on their home court, an extraordinary record. But it wasn’t just due to his brilliant coaching ability—his teams also had the help of a fiercely loyal home crowd. The fans cheered their school’s team in a remarkable way. Quite often, teams from other schools were distracted by the cheers and antics of fans in the home gym, leading to many victories for the Utah State men’s basketball teams.

As we strive to live the gospel, sometimes the distractions and temptations of the adversary cause us to miss shots. For basketball players, the key to taking good shots is keeping their eyes on the basket and trying to not let the fans distract their focus; the key to making wise decisions as followers of Jesus Christ is keeping our eyes on our eternal goal—eternal life with our Father in Heaven—without allowing mortal distractions such as pornography, doubt, sins, and trials to sidetrack

us. These distractions will inevitably creep in. Evil influences and even “conspiring men” (Doctrine and Covenants 89:4) may try to divert us, but having our eyes riveted on our Savior and His restored gospel will strengthen us.

3. Getting Past Fouls

During basketball games, players commonly commit fouls against their opponents, causing them to miss shots. Likewise, many of us have been “fouled” during mortality, whether it’s as simple as being snubbed by a friend or as serious as being abused in some way. Some “fouls” may only damage our ego, while others may require professional help in addition to the Savior’s healing power.

Friends, family members, co-workers, and even strangers might make choices that harm us, but the Lord has provided inspired counsel regarding what to do when we are fouled by others: “Be not hasty . . . to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools” (Ecclesiastes 7:9). “Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (James 1:19). The Savior will help us develop the divine attributes that lead to showing kindness, pardoning faults, and apologizing when needed rather than backbiting, gossiping, and seeking revenge. He knows that every time forgiveness is extended, our capacity to grow and progress is fostered.⁵

If you’re withholding forgiveness from someone, pray for a desire to

forgive and the ability to let go of hurt and anger so that Jesus Christ can help you feel peace and comfort through His Atonement. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled:

*“Let people repent. Let people grow. Believe that people can change and improve. . . . If something is buried in the past, leave it buried. Don’t keep going back with your little sand pail and beach shovel to dig it up, wave it around, and then throw it at someone, saying, ‘Hey! Do you remember *this?*’ Splat! . . .*

“ . . . Soon enough everyone comes out of that exchange dirty and muddy and unhappy and hurt, when what our Father in Heaven pleads for is cleanliness and kindness and happiness and healing.”⁶

Forgiving others who have fouled us means exchanging the desire for a better past (wasting time wishing that something hadn’t happened) for the hope of a better future (freeing your future self from the burden of resentment and anger).

As we think ahead of the present situation and look at the possible outcomes of our reactions, we allow the Holy Ghost to guide our next “shot.” When other people foul us, forgiving them will bless our lives and help us become more like the Savior. Elder Scott explained: “Forgiveness heals terrible, tragic wounds, for it allows the love of God to purge your heart and mind of the poison of hate. It cleanses your consciousness of the desire for revenge. It makes place for the purifying, healing, restoring love of the Lord.”⁷

How to Rebound

At my high school, Coach Bobof was our basketball coach. He focused on one particular skill at each practice: the ability to rebound, or retrieve the ball after a missed shot. We spent hours working on it. Coach Bobof often said that if a team could control the rebounds following missed shots, that team would typically have control of the game's tempo and would ultimately be in a good position to win.

The Lord, through His ordained servants, has taught divine principles about rebounding from missed shots. Don't be unduly concerned about your own missed shots or the fouls committed against you. If you've missed shots because of weakness or sin, turn to the Savior and allow Him to help you improve. Focusing only on your mistakes and feeling guilty will not help you progress. Guilt will accompany sin but will also be "swept away" (Enos 1:6) as we turn to the Savior with a repentant heart. Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reminded us, "God cares a lot more about who we are and who we are becoming than about who we once were."⁸

Rather than dwelling on the past, seek to rebound from missed shots. Ask yourself questions like, "What have I learned from my mistakes and from repenting of my sins? What blessings have come as I have turned to the Savior to help me forgive others? How can a missed shot be a blessing to others? What am I doing differently now because of my mistakes?"

Michael Jordan was one of the greatest basketball players in the United States. He once remarked: "I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games; 26 times, I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed."⁹ If you feel like you have missed 9,000 shots or lost 300 games or missed game-winning shots and opportunities, take heart: the Lord will help you rebound through the forgiving power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. ■

NOTES

1. See "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing," *Hymns* (1948), no. 70.
2. Richard G. Scott, "Personal Strength through the Atonement of Jesus Christ," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 83.
3. Dallin H. Oaks, "Sins and Mistakes," *Ensign*, Oct. 1996, 67.
4. Boyd K. Packer, "The Brilliant Morning of Forgiveness," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 19.

5. See, for example, the story of Pahoran and Captain Moroni in Alma 60–61.
6. Jeffrey R. Holland, "The Best Is Yet to Be," *Ensign*, Jan. 2010, 26; emphasis in original.
7. Richard G. Scott, "Healing the Tragic Scars of Abuse," *Ensign*, May 1992, 33.
8. Dale G. Renlund, "Latter-day Saints Keep on Trying," *Ensign*, May 2015, 56.
9. Michael Jordan, in Torin Koos, "The 23 Most Inspirational Quotes from Exceptional Athletes," *Deseret News*, Sept. 25, 2014, deseretnews.com.



The world constantly tries to throw us off balance, but by staying centered in Christ, we can trust the Lord to direct our path.

LEAN NOT

Staying Centered in Christ

By Hannah DeTavis
Church Magazines

I felt powerful each time I slipped on a pair of pink ballet slippers. However, I also felt keenly aware of my weaknesses that prevented me from excelling in dance—particularly my tendency to fall off balance. As I prayed to Heavenly Father for His help to “make [my] weak things become strong” (Ether 12:27) and dedicated myself to improving, I realized that I could learn a lot about spiritual discipline from the physical discipline required in ballet.

We learn in Proverbs 3:5 that we must “trust in the Lord with all [our] heart; and lean

not unto [our] own understanding.” By staying centered in Christ—and not leaning on our own wisdom—we can become the steady disciples Heavenly Father wants us to be. Here are a few lessons I learned from ballet that helped me focus on the Lord.

1. You can't lean on the testimonies of others forever

To warm up, I would balance on one leg near a barre, or a stationary rod. When my legs would tremble or I'd sway off balance, even the lightest touch to the barre would help me regain my position.

Eventually, I had to learn how to maintain balance without relying on the barre for support.

Just as I relied on the ballet barre for balance, we often rely on the testimonies of parents, friends, and leaders to steady us as we develop our own testimonies. While we are all subject to those “shaky moments,” it's up to us to strengthen our own testimony so we can stand strong for the Savior—especially if we stand alone.

Although hearing others' testimonies can strengthen us during times of difficulty, President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) taught that we can lean on the testimony of others for only so long. He said, “Eventually we must have our own strong and deeply placed foundation, or we will be unable to withstand the storms of life, which will come.”¹

2. Strengthen your spiritual muscle groups

After warm-ups, I would dance in the middle of the studio without the support of the barre. My teacher stressed the importance of strengthening different areas of the body to remain centered. I needed strong legs for dynamic turns, strong arms for structure, and a strong core for balance.

My teacher would pass between dancers and poke at our legs, arms, and stomachs to ensure that our muscles were fully engaged. If my muscles were tight, I could sustain a balanced position when she prodded me. If they weren't, I would fall off balance.

As we go through life, Satan prods our weak spots, hoping we'll tip off balance and stumble in our spiritual performance. If we develop our basic spiritual muscle groups—prayer, scripture study, service—and build our foundation on the Savior, we won't budge when Satan throws temptations and doubts in our direction (see Helaman 5:12).

3. Stay centered in Christ

A pirouette requires a dancer to perform a complete turn on one foot. Without the proper focus and technique, it's easy to feel unsteady during a series of pirouettes. But by centering my weight and focusing on, or “spotting,” a single point on the wall, I could maintain balance while avoiding dizziness.

Bonnie H. Cordon, Young Women General President, explains that “when we *physically* lean toward one side or another, we move off center, we are out of balance, and we tip. When we *spiritually* lean to our own understanding, we lean away from our Savior.”²

There are times when we all lean to our own understanding. But even when we stumble, the Savior is always there to take us by the hand and help us finish our journey across the stage. By “spotting” Him as our focal point, we can travel gracefully along the covenant path.

One day in college, I sustained a serious knee injury during a dance class. Unfortunately, this injury inhibited my ability to continue ballet. Although I was heartbroken that I couldn't dance anymore, I was filled with gratitude for the many spiritual lessons I had learned from ballet.

Ballet was just one tool that drew me closer to the Savior. I know that as I apply the lessons I learned in ballet to my spiritual growth (developing my own testimony, strengthening basic spiritual muscles, and staying centered in Christ), the Lord can empower me to remain spiritually balanced throughout this life—which, after all, is the arena where each of us must perform as we prepare for eternity. ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “How Firm a Foundation,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 62.
2. Bonnie H. Cordon, “Trust in the Lord and Lean Not,” *Ensign*, May 2017, 6.

There will always be “hard sayings.” But there will always be the option to choose faith over any doubt or uncertainty.

OUR Motivation TO Live the Gospel

By Mindy Selu
Church Magazines

The path of discipleship is filled with blessings—those both “seen and unseen.”¹ But there are times when that path, despite its blessings, isn’t easy or convenient. Becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ requires work and sacrifice, and sometimes it’s difficult to find the motivation to live the commandments and make those sacrifices.

As a young adult, you’re probably also busy trying to juggle new responsibilities, make life-altering decisions, and figure out what your own path of discipleship is going to look like for the rest of your life. On top of that, there may be things in the Church’s policies or history or in gospel doctrine that you don’t quite understand and temptations you struggle with, as well as blessings you’re still waiting on and questions about God’s plan for you.

Some of us may wonder at times if living the gospel is worth the blessings we’ve been promised. We might argue that we don’t fit in, that it’s too much work, or that the questions seem to outweigh the answers. But what it really comes down to is motivation. Why do you do what you do and live the way you do? Why do you continue keeping the commandments, even when no one’s around to notice if you do?

Regardless of who you are and what stage of life you’re in, the choice to find your motivation by cultivating your faith in the Savior and His gospel is up to you.



To Whom Shall We Go?

Finding and keeping up the motivation to live the gospel is hardly a challenge unique to our day. Even when the Savior was on the earth, people still had a hard time understanding and thus obeying the principles He taught. Several of His disciples were listening as He explained a concept that seemed to offend them—His role as the “bread of life” (see John 6:35–58). They responded skeptically, saying, “This is an hard saying; who can hear it?” (John 6:60).

Christ, seeing that they were having a hard time believing or accepting this doctrine, asked, “Doth this offend you?” (John 6:61). Instead of putting their faith ahead of their doubts, many of His disciples “went back, and walked no more with him” (John 6:66).

But when Christ asked the rest of His disciples if they too would “go away,” Peter gave the only answer there really is to give: “To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:67–68).

The Source of Our Motivation

Peter knew the source of his motivation.

It came down to the heart of why we do
what we do in the gospel:

our testimony of and faith in Jesus Christ. “We believe and *are sure*,” Peter declared, “that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God” (John 6:69; emphasis added). By gaining that same strong conviction of Jesus Christ, His divinity, and His work, we too can find the motivation to continue living the gospel—even when it seems hard, even when nobody else will notice, and even when we’re not sure we want to.

There will always be “hard sayings.” But there will always be the option to choose faith over any doubt or uncertainty. As Elder L. Whitney Clayton of the Presidency of the Seventy said, “The decision to believe is the most important choice we ever make.”²

So what do we do if we find ourselves on the other side of one of those “hard sayings”?

1. Follow the example of Peter and the other disciples who remained faithful even when it would’ve been easy to “go away.” Listen to the counsel of prophets, apostles, and other leaders:

“In moments of fear or doubt or troubling times, hold the ground you have already won. . . . *Hold fast to what you already know and stand strong until additional knowledge comes.*”³

“Take one simple step forward in faith—and then another. . . . Focus on the truths [you do] believe and let those truths fill [your] mind and heart. . . .



“ . . . Start with basic gospel truths.”⁴

2. Stay close to the scriptures and follow their teachings:

“Prayerfully study and ponder the Book of Mormon each day.”⁵

“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (John 7:17).

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22).

3. Continue keeping the commandments:

“Answers to our sincere questions come when we earnestly seek and when we live the commandments. . . . Our faith can reach beyond the limits of current reason.”⁶

“As you continue to be obedient, . . . you will be given the knowledge and understanding you seek.”⁷

In the end, our motivation simply comes down to what Peter said. Do we believe that Jesus is the Christ, that He runs His Church and has the words of eternal life? Does our faith in Him take precedence over the “hard sayings” we might not understand at the moment?

The Rewards of Living the Gospel

When we do decide to love and follow God and Jesus Christ and to keep the commandments even when we don’t fully understand them, the rewards are immeasurable. The natural man asks, “What’s in it for me?” The teachings of the gospel respond: “Peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come”; a place prepared for you in the

mansions of God; all that Heavenly Father has; “never-ending happiness” (see Doctrine and Covenants 59:23; Ether 12:34; Doctrine and Covenants 84:38; Mosiah 2:41); and, as Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated: “Here [in the Church] you will find what is precious beyond price. . . . Here you will find the words of eternal life, the promise of blessed redemption, and the pathway to peace and happiness.”⁸ Just to name a few.

When we devote ourselves to following Christ and obeying His commandments, we are promised all of these things and more. That doesn’t mean the path will always be easy or understandable, but the blessings we’re promised from staying strong will continue to unfold throughout our lives and even after.

However, as incredible as these blessings are, they shouldn’t be our primary motivation for living the gospel. No matter what questions you have, no matter which doctrine you don’t understand, your faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement will be the key to your motivation to live His gospel, just as it was for Peter and others.

“Our motives and thoughts ultimately influence our actions,” said Elder Uchtdorf. “The testimony of the truthfulness of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ is the most powerful motivating force in our lives. Jesus

repeatedly emphasized the power of good thoughts and proper motives: ‘Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not’ (D&C 6:36).

“The testimony of Jesus Christ and the restored gospel will help us in our lives to learn of God’s specific plan for us and then to act accordingly. It gives us assurance of the reality, truth, and goodness of God, of the teachings and Atonement of Jesus Christ, and of the divine calling of latter-day prophets.”⁹

As for me, I’m going to keep trying, even when it feels hard. I’m going to keep saying my prayers and studying my scriptures. I’m going to make an effort to strengthen my testimony of the Savior every day. And I’m going to keep trying to live as He would have me live and depend on His words and His living prophets and apostles to teach me how, relying on the motivation that stems not only from my faith in and love for Him but also from His eternal sacrifice and love for me. ■

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Way of the Disciple,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 76.
2. L. Whitney Clayton, “Choose to Believe,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 38.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Lord, I Believe,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 93–94; emphasis in original.
4. Rosemary M. Wixom, “Returning to Faith,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 94.
5. Thomas S. Monson, “The Power of the Book of Mormon,” *Ensign*, May 2017, 87.
6. Rosemary M. Wixom, “Returning to Faith,” 95.
7. Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 95–96.
8. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Come, Join with Us,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 24.
9. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Power of a Personal Testimony,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 37.



TWO CHOICES

“The Lord’s way is not hard. Life is hard, not the gospel. . . . Life is hard for all of us, but life is also simple. We have only two choices. We can either follow the Lord and be endowed with His power and have peace, light, strength, knowledge, confidence, love, and joy, or we can go some other way, any other way, whatever other way, and go it alone—without His support, without His power, without guidance, in darkness, turmoil, doubt, grief, and despair. And I ask, which way is easier?”

Elder Lawrence E. Corbridge of the Seventy, “The Way,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 36.



By Elder D. Todd Christofferson

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

ELDER GERRIT W. GONG: **Love the Lord and Trust Him**

A newly married graduate student at England's University of Oxford, Gerrit W. Gong learned through personal experience that when we love the Lord and trust Him, He will help us, guide us, and strengthen us.

Gerrit was a Rhodes Scholar working to complete two graduate degrees, one of them a doctorate. At the same time, he was serving in the Oxford Ward bishopric. He and his wife, Susan, remembered advice that Elder David B. Haight (1906–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gave when he performed their marriage in the Salt Lake Temple. “He told us always to have a calling,” Elder Gong says. “We knew if we trusted God and did our best, He would help us.”

Gerrit and Susan did receive “divine help and tender mercies,” he says. While continuing in the bishopric, Gerrit finished all the academic requirements for a doctoral degree, except his dissertation. He asked the bishop of the Oxford Ward, Alan Webster, for a priesthood blessing. In the blessing, Gerrit received this promise: “Continue doing all you can, and the Lord will bless you.”

Two ward members who were experienced legal secretaries volunteered to help type his manuscript, and Gerrit was able to finish his dissertation in a few months. In fact, he completed both a master's and a doctoral degree in just

over three years. Upon graduation he also accepted a faculty research position at the university. His experience at Oxford strengthened his trust in the Lord, trust that endures to this day and will continue to bless Gerrit W. Gong as he now serves in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Loaves and Fishes

“The Lord is kind and gracious and seeks to bless us,” Elder Gong says. “If we do our best, He will enable us to do more than we otherwise could. It's like the multiplication of loaves and fishes. The Lord takes what is available and magnifies it far beyond what we could do on our own.”

The loaves-and-fishes principle is also true with learning, he says. “Even when formal education is unavailable,





the spirit of learning is what counts, because learning is eternal. We can all seek for light and truth, regardless of our circumstances. When we do, the Lord will help us find it.”

Covenant Belonging

While at Oxford, Elder Gong learned another gospel principle, one he calls “covenant belonging.”

“As we draw closer to the Lord, we also draw closer to each other,” he says. “At Oxford, Susan and I treasured our ward experience just as much as our academic experience. Many of our dearest friends to this day are people from

Elder Gong attributes much of his happiness to his parents, Jean and Walter, and to his wife, Susan. His parents’ home “was filled with a deep reverence for God’s love for each of His children,” he says. When Elder Gong met his wife for the first time, he felt like Susan was someone he had always known.

the Oxford Ward.”

Among those friends are Tim and Kathryn Witts, who remember going to the temple with the Gongs. “I remember clearly that Brother Gong removed his watch so he would not be distracted or constrained by time when contemplating the matters of eternity,” Sister Witts says. “That small act has helped me to be more diligent in my own temple worship.”

The Gongs often meet friends they know because of the gospel. “People will say, ‘We worked with you when you were on the high council,’ things like that,” Elder Gong says, “and it goes both ways. I am

grateful for a stake president and a ward council who helped me as a young bishop. We are all indebted to parents, in-laws, neighbors, mission presidents, sisters, and priesthood leaders who are kind to us, guide us, and encourage us to come unto Christ.”

Family Heritage

Elder Gong’s family history traces back 34 generations to First Dragon Gong, born in AD 837. Elder Gong’s grandparents emigrated from China to the United States. His mother, Jean, joined the Church as a teenager in Hawaii, USA, and later attended Brigham

Young University in Provo, Utah, USA, where she stayed with the family of Gerrit de Jong, the first dean of the College of Fine Arts. “The de Jongs helped me understand what a gospel family is like,” she says.

After BYU, Jean attended Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, USA, where she met Walter A. Gong. “He was already a Christian and quickly understood what the restored gospel offers,” Jean says. He joined the Church, and a year later they were married in the Salt Lake Temple. Both became professional educators and collectively spent more than 70 years teaching.

“Dad also became a patriarch,” Elder Gong says, “and because patriarchal blessings were given in our home, our home was filled with a deep reverence for God’s love for each of His children.”

On December 23, 1953, in Redwood City, California, the first of Jean and Walter’s three children was born. “His given name, Gerrit, is Dutch, to honor Gerrit de Jong,” Jean explains. “His middle name is Walter, to honor his father. And our family name is Chinese, which honors his heritage.”

Jean says Gerrit was considerate to his younger siblings, Brian and Marguerite. “He liked to help them,” she says, “even with little things like teaching them to tie their shoes.” She remembers coming home from church one day and overhearing Gerrit and Brian saying they thought a sacrament meeting talk was boring. “So I challenged them: ‘Then you come up with a better talk.’ They took the challenge and started paying more attention to all the talks,” she says.

As a teenager, Gerrit loved to go backpacking and hiking with the other young men in his

From left: Marjorie and Gordon B. Hinckley greeted Gerrit and Susan at the Gongs’ wedding reception. As a missionary in Taiwan, Elder Gong taught a family and years later, as a General Authority, met the grandson of one of the daughters in the family. In Vietnam, Elder and Sister Gong painted a mural as a way to bring joy to children facing challenges. Members of the Gong family gathered with those who assisted in painting the mural in Vietnam.

ward. Wally Salbacka, a lifelong friend, remembers one camping trip in particular. “I was there with Gerrit and his brother, Brian, and a friend who wasn’t a member of our Church. For some reason, we started singing hymns. Gerrit sang melody, Brian sang tenor, and I sang bass. I think we sang 10 or 20 hymns, just for the joy of singing. It was a good experience. Our nonmember friend was impressed.”

Brother Salbacka also remembers that in high school, Gerrit asked the cheerleaders to



lead silent cheers for the chess team. “He convinced them that moral support is good for everybody,” he says, “and they actually came to a match!”

After high school, Elder Gong attended Brigham Young University. From

1973 to 1975, he served in the Taiwan Taipei Mission, then returned to BYU, where in 1977 he received a bachelor’s degree in Asian studies and university studies.

Courtship and Marriage

After his mission, Elder Gong volunteered to provide Sunday evening firesides at the Provo Missionary Training Center. The firesides helped acquaint missionaries headed to Taiwan with the people, customs, and culture

there. One of the missionaries was Sister Susan Lindsay from Taylorsville, Utah, the daughter of Richard P. and Marian B. Lindsay. Brother Lindsay was a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy. “I felt Susan was someone I had always known,” Elder Gong says.

Two years later, some months after Susan had returned to BYU following her mission, Gerrit was in Provo with his family. His father was teaching at the university, and Gerrit had planned a two-week visit. The visit was extended to four weeks, as he and Susan dated every day. Then Gerrit left for an internship in Hawaii before returning to Oxford.

“We courted from two different hemispheres,” Elder Gong recalls. “I was trying to study in England while learning everything I could about her from across the Atlantic Ocean.”

“We got engaged over the telephone,” Sister Gong says.



“He came home again at Thanksgiving, and we were married the first day the temple opened in the new year.” Two weeks later, they flew to England to start a new life together.

“When people get married, they talk about two families becoming one,” Elder Gong says. “And that’s what truly happened to me. I feel part of the Lindsay family, just as I am part of the Gong family.”

A Stellar Career

After he spent a brief time on the faculty at Oxford, Gerrit’s career shifted to government service in Washington, D.C., USA. In 1984 he served on the staff of the Reagan-Bush reelection campaign, where he shared office space with Mike Leavitt, who later became governor of Utah. “Gerrit was observant and thoughtful,” Brother Leavitt says, “but he was distinguished by his unrelenting kindness.”

In 1985 Gerrit served as special assistant to the Under Secretary of the State Department. In 1987 he became a special assistant to the U.S. ambassador in Beijing, China. And from 1989 to 2001, he filled several positions at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. He then returned to the academic world when he accepted a position as an assistant to the president for strategic planning at BYU. He spent nine years in that role.

Carri Jenkins, assistant to the president for university communications at BYU, was in the office next door. She remembers Gerrit Gong’s ability to encourage those around him. “If you didn’t have confidence that you could take on a difficult assignment, he had that confidence for you,” she says. “He did everything in his power to counsel you, give you hope, and let you go forward and prove yourself.”





Federal judge Thomas B. Griffith, who knew Elder Gong both in Washington and at BYU, describes interaction with him this way: “At the end of a conversation, you realize the focus has been you. He’s a great listener. And he asks questions that make you think.”

Cecil O. Samuelson, emeritus General Authority Seventy and former president of BYU, says Elder Gong is “generally quiet, but the wheels are always turning.”

Family Life

Gerrit and Susan Gong became the parents of four sons—Abraham, Samuel, Christopher, and Matthew—who grew up in a variety of settings.

“When we were in Beijing, our children had the blessing of becoming each other’s best friends,” Elder Gong says.

“On the one hand, they had the opportunity to see an expansive view of the world,” Sister Gong adds. “On the other hand, it helped us become tight-knit as a family. Our boys still say the best thing we did as parents was to give them brothers.”

“Once, we cashed in our frequent-flyer miles,” Elder Gong says. “We let each person choose a destination. We started in Washington, D.C., where we were living, then went to England, the Czech Republic, Greece, Turkey, India, China, and Japan.”

“We had one firm rule during that trip,” Susan says. “Wherever we went, we ate what local people ate.” Finally, in Japan at the end of the trip, Elder Gong told his sons he was taking them to a restaurant world-famous for beef. At McDonald’s, four hungry sons and two parents consumed 17 hamburgers!

“Both Mom and Dad put a high value on learning by

experience,” Abraham says. “Dad thinks deeply about how experiences shape people, including whole cultures.” Abraham also notes that his father “speaks carefully because he has to mean completely and believe fully what he says.”

Sam remembers that “as busy as he was at the State Department, Dad took time every night to coach and train me for a third-grade math competition that I wanted to be in, called ‘Challenge 24.’ He said if I won, we’d have a party with ice-cream sundaes and 24 toppings.” Sam made it to the national finals but didn’t win. The Gong family had sundaes anyway. But it wasn’t easy to come up with 24 toppings—one was beef jerky.

Christopher and Matthew comment on how much they “appreciate the trust, love, and devotion our father and mother share.” It is a love Elder and Sister Gong share with each other as well as with each son and with the extended family.

“As well as a devoted father, Gerrit is a devoted son and brother,” Susan says. “Those roles are important to him. He



helps us understand that family relationships are most important of all.”

Church Experience

Although busy with career and family, Elder Gong continued willingly to serve in the Church, fulfilling callings as a high counselor, high priests group leader, stake Sunday School president, seminary teacher, bishop, stake mission president, stake president, and Area Seventy.

Whatever he is called to do, and in his family life as well, he consistently demonstrates



certain characteristics. “He sees everyone as a son or daughter of Heavenly Father,” Sister Gong says. “But above all, he loves the Lord. He really desires with all his heart to build the kingdom and bless Heavenly Father’s children.”

And he admires his wife. “Whatever I am asked to do,” he says, “Susan is by my side. She is comfortable with everyone and oriented to other people. She has always been willing to go to new places and try new things, for which I am grateful.”



From left: In Thailand, Elder Gong met with His Eminence Francis Xavier Cardinal Kriengsak Kovithavanij, the Catholic Archbishop of Bangkok. Elder Gong enjoys one-on-one trips with his sons, such as this trip in Canada with his son Sam. Elder Gong shared his thoughts about the Bread of Life with seminary and institute teachers in 2017. Sister Gong exchanges greetings in the home of a Cambodian member.

Service with the Seventy

On April 3, 2010, Elder Gerrit W. Gong was sustained as a General Authority Seventy. He was assigned to the Asia Area Presidency, headquartered in Hong Kong. He later became the Asia Area President. On October 6, 2015, Elder Gong was sustained to the Presidency of the Seventy, where his international experience continued, including area reviews in various parts of the world such as Africa and Central America.

“You meet and come to love the Saints in all these places,” he says. “You feel blessed to have people tell you about their faith, because their experience of God working in their lives becomes part of understanding who God is and how He loves each of us.”

“When we send Elder Gong into any situation, those involved feel they have found a friend,” says President Russell M. Nelson. “He has a high level of knowledge, but he is humble. He relates with people at all levels and is always well-prepared and persuasive.”

Calling as an Apostle

When President Nelson extended the calling for Elder Gong to serve as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, the prophet “lovingly took my hands in his, [with] my dear Susan at my side, and extended this sacred call from the Lord that took my breath away” (“Christ the Lord Is Risen Today,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 97). Humbled, but certain of his love for and trust in the Lord, Elder Gong accepted the call. He was sustained on March 31, 2018. Carefully prepared by the Lord, he will now minister as a “special [witness] of the name of Christ in all the world” (Doctrine and Covenants 107:23). ■

Conquering Fear

WITH

FAITH, HOPE,
AND CHARITY

By Mark D. Ogletree

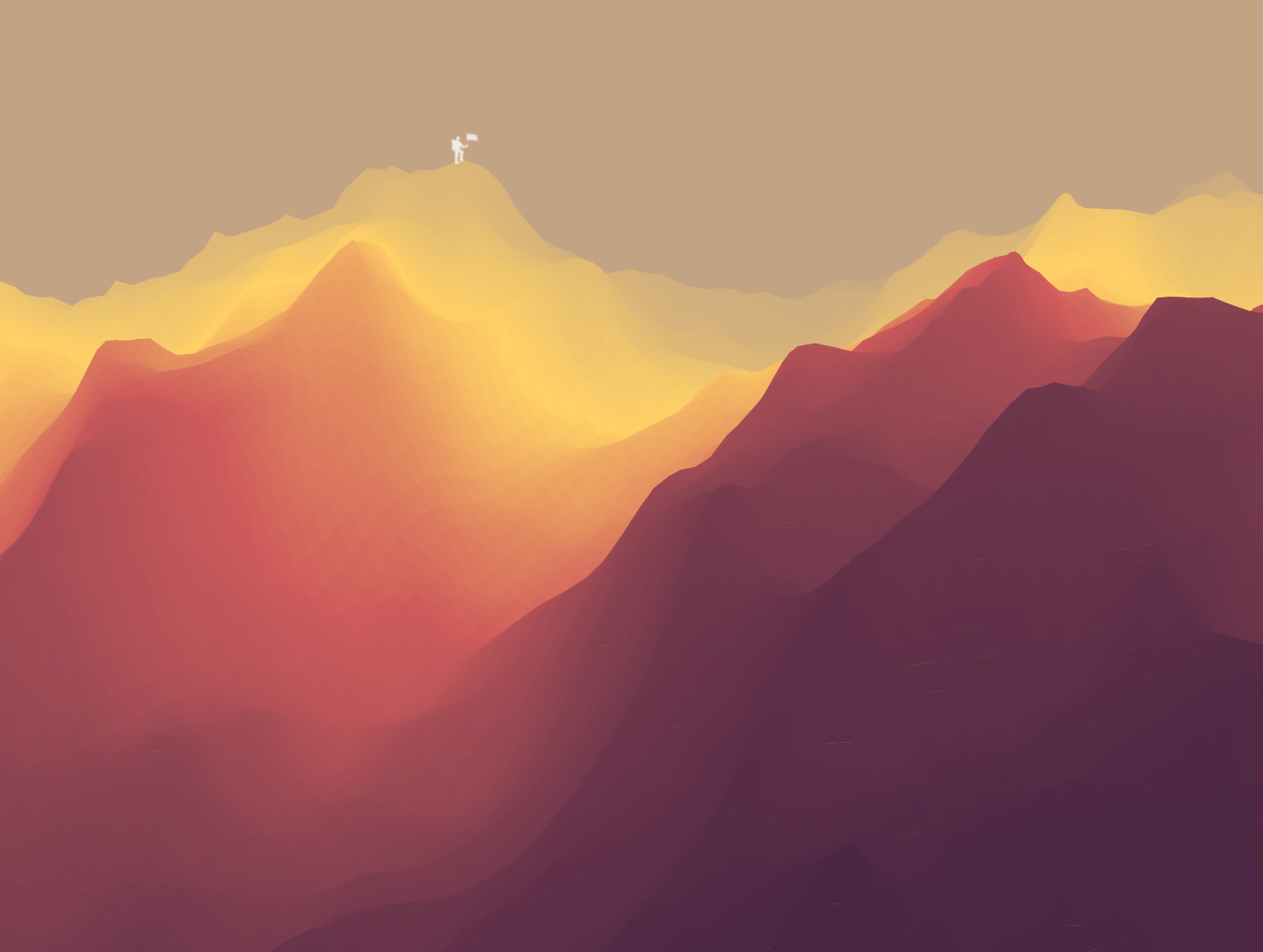
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In these perilous times, it helps to remember that the gospel of Jesus Christ is also known as “the gospel of peace” (Romans 10:15) and that the Savior has provided this assurance: “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Nevertheless the troubles of the last days—days of wickedness, turbulence, chaos, and fear—can disrupt our sense of peace and security. As wars, financial collapses, and natural disasters surround us, it is easy to become full of fear instead of faith. The Savior prophesied that in the last days men’s hearts would fail them because of such fear (see Luke 21:26), making this truly a time for the faithful in heart, not for the faint of heart.

President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) declared: “Fear, which can come upon people in difficult days, is a principal weapon in the arsenal which Satan uses to make mankind unhappy. He who fears loses strength for the combat of life in the fight against evil. Therefore the power of the evil one always tries to generate fear in human hearts. In every age and in every era, mankind has faced fear.”¹

Satan is a great liar; in fact, he is the father of lies (see John 8:44). He can whisper ideas into our minds that are full of doubt and fear. Darkness, confusion, doubt, and fear certainly do not come from the Lord, who is full of light and love. President George Q. Cannon (1827–1901), First Counselor in the First Presidency, stated: “Whenever darkness fills our minds, we may know that we are not



The Lord has given us key principles to use in our fight against Satan's weapons of confusion, doubt, and fear.

possessed of the Spirit of God. . . . When we are filled with the Spirit of God, we are filled with joy, with peace and with happiness no matter what our circumstances may be; for it is a spirit of cheerfulness and of happiness.”²

Remember, our Heavenly Father is the epitome of faith, hope, charity, optimism, and kindness. Paul taught, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7). President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) reminded us that “fear comes not of God, but rather . . . from the adversary.”³

The Lord has given us several key doctrines to combat the fears we face. These doctrines become weapons in our arsenal to fight against fear and the author of fear—even Satan. These key doctrines are *faith*, *hope*, and *charity*.

Faith

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the first principle of the gospel. Faith is power; faith is strength. Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that faith is “a reward for personal righteousness. . . . The greater the measure of obedience to God’s laws the greater will be the endowment of faith.”⁴ We also learn from the Apostle Paul that faith comes by hearing the word of God (see Romans 10:17). Therefore, if we want to increase our faith, we must read the scriptures, study the teachings of our latter-day apostles and prophets, and follow the direction of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Faith is also a decision. If we want to be immersed and saturated in faith, then we must choose to believe; we must choose to exercise faith.

We must supplant our fears with faith. Thinking of the Savior and remembering Him helps to strengthen

Hope is believing in God's promises to us. It is a gift of the Spirit. As you pray for this gift, your load will be lifted, and you will, in turn, bless and inspire others.

our faith and combat fear. In the Doctrine and Covenants we read, "Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not" (Doctrine and Covenants 6:36). The Savior also taught, "And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you" (3 Nephi 18:7, 11). With His Spirit constantly with us, we will have the ability to stay focused, brush off fearful thoughts and worries, and see the world the way Christ would see it.

To have faith means to trust in God and believe in His promises to us. President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) said:

"There will be nothing in this world that can defeat us.


". . . Fear not. Be of good cheer. *The future is as bright as your faith.*"⁵

Since a prophet of our day believed that the future is as bright as our faith, shouldn't we believe it too? Learn to choose faith over fear.

Hope

The prophet Moroni taught, "Whoso believeth in God might with surety hope for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, which hope cometh of faith, maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast, always abounding in good works, being led to glorify God" (Ether 12:4). Hope is believing in God's promises to us and expecting the Lord to deliver us. As Mormon taught, our hope is rooted in the Savior and the Atonement (see Moroni 7:41).

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that "each time a hope is fulfilled, it creates confidence and leads to greater hope."⁶ He explained that hope is cultivated the same way faith is—by reading and studying the word of God—and by exercising hope. He said: "Hope is not knowledge, but rather the abiding trust that the Lord will fulfill His promise to us. It is confidence that if we live according to God's laws and the words of His prophets now, we will receive desired blessings in the future. It is believing and expecting that our prayers will be answered. It is manifest in confidence, optimism, enthusiasm, and patient perseverance."⁷



When you begin to feel stress and the pressures of the world, learn to turn outward instead of inward. Find someone that you can help or bless.

Elder Uchtdorf further declared that despair, or a lack of hope, “drains from us all that is vibrant and joyful and leaves behind the empty remnants of what life was meant to be. Despair kills ambition, advances sickness, pollutes the soul, and deadens the heart.”⁸ Hope, on the other hand, breeds faith, optimism, confidence, trust, and happiness.

If we have the Holy Ghost with us, we will have hope; we will expect the Lord to bless us; we will have confidence in His promises to us. Become a person of hope by trusting in God and knowing that His promises are real. Hope is a gift of the Spirit. As you pray for this gift, your load will be lifted, and you will, in turn, bless and inspire others.

Charity

The final weapon in our arsenal is charity—ultimately the greatest of the three principles discussed here (see 1 Corinthians 13:13; Moroni 7:46–47). Consider that our fears can cause us to become preoccupied with our own issues to the point that we become blind to the needs of those around us. Fear can disconnect us from the Lord’s Spirit and can separate us from other people. In an October 2011 general conference talk, Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles quoted this scripture: “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear” (1 John 4:18). He then

observed, “If we simply love God and love our neighbors, we are promised that we will overcome our fears.”⁹

President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901) taught, “When you find yourselves a little gloomy, look around you and find somebody that is in a worse plight than yourself; go to him and find out what the trouble is, then try to remove it with the wisdom which the Lord bestows upon you; and the first thing you know, your gloom is gone, you feel light, the Spirit of the Lord is upon you, and everything seems illuminated.”¹⁰

When you begin to feel stress and the pressures of the world, learn to turn outward instead of inward. Find someone that you can help or bless. When we put others’ needs before our own and serve and bless those around us, our own fears and problems seem to be put into proper perspective.

Faith, hope, and charity—these three great pillars of the gospel are the great antidote to confusion, doubt, and fear. As you deepen your commitment to these principles and practices, you will feel the Lord’s Spirit in your life, and you will begin to feel your load lighten. Your life will become much happier as you seek to lift the spirits of those around you. ■

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Howard W. Hunter* (2015), 70–71.
2. *Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of George Q. Cannon*, sel. Jerreld L. Newquist (1987), 17.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Gordon B. Hinckley* (2016), 338.
4. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (1966), 264.
5. Thomas S. Monson, “Be of Good Cheer,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 92; emphasis added.
6. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Infinite Power of Hope,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 24.
7. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Infinite Power of Hope,” 22.
8. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Infinite Power of Hope,” 22.
9. L. Tom Perry, “Perfect Love Casteth Out Fear,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 43.
10. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow* (2012), 260.



By Elder Neil L. Andersen

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

ELDER ULISSES SOARES: **A Man without Guile**

In the early days of His ministry, as Jesus was selecting His Apostles, He saw Nathanael coming toward Him. He immediately discerned Nathanael's goodness, declaring, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"¹

Jesus knew that Nathanael was a man of pureness of heart, honest in his intentions, and without hypocrisy or deceit. The Lord loves this quality of righteous integrity, and He called Nathanael to be an Apostle.²

Ulisses Soares is like Nathanael of old, and the Savior has called him as well.

"The Light of My Parents"

Ulisses, the youngest of four brothers, was born in São Paulo, Brazil, on October 2, 1958. He came from humble beginnings, but his parents, Aparecido and Mercedes Carecho Soares, were honorable, hardworking people who honestly listened to the missionaries. They joined the Church in 1965 when Ulisses was six years old.

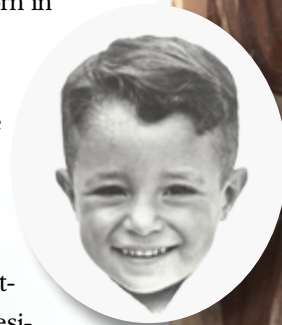
"I never saw Brother Aparecido miss a meeting," says Osiris Cabral, who served as stake president when Ulisses was a young man. "Mercedes was also very faithful. Ulisses inherited his parents' dedication."

Ulisses's naturally good heart blossomed as he learned the ways of the Lord. "I grew up in the Church following the light of my parents," Elder Soares says. As he followed

that light, his testimony grew stronger despite opposition.

"I was the only member of the Church in my school, and the other boys were always trying to drag me down and push me to do things that were wrong," he says. "I had to learn to defend myself in these challenges, but I always trusted in the Lord with all my heart to help me succeed. I learned as a young man that if you do your part, the Lord will do His. But you have to hold tight to His hand and to His gospel."

When Ulisses was 15, his bishop asked him to teach a youth Sunday School class. One lesson he taught centered





asked, the Lord would generously bless him. One such lesson came as he prepared for a mission. During interviews with Ulisses, his bishop emphasized the importance of obeying the commandments and living worthily. He also stressed financial preparation.

Today all missionaries from Brazil contribute to their mission costs, with many families contributing all the costs. As Ulisses approached mission age, he determined that he would earn all the money needed for his mission. Taking advantage of the strong work ethic he had learned working in his father's

on gaining a testimony of the gospel. Ulisses had studied the Book of Mormon, always felt that the Church was true, and believed in the Savior Jesus Christ.

As he prepared his lesson, he wanted to strongly testify to his class of the gospel's truthfulness. "I studied and prayed fervently," Elder Soares recalls. "After I knelt down, there came to my heart a very sweet feeling, a small voice that confirmed to me that I was on the right path. It was so strong that I could never say that I didn't know."

As Ulisses matured, he learned that if he would do more than what was expected or

Ulisses Soares "grew up in the Church following the light" of his parents, Aparecido and Mercedes Soares (left). As Ulisses trusted in the Lord despite opposition, he learned as a boy to hold tight to the Savior and His gospel.

small business and armed with the ability to type fast, Ulisses found a day job helping a company prepare its payroll.

After passing a difficult entry exam, he began studying accounting at a technical high school in the evening. Each month, after paying tithing, he would save money for his mission. After a year, he was transferred to his company's accounting department.

"That's how I saved money to pay for my mission," Elder Soares says. "And each month during the three years before I left, I would buy something I needed—a shirt, a pair of pants, a pair of socks, a tie, a suitcase." He also

needed, and received, strong love and support from his parents and local leaders.

Ulisses was called to the Brazil Rio de Janeiro Mission. He served the first part of his mission under President Helio da Rocha Camargo, who would later become the first General Authority called from Brazil. Ulisses began his mission in early 1978. The first temple in Latin America was dedicated later that year in São Paulo by President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985).

In January 1980, Ulisses and his companion, who also had not received his endowment, boarded a bus in Rio de Janeiro for an eight-hour ride to the São Paulo Brazil Temple. Ulisses's parents and siblings met him there, and the Soares family was sealed for time and eternity. Ulisses has never forgotten those five hours together in the São Paulo Temple. Later that day, he and his companion returned to the mission field.

Putting God First

Ulisses enjoyed a successful mission, which further strengthened his testimony. When he returned home, he found a job and began studying accounting and economics at a local university.

He had been home about seven months when he ran into “Sister Morgado” at a multi-stake dance. Ulisses had served as her zone leader for a time, and the two spent the evening catching up and sharing mission stories. Three weeks later, they began dating.

Rosana Fernandes Morgado was eight when her older sister, Margareth, began taking her to church. Eventually, the two faithful young investigators received permission from their father to be baptized, but each had to wait

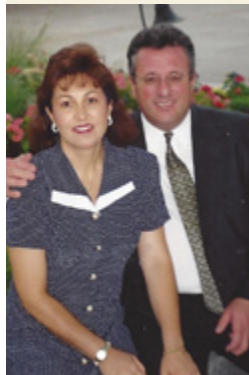
Elder Soares credits his wife, Rosana, with “all the good things in my life.”

The couple married in 1982 (far right), two years after a chance meeting following their service in the Brazil Rio de Janeiro Mission.

until she was 17. Rosana attended church for nine years before receiving permission to be baptized.

Ulisses lived in northern São Paulo, and Rosana lived with her parents in the city's southern sector. Travel across the sprawling city took two to three hours by bus and subway. Fortunately, Margareth and her husband, Claudio, lived near her parents' home.

“When Ulisses came on weekends to date Rosana, it was tough for him to return home so far at night,” recalls Elder Claudio R. M.



Elder Soares with Rosana in 2000 (above); with his family (lower right); and as a full-time missionary in 1979 (above right), with new member Eliezer Wagner de Souza Santos and his then-fiancée (now wife), Regina. Brother Santos currently serves as president of the Vila Velha Brazil Stake, in the state of Espírito Santo. Kim Pickett, Elder Soares's companion, appears in the background.



Costa, General Authority Seventy, of his future brother-in-law. So, he and Margareth invited Ulisses to spend the night at their home after his dates. “We adopted him for a while,” Elder Costa adds.

“He would sleep on the couch in our living room,” says Sister Costa. “We were recently married, so we didn't have extra blankets. But he would cover himself with an old curtain we had. He was happy because he could see Rosana again the next day. He was good to my sister, and my parents liked him very much.”

Ulisses and Rosana were married in the São Paulo Brazil Temple on October 30, 1982.

If you spend a few minutes with Elder and Sister Soares, their love, admiration, and

respect for each other quickly become apparent. For Elder Soares, Rosana “has been an example of goodness, love, and total devotion to the Lord for me and my family.”³ For Sister Soares, Ulisses is “a gift from heaven.”

Sister Soares adds: “He has always been extremely responsible and righteous, he has always taken good care of our family, and he has always treated me very well. In all of his Church callings, he has done his best. He goes and he does. He always puts the things of God first in his life. I fall in love with him over and over because I know if he puts the things of God first, he will also put me first.”

Of his wife, Elder Soares says: “She is the true hero and

inspiration in our family. She’s loving, kind, and patient with everybody. She unites our family, and she sees good in everyone. She has contributed enormously to what has happened in my life. Of my calling to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, I jokingly told her, ‘I blame you for this because you have magnified so very much the power of the gospel in my life.’”

A Big Heart

Gustavo, the Soareses’ oldest child, remembers the night when, as a boy, he disobeyed his parents and slipped away to check out an annual celebration in their São Paulo neighborhood known as Festa Junina.

“I was in the middle of a large crowd having a good time when I heard an announcer call me up to the front,” he says. “That’s when I saw my dad.”

His parents had been worried sick, but rather than scold Gustavo, Ulisses hugged him tight.

“We had a serious conversation about me getting lost, but my parents treated me with respect,” Gustavo recalls. “I felt protected, and I knew that they really loved me.”

Ulisses is devoted to his family. Despite his busy work and travel schedule over the years, he made time to build relationships with his children.

When Elder Soares was sustained to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on March 31, 2018, perhaps no one was more surprised than Gustavo and his two sisters, Lethicia Caravello and Nathalia Soares Avila. But if love, hard work, empathy, and humility qualify a person for the apostleship, they say, they can understand why the Lord called their father.

“When Jesus called His Apostles, He didn’t pick the most knowledgeable Pharisees, He picked fishermen,” says Lethicia. “My father and mother are like that. They totally trust the Lord, and He uses them to fulfill His works because He knows they are selfless, willing to work hard, and humble enough to accept correction.”

Their father’s “big heart” will help him as he goes forward as one of the Savior’s special witnesses, adds Nathalia. “He





has the heart for it,” she says. “He feels heaven’s influence, and he loves everybody and wants to do what’s right.”

“Everything Will Work Out”

When Elder Soares served as president of the Portugal Porto Mission from 2000 to 2003, he became well known for using the Portuguese phrase “Tudo vai dar certo”—everything will work out.

“He taught it to us,” recalls Ty Bennett, one of his missionaries. “He lives his life with faith and optimism that if we do what the Lord wants us to do, everything will work out.”

He also taught his missionaries not to use the words *difficult* or *impossible*, says Richard Shields, another of his missionaries. “We referred to things as ‘challenges.’ That advice helped shape my life as I have looked at things as ‘challenges’ to be overcome rather than as ‘difficult’ or ‘impossible.’”

Such faith and optimism haven’t come from an easy life. Elder and Sister Soares know well the disappointment of going without, the weariness of long days of work and study, the challenges of ill health, and the heartache of miscarriage, stillbirth, and loss of siblings and parents.

But through life’s journey, they have put their faith in the words of Elder Soares’s favorite scripture: “Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers.”⁴

“Challenges are part of our progress,” Elder Soares says. “But when we are patient in suffering, when we learn to survive life’s challenges, when we remain faithful, the Lord keeps us in high regard and blesses us with the blessings He has promised.”

And when we hold tight to the iron rod, he adds, the Lord will not leave us alone.

“Consistency in holding tight to the commandments, to the gospel, to the scriptures, and to the Lord Jesus Christ helps us overcome life’s challenges,” Elder Soares testifies. “When we kneel down to pray, He will be with us and He will guide us. He will inspire us where to go and what to do. When we are obedient and humble ourselves, the Lord answers our prayers.”

Devoted Disciple

Ulisses Soares is a man of ability and preparation. His education, including a master of business administration degree, prepared him to work as an accountant and auditor for multinational corporations in Brazil. That experience prepared him to work in the Church’s finance department, which in turn prepared him at age 31 to become one of the Church’s youngest directors of temporal affairs. That preparation served him well as a mission president and in his calling as a General Authority Seventy on April 2, 2005.

Before being called to the Presidency of the Seventy on January 6, 2013, Elder Soares served as a counselor in and then as President of the Brazil Area Presidency and as a counselor in the Africa Southeast Area. There, he served as a counselor to Elder Dale G. Renlund, then a General



Authority Seventy. Elder Renlund, now a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, relishes their time together.

“Elder Soares is an exuberant, committed, devoted disciple of Jesus Christ,” says Elder Renlund. “I don’t know anyone who feels more keenly that he’s on the Lord’s errand. If he’s asked to do something, he does it with all his might.”

He said Elder Soares quickly “fell in love” with the Saints in Africa. One of his first assignments in the area was to preside over a stake

Whether among the Saints of Peru (left), Ghana (below), or other nations where he has served and ministered, Elder Soares “easily loves people,” says Elder Claudio R. M. Costa.



conference in Kananga, Democratic Republic of Congo. “When he returned, he couldn’t stop talking about the goodness and devotion of the people he met,” Elder Renlund says.

Elder L. Whitney Clayton, who served with Elder Soares for five and a half years in the Presidency of the Seventy, calls Elder Soares a consensus builder. “He listens and measures his thoughts. He is careful in the way he conducts himself in meetings so that our voices form a chorus, rather than that of competing soloists.”

Elder Soares is modest about his ability to

Despite his busy work and travel schedule over the years, Elder Soares has always put his wife, children, and grandchildren (lower left) first in his life. He has also made time, with his wife, to become an accomplished chef (far left).

communicate in Portuguese, English, Spanish, and French. But that gift, which requires constant attention, is a blessing to the Church, says Elder Clayton. Elder Soares can speak to the vast majority of Church members in their own language.

“Ulisses has been a leader since he was a boy,” observes Elder Claudio Costa of his brother-in-law. “He is very intelligent and very capable, and he feels the responsibility to always give his best. He easily loves those around him. He has the heart of a true disciple of the Savior, and he has the sure witness that Jesus is the Christ. I love him and am grateful to sustain him as an Apostle of the Lord.”

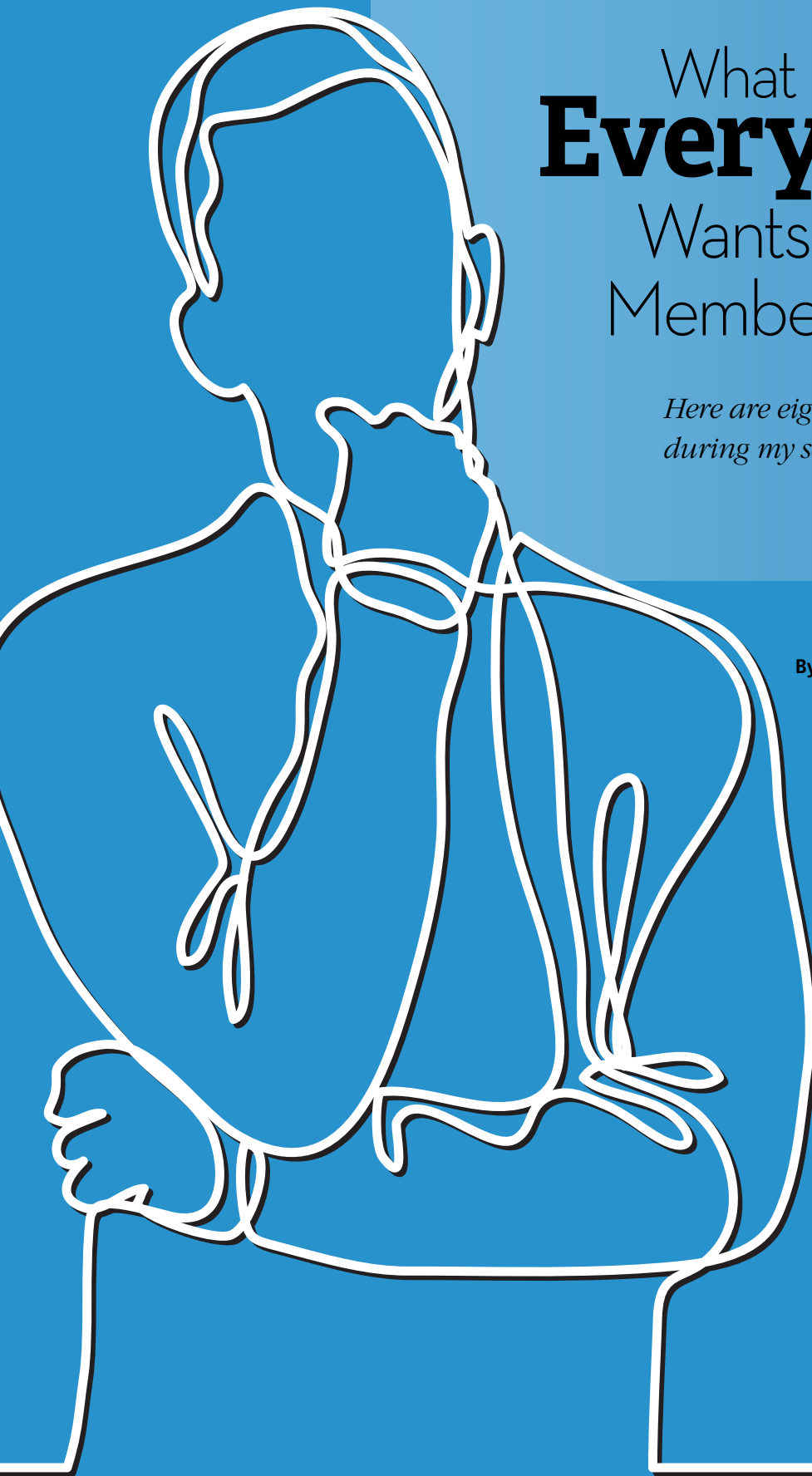
And Elder David A. Bednar, speaking for the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, adds: “Elder Soares is a pure, guileless, and innocent disciple of the Savior. Through the light in his countenance, his warm smile, and his gracious manner, countless individuals and families have been, are, and will be inspired with a greater desire to follow the Savior and live the precepts of His gospel.”

In our dispensation, the Lord said of Edward Partridge, “His heart is pure before me, for he is like unto Nathanael of old, in whom there is no guile.”⁵ Of Hyrum Smith, the Lord said, “I, the Lord, love him because of the integrity of his heart, and because he loveth that which is right before me.”⁶

Of Ulisses Soares, the Lord would say the same. ■

NOTES

1. John 1:47.
2. See James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (1916), 217–18, 222.
3. “Prophets Speak by the Power of the Holy Spirit,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 98.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 112:10.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 41:11.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 124:15.



What **Every Bishop** Wants His Ward Members to Know

*Here are eight truths I learned
during my service as a bishop.*

By Michael Meyers

I had the wonderful opportunity to serve as a bishop. During those years, I learned more lessons than can be enumerated. But I did learn eight truths that I believe are universal. While this list is not all-inclusive, it is my attempt at sharing what every bishop hopes his ward members know.

1. The bishop loves every member of his ward in a very real way.

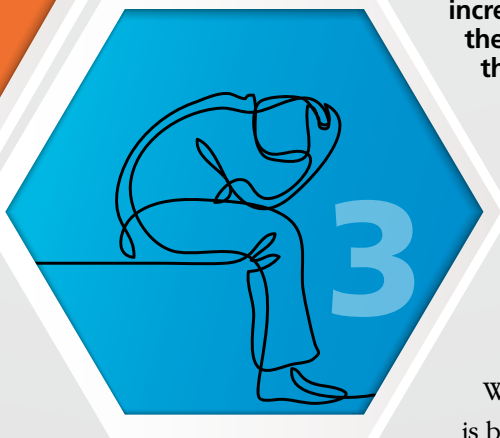
The love a bishop has for his ward is connected to the love that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have for each of us. When a bishop looks out at the members in a sacrament meeting, compassion and empathy rest upon him in a way unlike anything he has experienced. When a bishop stands up and shares how much he loves his ward members, his feelings are heartfelt and real. Know that your bishop loves you, is concerned about you, and cares about you more than you know.



2. The bishop is physically, emotionally, and spiritually sustained by the faith and prayers of the members.

A bishop spends countless hours serving. He will often spend many hours at church on Sunday and additional weeknights after work visiting, interviewing, and caring for the members of his ward.

The bishop is able to do this week after week because of the faith and prayers of the ward members. As a newly called bishop, tears involuntarily flowed every time I heard a member pray to “bless the bishop.” Your prayers of faith truly are answered, and the bishop receives and feels the sustaining influence of those prayers. The Lord answers those faith-filled prayers upon the heads of the bishops of the Church.



3. The bishop often feels incredibly inadequate for the calling (even after three or four years).

I have known very few bishops who felt they were truly “prepared” for the calling. I do know, however, that “whom the Lord calls, the Lord qualifies.”¹

While a bishop knows he is becoming qualified, he also struggles with feeling like he is never going to do the calling well. He will do his best to give wise counsel when needed, to not offend people, and to be in tune with the Spirit, but he will still wonder at times if he is fulfilling his calling acceptably.

4. The Spirit of God can work through the bishop when he is counseling with ward members.

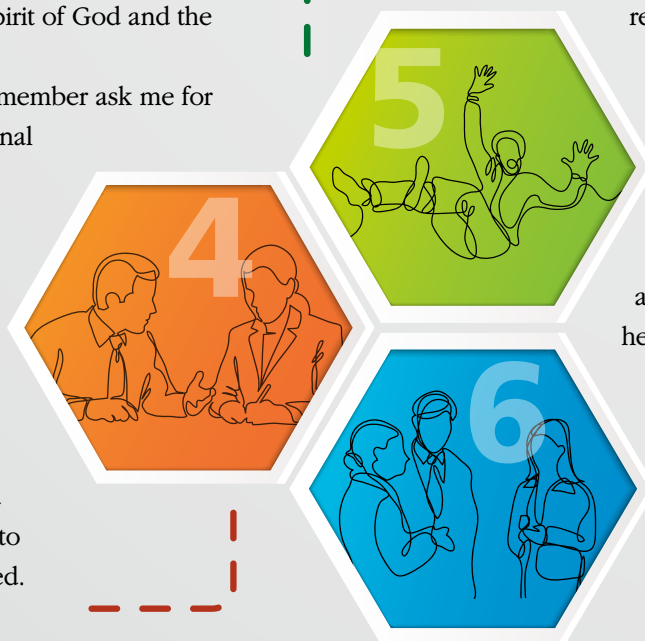
When asked what I miss most about serving as a bishop, I tell people that I miss the strong influence of the Spirit that accompanies the mantle of a bishop. Whether consoling those who had lost loved ones, speaking with those struggling with unfaithful spouses, or calling people to repentance, the Spirit that is available to a faithful bishop is the Spirit of God and the spirit of revelation.

I recently had a former ward member ask me for help in dealing with some personal issues. She had moved to a new ward and was not sure if she wanted to go to her new bishop for guidance. I shared with her what I have shared many times since being released, which was that while I was happy to assist, I no longer held the keys that a bishop holds and that those keys could be crucial to providing the support she needed. I suggested that she speak with her bishop. I visited with her two weeks later, and she said that she had met with her bishop and it was as if he already knew what her issues were and how to best help her. While the bishop is certainly fallible, the Lord inspires him, guides him, and blesses lives through his words.

5. The bishop is human; sometimes he makes mistakes and sometimes he does things wrong.

Bishops, after all, are mortal men. They have imperfections, weaknesses, biases, and their own personal issues. The Spirit qualifies the man who holds the office of bishop, but the bishop is still a man subject to the same issues and weaknesses that we all face.

This realization should not reduce the honor we show to his calling or the heed we give to his counsel. A bishop is well aware of his weaknesses and strives to overcome them or at least keep them out of his service as a bishop. As hard as he tries, he will always be imperfect.



6. The bishop feels that he can never see ward members enough or do enough good.

Every day a bishop wonders whom else he could or should have helped that day. I would have loved to visit with every member regularly, but I had a full-time job, my family, the youth program, and certain ward members with great needs. There was just not enough time to see every member on a regular basis.

Nevertheless, as a bishop, the Spirit sometimes prompted me to visit a certain member who was struggling. Many times, those visits started with them saying, “I knew you would come.” The Spirit we felt was often overwhelming as we both realized that the visit was proof that God answers prayers.

I also always enjoyed the reception I received at the doors of those active, “non-struggling” members. These good people go to church each week, serve faithfully in callings, have no tremendous outward challenges, and generally do not regularly receive visits from priesthood leaders. They were grateful to have some one-on-one time with their bishop. To all of you may I say, “Thank you! Carry on! Know that your bishop loves you and would visit more if he could.”

7. Your bishop really, truly, honestly needs you to minister to each other.

As a bishop, whenever I was told a ward member was struggling, I would always ask, “Who are the home and visiting teachers?” This was one way of assessing that the member’s needs would be met both short and long term. The bishop, acting without help from other members of the ward and stake, has limited resources. He certainly can—and will—go visit people in a crisis. But with the priesthood and Relief Society resources available to him, his reach can be extended.

This is what ministering is about. There are times when some of us forget why we minister to each other: The Lord has commanded us to “love one another” (John 13:34). Know that your bishop uses ministering as an inspired way to be “more present” in the lives of the ward members.



8. The bishop wishes he could do everything for his flock.

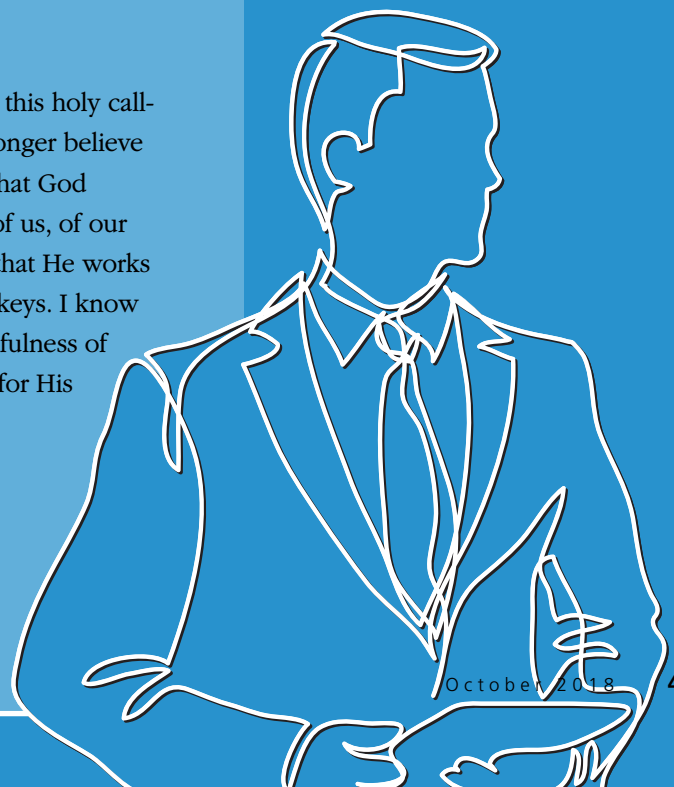
Anytime, day or night, whether it is a priesthood blessing, counseling a wayward child, or rushing to an accident scene, he would like to do whatever a member needs. He can’t always do it all, and he might not be the right person in every situation, but don’t be afraid to ask for help when you need it. Know that the bishop is there to serve in those times and that you are both richly blessed for working together.

I am humbled by the sacred opportunity I had to serve in this holy calling. In my service, I went from a belief to knowledge. I no longer believe that the gospel is true; I know it is true. I no longer believe that God knows me; I know that God is infinitely aware of each one of us, of our daily lives and our personal struggles. Furthermore, I know that He works through His servants, especially those who hold priesthood keys. I know that I could not have served as a bishop without God’s mindfulness of this work. It is the truthfulness of the gospel and God’s love for His children that enables every bishop to serve. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTE

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Duty Calls,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 44.



Our Child Is His Child

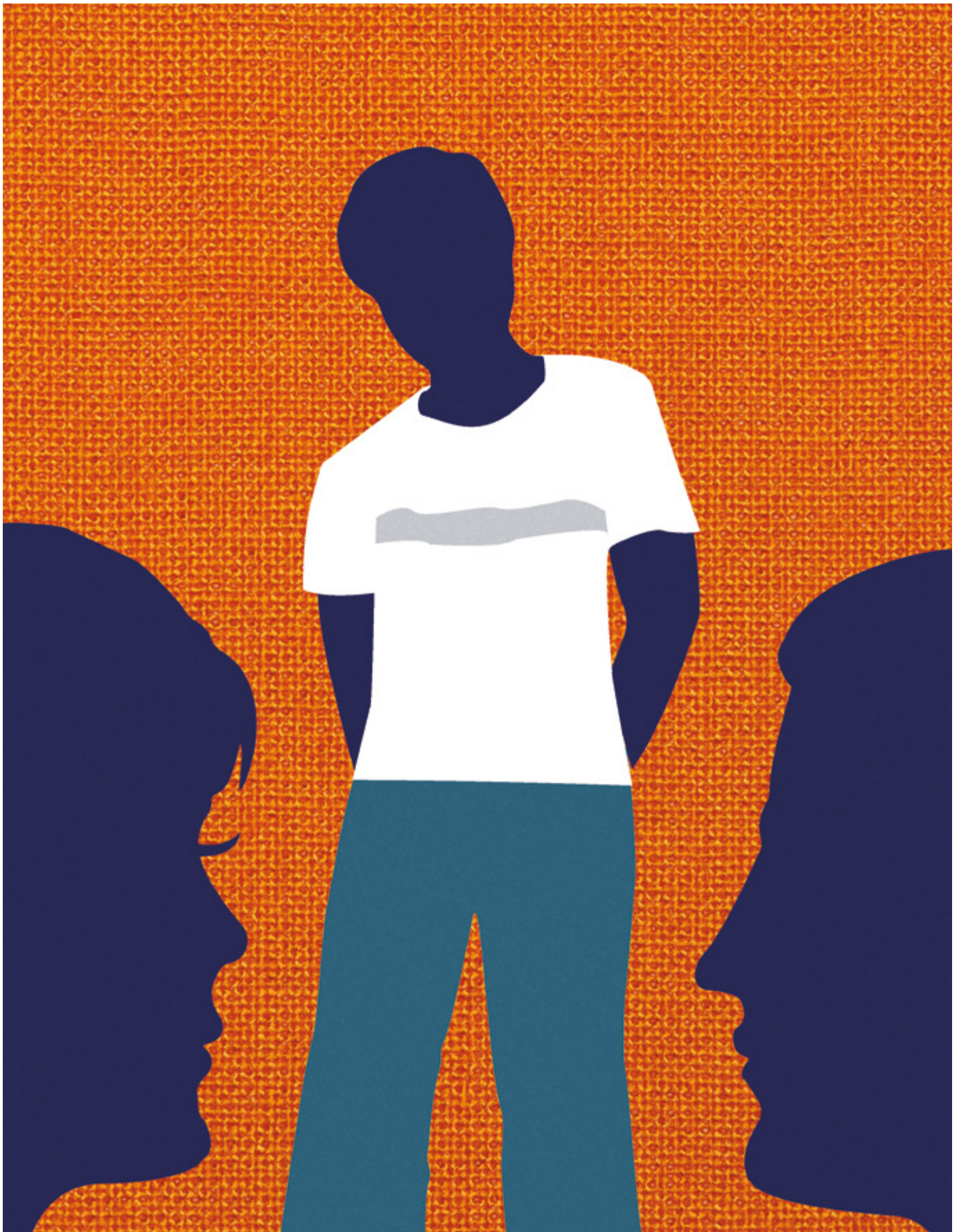
*We can trust the Lord to care for our
wayward children.*

By Martine Leavitt

You may have had to fight hard for your faith. Even if you were raised in the gospel, you may have had to sacrifice or struggle in choosing your faith. Perhaps you chose to go to church on Sunday instead of hanging out with your friends. Or you worked for a year to save the money for a mission and then put aside your education or career for two more years to serve the Lord. You perhaps lost friends because you chose to live the Word of Wisdom or just because you were a member of the Church. You accepted a lifelong journey of trying to be like your Savior—failing, repenting, and trying again. As much joy as being a member of the Church is for you, it probably came at some price.

And then you have a child, and you discover a new type of love. You want to give your children the world. Even knowing it isn't reasonable or possible, you want to spare your child every pain and sorrow. You work every day so you can give them food, clothing, a home, an education—you just want them to be happy.

You know what has made you happy above all: the gospel of Jesus Christ. You take your children to church and you have family home evening and family prayer, and you try to put into words they can understand why you love being a member of this Church. You dream of sending your child on a mission or seeing them sealed for time and eternity in the temple of the Lord. You dream of seeing your grandchildren raised in the gospel.



But one day—suddenly or over time—you realize, or you are told, or you discover that your child has chosen not to embrace the principles of the gospel.

Heartache and Worry

Of course, you knew that this could be a possibility. You saw it happen in other families. You knew that a third of the spirit children of God rejected His plan. You knew that Adam’s son Cain murdered Adam’s other son Abel. You knew what happened to Esau, the son of Isaac, and some of the sons of Jacob. You knew about Lehi’s sons Laman and Lemuel.

But maybe you weren’t expecting how it would feel—the worry that your child will live his or her life without the principles of righteous living, the aching concern you

have for their ultimate happiness. Other people look at your child and say, “Well, he’s an adult. He’s made his choice.” But all you see is that little child, innocent and beautiful and funny, toddling around the world all by himself without anyone knowing just how wonderful he is. You sense that somehow—you don’t know exactly how—you are at fault.

An Invitation to Ponder

I had all these feelings as I watched a son stray from the gospel and go down dark paths. One day, as I was seeking comfort, I read Doctrine and Covenants 31, a revelation given through the Prophet Joseph Smith to Thomas B. Marsh in September 1830. It was not the first time I had read it, but this time I slowed down and read it carefully and pondered it:

“Behold, you have had many afflictions because of your family; nevertheless, I will bless you and your family, yea, your little ones; and the day cometh that they will believe and know the truth and be one with you in my church.

“Lift up your heart and rejoice, for the hour of your mission is come; and your tongue shall be loosed, and you shall declare glad tidings of great joy unto this generation. . . .

“Therefore, thrust in your sickle with all your soul, and your sins are forgiven you, and you shall be laden with sheaves upon your back, for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Wherefore, your family shall live.

“Behold, verily I say unto you, go from them only for a little time, and declare my word, and I will prepare a place for them. . . .

“Be patient in afflictions, revile not against those that revile. Govern your house in meekness, and be steadfast. . . .

“Go your way whithersoever I will, and it shall be given you by the Comforter what you shall do and whither you shall go.

“Pray always, lest you enter into temptation and lose your reward.





“Be faithful unto the end, and lo, I am with you. These words are not of man nor of men, but of me, even Jesus Christ, your Redeemer, by the will of the Father. Amen” (Doctrine and Covenants 31:2–3, 5–6, 9, 11–13).

A Closer Look

The second verse says, “Behold, you have had many afflictions because of your family; nevertheless, I will bless you and your family, yea, your little ones; and the day cometh that they will believe and know the truth and be one with you in my church.” As I read this, I had the impression that the Lord was acknowledging that he understood—that this truly was an affliction to me. But after that expression of understanding, the Lord declares, “Nevertheless, I will bless you and your family, yea, your little ones.”

That wonderful promise is followed by a series of instructions. We may not be able to stop the affliction we are having, but there are things we can do to ensure that the Lord’s promises are fulfilled and to find comfort while

we wait for those promises to be fulfilled.

The Lord, in effect, is saying, “Thrust in your sickle. Because of your service, you have earned your blessings and your family shall live” (see Doctrine and Covenants 31:5). I am convinced that when the Lord says “live,” He isn’t necessarily talking about mortal life. He is talking about a different kind of life: eternal life.

We know that we do not “earn” eternal life—it is a supernal gift from a loving God through the merits, grace, and mercy of the Savior, Jesus Christ (see Doctrine and Covenants 14:7; 2 Nephi 2:8). We are saved by faith through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. But our service shows our faith. We serve because the Lord asks us to, which shows that we love Him, that we have taken upon ourselves His name, and that we desire to have His Holy Spirit to be with us, which in turn sanctifies us. As concerned parents, continuing to serve in our callings and to be loving brothers and sisters to the rest of our Father’s children brings the opportunity for blessings of all sorts in our lives.



Steps for Going Forward

The Lord then says, “Be patient in afflictions, revile not against those that revile. Govern your house in meekness, and be steadfast” (Doctrine and Covenants 31:9).

There’s a lot in this verse.

1. **“Be patient.”** It can be hard to be patient as the years go by and that wandering child doesn’t seem to notice just how patient we have been. It can be hard to be patient when you see your child making choices that could lead them into difficult situations. But you know what “patient” looks like, and so you behave patiently, even when your heart is breaking.
2. **“Revile not against those that revile.”** *Revile* means to “criticize in an abusive or angrily insulting manner.”¹ You remember that you cannot hope your child will want to return to the fold if he or she feels driven away by criticism, anger, or insults.
3. **“Govern your house in meekness.”** Moses was meek above all men (see Numbers 12:3). When the children of Israel sinned in the desert, he fell on his face before the Lord. He was heartbroken, but he taught the people, was submissive when they spoke against him, and prayed for them. At the same time, the word *govern* probably implies that you can expect that those in your home will meet a certain standard of behavior. You can expect that within the walls of your home, the Spirit will not feel unwelcome.
4. **“Be steadfast.”** To be steadfast is to be “resolutely or dutifully firm and unwavering.”² One woman I spoke to, who watched one child after another fall away, said that she felt her own testimony wavering. The years had been hard and disappointing, and she didn’t like being so different from her children. But the Lord seems to be assuring us that He will help us have the strength to be steadfast, firm, and unwavering—and that peace will come.

Peace and Hope for Parents

The Lord has these additional thoughts to get you through

hard days: “It shall be given you by the Comforter what you shall do” (Doctrine and Covenants 31:11). The Lord assures you that He will guide you through the Holy Ghost.

One time in the Old Testament, a man named Manoah, having heard that his barren wife was going to conceive, was visited by an angel of the Lord. He is the only man in scripture, as far as I know, who got to ask an angel for parenting advice. Manoah said to the angel, “How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him?” (See Judges 13:2–12.)

As I read this, I wondered what the angel would say. This child was to grow up and be a judge for Israel—how to raise such a special child?

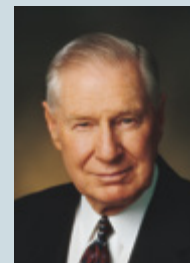
The angel answers this way: First he cautions the mother not to drink any wine or strong drink and not to eat any unclean thing. And then he says, “All that I commanded her let her observe” (Judges 13:14).

By keeping the commandments, we parents will be doing what we can. We will be striving to live worthy of the ongoing guidance and comfort of the Holy Ghost. We can trust that the Lord will care for our wayward child, knowing that our child is His child too. He loves our child more even than we can comprehend. He will be our everlasting help. ■

The author lives in Alberta, Canada.

NOTES

1. Oxford Dictionaries, “revile,” oxforddictionaries.com.
2. Oxford Dictionaries, “steadfast,” oxforddictionaries.com.



REPENTANCE OF WAYWARD CHILDREN

“If the repentance of the wayward children does not happen in this life, is it still possible for the cords of the [parents’ temple] sealing to be strong enough for them yet to work out their repentance? In the Doctrine and Covenants we are told, ‘The dead who repent will be redeemed, through obedience to the ordinances of the house of God, “ ‘And after they have paid the penalty of their transgressions, and are washed clean, shall receive a reward according to their works, for they are heirs of salvation’ [Doctrine and Covenants 138:58–59].”

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Dear Are the Sheep That Have Wandered,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 62.





By Elder
S. Mark Palmer
Of the Seventy

THE ENDURING INFLUENCE OF **Righteous Women**

*I appreciate the example of faithful Latter-day Saints
who, like Naomi and Ruth of ancient times,
demonstrate and embody pure religion.*

A Widow's Faith

One of the truly beautiful accounts in the Old Testament is the story of Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi. Consider the remarkable example demonstrated by Ruth and what brethren and sisters alike can learn from her.

Ruth became a widow at a relatively young age. She was a committed convert and made great sacrifices as she left home and relatives for Bethlehem. She famously declared to Naomi, “Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God” (Ruth 1:16). She showed complete loyalty and faithfulness to her widowed mother-in-law as she supported her in many ways, including providing food she gleaned from the fields of Boaz. In other words, despite being a widow herself, Ruth demonstrated pure religion in how she ministered to another widow, Naomi, in her time of affliction.

Ruth was known to all the people of the city as a virtuous woman (see Ruth 3:11.) Other women, seeing how good Ruth was to her mother-in-law and how she loved and cared for her, paid the extraordinary compliment that she was “better to [Naomi] than seven sons” (Ruth 4:15).



In a wonderful tribute to her goodness, Ruth was blessed to have in her lineage both King David and Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Her influence as a righteous woman has continued through the centuries, as millions who read the Old Testament have been uplifted and inspired by the book of Ruth.

A Mother's Faith

As I marvel at modern-day Naomis and Ruths, I think of my 90-year-old mother living in New Zealand, who has been a widow for 30 years. When I was called to be a General Authority Seventy in 2016, I visited her with the unexpected news of our assignment to Africa. I nervously shared that I did not know when I would be able to see her again.

With tears in her eyes she simply said, "Mark, the Lord needs you more than I do . . . and it would be selfish of me to want it any other way." Such is the faith of a righteous woman who has been a great example all my life.

"The Lord needs you more than I do," my mother (below) said. "It would be selfish of me to want it any other way."



In James 1:27 we learn that "pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." I am profoundly thankful for family members, home teachers, visiting teachers, ward members, and other loving Saints who regularly visit my mother and in so doing demonstrate pure religion.

Faithful Sisters

Many of our Latter-day Saint sisters exemplify Christlike service and teaching. As I have visited wards and branches in my assignment in Africa during the past two years, I have been especially impressed by the beautiful testimonies of African sisters teaching pure doctrine from well-worn scriptures both at the pulpit and in the classroom.

Sadly, sometimes sisters feel less important or less valued than their brethren. But we simply need to look at the example of the Savior to know that such is not His way. Consider how He loved Mary and Martha and took comfort from His visits with them. And in an act of great symbolic importance, the resurrected Lord appeared first, not to His Apostles, but to Mary Magdalene and also (according to the Gospel of Matthew) to "the other Mary" (see Matthew 28:1, 9). When the resurrected Savior appeared to the Nephites, He invited all—sisters, brothers, and children—to come to Him so He could minister to them one by one (see 3 Nephi 11:14–15).

A Faithful Pioneer

A year ago my wife and I were blessed to participate in a young single adult devotional in Luanda, Angola. Maer Emanuel Gonçalves de Carvalho, the branch president at the time, conducted the meeting. He is an excellent returned missionary, recently married in the temple. After the devotional, he introduced me to his mother, Paulina Lassaete Gonçalves. Since that time, I have learned more about this fine sister, who is a beloved pioneer of the Church in Angola.

This remarkable single sister raised six children, mostly on her own. Thanks, in part, to her example and gospel-centered teaching in the home, three of them have served

Sister Paulina Lassaete Gonçalves (below) raised her children mostly on her own but made sure a gospel influence was in the home.



missions or are now serving, while two more are preparing. Brother Carvalho writes: “My brother and I enjoyed listening to Book of Mormon stories which my mother shared with us when we were little. She used to put Book of Mormon pictures on the walls of our room and we loved them. We had a little box where we saved money for our missions when we grew up. We had family prayers every day, and my mother read the scriptures to us. . . . We prayed, sang, and listened to stories that Mom read to us.”¹ Such is the influence of a righteous and faithful sister in the gospel!

To Shepherds in Israel

All of us, especially those called as shepherds in Israel, should visit the fatherless and the widows and pay special attention to our single sisters and single mothers so we can involve them, learn from their examples of faith, and seek to ease their individual and unique burdens. You who are called as leaders, listen well to the sisters with whom you serve—and especially those you are called to serve—and heed their inspired counsel.

Honestly and prayerfully consider your own personal actions and ask yourself:

- How can I help change the experiences of women in the Church so they know their participation in ward and stake councils is meaningful and essential

and they feel valued as full and equal participants in every council setting?

- What experiences and opportunities do widows and single members need so that they feel more included in family settings and less isolated or neglected in this family-focused church?
- What can wives and husbands do at home so that one does not dominate and both become contributing and full partners, governing their family together in righteousness?

Future of the Church

Just as the righteous examples of Ruth and Naomi have inspired generations, so faithful women will have an ever-increasing and prominent impact on the future of the Church. In 1979, President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) prophesied: “Much of the major growth that is coming to the Church in the last days will come because many of the good women of the world . . . will be drawn to the Church in large numbers. This will happen to the degree that the women of the Church reflect righteousness . . . in their lives and to the degree that the women of the Church are seen as distinct and different—in happy ways—from the women of the world.”² We are now seeing this prophecy fulfilled in a wonderful way.

Testimony

The greatly loved Bible account of Ruth and Naomi teaches many lessons, including loyalty, devotion, faithfulness, virtue, and the power of compassion and Christlike service. To any sisters in the Church who may feel neglected or unloved, I testify that Heavenly Father knows and loves you. You are His daughters. Our sincere prayer is that throughout the Church, programs will never replace pure religion and that every member, no matter their circumstances, will feel valued and loved. ■

NOTES

1. Maer Emanuel Gonçalves de Carvalho, “I Chose to Serve,” africase.lds.org/i-chose-to-serve.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 222–23.



What We Can Learn from King David's Fall

We can avoid tragedy by learning from the chain of bad choices that separated David from the Spirit.

By Frank F. Judd Jr.

Associate Professor of Ancient Scripture at Brigham Young University

The Old Testament is filled with good examples to emulate and bad examples to avoid. What makes it especially applicable, however, is its stories of good people who often try to do what is right but also make mistakes. King David is one such example.

The Book of Mormon prophet Moroni said, “Give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more wise than we have been” (Mormon 9:31). We can apply this same principle to King David’s life. We do not glorify the mistakes he made, but thankfully we can learn from them.

A Good Start Isn’t Enough

King David was foreordained to accomplish great things. And as a young man he had great zeal for the Lord and rose to great heights. But foreordination is no guarantee. Rather, it is an opportunity that depends upon faithfully living the gospel. As Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: “God foresaw the fall of His beloved David but did not cause it. (See D&C 132:39.) Sending for Bathsheba was David’s decision.”¹

President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) said, “David commenced well the race, then faltered and failed to finish his course.”² David’s failure, however, did not come all at

once but by degrees. A series of bad choices ultimately led to his downfall. Examining these choices can help us avoid the same types of mistakes.

The Beginning of Bad Choices

The story of David and Bathsheba begins with the Israelite army fighting a battle against the Ammonites at Rabbath-Ammon, modern-day Amman, Jordan. But the account adds what turns out to be an ominous detail: it was the time of year “when kings go forth to battle . . . but David tarried still at Jerusalem” (2 Samuel 11:1). Kings were expected to lead their armies into battle, but David decided to stay home instead.

Elder Hartman Rector Jr. of the Seventy encouraged Church members to “be where you should be when you should be there.”³ Whether it is attending Church meetings, helping with a service project, or magnifying callings, we should always fulfill our covenant responsibility to be in the right place, at the right time, doing the right things. Being “anxiously engaged in a good cause” (D&C 58:27) can safeguard us against many temptations, because, as President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) taught, “idleness leads to evil.”⁴

One evening, King David “walked upon the roof of the king’s house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing

herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. And David sent and inquired after the woman” (2 Samuel 11:2–3). In Jerusalem, there are often comfortable evening breezes, and even today people will go out on the roof to cool off. David’s palace was probably on the crest of a densely populated hill, today called the City of David, where it would have been common to see others below on their roofs.

However, as President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, taught, David “allowed himself to look upon something he should not have viewed.”⁵ Another pivotal mistake was that when David found out Bathsheba was married, he did not let the issue go. The king knew Jehovah had commanded Israel to honor marital vows with complete fidelity (see Exodus 20:14, 17), yet “David sent messengers, and took her” (2 Samuel 11:4).

How Was It Possible?

How could such a great hero, so favored by the Lord, have made such misguided choices? In his younger days, “David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the Lord was with him” (1 Samuel 18:14). Yet in the face of temptation, David gave in to lustful desire. Modern revelation again teaches us that “he that looketh upon a woman to lust after her shall deny the faith, and shall not have the Spirit” (Doctrine and Covenants 42:23). The loss of the companionship of the Spirit certainly hindered David’s ability to choose wisely.

Elder Bruce C. Hafen of the Seventy observed that David “somehow developed too much confidence in his own ability to handle temptation. He was tragically willing to flirt with evil, and it ultimately destroyed him.”⁶ A better course of action would have been to follow the example of Joseph of Egypt, who, when confronted with temptation by Potiphar’s wife, wisely “got him[self] out” (Genesis 39:12). As President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) counseled: “The time to protect against the calamity is when the thought begins to shape itself. Destroy the seed and the plant will never grow.”⁷

Multiplying Bad Choices

His judgment impaired by the loss of the Spirit, David then committed adultery with Bathsheba and conceived a child out of wedlock (see 2 Samuel 11:4–5). As Alma explained, sexual immorality is “an abomination in the sight of the Lord; yea, most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost” (Alma 39:5).

Upon learning that Bathsheba was pregnant, the king compounded the tragedy by trying to hide his sin. David summoned Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah, who was in the Israelite army fighting against the Ammonites. When Uriah arrived in Jerusalem, David twice tried to convince him to go home and be with his wife so that everyone would think that the child was Uriah’s. In stark contrast to David, however, Uriah refused to spend time at home while his fellow soldiers were at war. (See 2 Samuel 11:5–13.) If there are any heroes in this story, Uriah the Hittite is one of them. Though not an Israelite by lineage, Uriah’s faithfulness to





the Lord is manifest by his name (“My light is Jehovah” in Hebrew) and by his actions.

David’s situation went from bad to worse. Modern revelation teaches that when a priesthood holder—as King David was—attempts to cover his sins, “the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man” (Doctrine and Covenants 121:37). The loss of the companionship of the Spirit as well as of his priesthood authority continued to erode the king’s capacity to make righteous decisions. It was while in this diminished spiritual state that David arranged for the murder of Uriah. Ironically, Uriah carried the letter containing his own death sentence back to the battlefield, where he died at the hands of the Ammonite soldiers. (See 2 Samuel 11:14–17.)

David’s downfall was not determined by one fatal mistake but rather a series of increasingly unwise and selfish decisions. It is important to remember that at any time during this devastating progression, David could have chosen to humble himself and seek repentance. Tragically, however, David admitted his guilt only after he was confronted by the prophet Nathan (see 2 Samuel 12:13). And while the Lord offers forgiveness to those who fully repent, He does not necessarily remove the negative consequences of sinful behavior. As President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994)

taught, “It is better to prepare and prevent than it is to repair and repent.”⁸

Stay Close to the Spirit

One of the central lessons for us from the story of David and Bathsheba is the importance of the Holy Ghost and its role in helping us make good choices. Nephi taught that if you “receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:5), thus helping us to be in the right place at the right time to avoid temptation. By extension, the Holy Ghost can also show us what we should not do, giving us courage to flee temptation when we are confronted by it.

David’s poor choices progressively hindered his ability to be filled with and use the precious gift of the Holy Ghost. In our own lives, it is critical that we live worthy of the companionship of the Spirit so that this precious gift may help us navigate the difficult roads of life. ■

NOTES

1. Neal A. Maxwell, *All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience* (1979), 19.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Finishers Wanted,” *Ensign*, June 1989, 3.
3. Hartman Rector Jr., “Following Christ to Victory,” *Ensign*, May 1979, 30.
4. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Converts and Young Men,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 49.
5. Dallin H. Oaks, “Pornography,” *Ensign*, May 2005, 90.
6. Bruce C. Hafen, “The Gospel and Romantic Love,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1982, 67.
7. Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (1969), 114.
8. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* (2014), 221.



By Elder
Quentin L. Cook

Of the Quorum
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Apostles

How Merciful the Lord Has Been

The new multivolume history of the Church will help us keep our covenants by enlarging our memory of what the Savior has done for us.

For the first time in nearly a hundred years, a new multivolume history of the Church is being published under the direction of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Titled *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*, this narrative history tells the true story of ordinary people who became Saints through the Atonement of Jesus Christ (see Mosiah 3:19). The first volume, *The Standard of Truth, 1815–1846*, is now complete and has been translated into 14 languages for distribution to many areas of the world.

Saints is the story of how God restored His everlasting covenant because of His love for His children. It shows how the Lord restored His gospel to provide hope and peace in times of tumult, trial, and suffering. It also shows how restored covenants lead to exaltation through Jesus Christ.

You might expect the story to begin with Joseph Smith, but *Saints* begins in 1815 with the explosion of a volcano in Indonesia, which caused widespread death,



SANTOS

1815-1846

EL
ESTANDARTE
DE LA VERDAD

Through His prophet, God renewed covenants that do not eliminate evil, sorrow, suffering, and separation at death but do promise healing through the Savior's Atonement and assure us that relationships can endure in eternity.

disease, and disruption. This beginning point was chosen in light of what the Lord revealed about how He restored covenants that bind us to the Savior and enable us to overcome all of life's problems:

“I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments; . . .

“That mine everlasting covenant might be established”
(Doctrine and Covenants 1:17, 22).

From its opening scene to its worldwide distribution, *Saints* signals to God's children everywhere that it is the story of their covenant with God, who knows their hardships. Through His prophet, God renewed covenants that do not eliminate evil, sorrow, suffering, and separation at death but do promise healing through the Savior's Atonement, sanctify and endow our lives with transcendent meaning, and assure us that relationships we cherish here on earth can endure in eternity, “coupled with eternal glory” (see Doctrine and Covenants 130:2).

The first eight chapters of *The Standard of Truth* have



been published in issues of this magazine throughout the year. This month's issue concludes the serialized chapters from *Saints*, but the story continues at saints.lds.org, in the Gospel Library app, and in print (order at store.lds.org). I invite you to continue reading it in any of these channels.

A Divine Pattern and Plan

Saints continues a divine pattern in which prophets, as part of their ministry, use the past to help us learn who we are and see God's purposes in our lives. In the scriptures, many prophets begin their teaching by recounting

stories of the Lord's mercy to their forefathers.¹ Moroni exhorted readers of the Book of Mormon to "remember how merciful the Lord hath been" throughout history "and ponder it in your hearts" (Moroni 10:3). Reflecting on God's goodness prepares us to receive the witness of the Spirit, which teaches us "of things as they really are, and of things as they really will be" (Jacob 4:13; see also Moroni 10:4–5).

Knowing that our Heavenly Parents planned for our ultimate happiness and exaltation provides us with perspective, gives us identity as beloved children of divine parents, and increases our confidence in the Lord, even in times of adversity. Remembering the Lord's goodness can also protect us against pride and the perils of prosperity. Mormon wrote about a time when the Nephites "began to grow exceedingly rich." But unlike other periods in the Book of Mormon when the people allowed pride and riches to bring their downfall, they followed a different path this time: "But notwithstanding their riches, or their strength, or their prosperity, they were not lifted up in the pride of their eyes; neither were they slow to remember the Lord their God; but they did humble themselves exceedingly before him." They kept their covenants and remained righteous because "they did remember how great things the Lord had done for them" (see Alma 62:48–50).

Saints teaches lessons like these and many more. It will help you see the Lord's hand in your life as you vicariously experience the trials of faith, the heartaches and joys, the revelations and resolve of imperfect people who loved the Lord and who felt His love.

As you read, you will discover new insight and meaning even in stories you have heard before. No scene in Church history is better known than Joseph Smith's First Vision, but *Saints* helps us better understand how Joseph struggled to reconcile what he felt in his heart with what he thought in his mind.

Joseph's heartfelt desire to feel the Savior's forgiveness had gone unfulfilled because he observed that none of the existing churches taught "the gospel of Jesus Christ as recorded in the New Testament."² In his mind Joseph pondered which church was right or if they were all wrong. In his heart he desperately hoped that one of them was right so he could find the peace he sought. With his head and his heart at odds, Joseph discovered that he could ask of God. He went to the woods to pray. There he saw the Father and the Son, who forgave him and resolved his dilemma in a way he had never imagined.³



Saints shows that knowing the dealings of the Lord gives us eternal perspective, helps us see things as they really are and will be, and helps us exercise faith that the Lord will see us through hard times.

Joseph, his family, and the many other people who embraced the Lord's restored covenant wanted to feel God's love for them, learn how they could draw closer to Him, and heal relationships with loved ones. *Saints* tells their stories.

Trusting the Lord during Trials

Volume 1 of *Saints* includes the heart-wrenching story of Amanda Barnes Smith and her family, who obeyed the Lord's commandments and were doing His will.⁴ Amanda's husband and one of her sons were brutally killed along with 15 other Latter-day Saints camped at a small settlement on Shoal Creek in Missouri. The Lord sustained Amanda through the awful experience, answered her prayers, gave her courage, and enabled her to heal her severely wounded son.⁵

Saints shows how Amanda learned to trust in the Lord through extreme adversity. It also tells what Joseph Smith learned about God's goodness even in times of suffering. It shows that knowing the dealings of the Lord gives us eternal perspective, helps us see things as they really are and will be, and helps us exercise faith that the Lord will see us through hard times.

When the Prophet Joseph learned what had happened to Amanda's family and others on Shoal Creek, he felt he



would rather go to prison or be killed than let the Saints be slaughtered. The next day he attempted to negotiate a peaceful solution with the Missouri militia, which was poised to attack the Saints' main settlement of Far West. Instead, Joseph was captured and held as a prisoner.

Nearly five months later, Joseph remained in custody, confined in a cold, cramped underground cell in Liberty, Missouri. He wondered where God was hiding and how long He could stand to listen to the cries of widows and orphans. He prayed, "O Lord, how long shall they suffer

these wrongs and unlawful oppressions, before thine heart shall be softened toward them, and thy bowels be moved with compassion?" (Doctrine and Covenants 121:3).

Saints teaches us that adversity is not evidence of the Lord's disfavor, nor a withdrawal of His blessings. Opposition is part of God's plan to refine us and prepare us for an eternal, celestial destiny (see 2 Nephi 2:11). Joseph learned that the Savior's infinite suffering enables Him to succor us when we suffer and eventually to exalt us (see Alma 7:11–13). In answer to Joseph's anguished cry, the Lord listed all kinds of challenges before concluding:

"If the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.

"The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?" (Doctrine and Covenants 122:7–8).

Experiencing *these things* ourselves can endow us with Christlike empathy for those who are afflicted. "My heart will always be more tender after this than ever it was before," Joseph realized while in jail. He wished he could be with the Saints to comfort and console them. "I never could have felt as I now do," he explained, "if I had not suffered the wrongs that I have suffered."⁶

One reason the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles commissioned and approved *Saints* is that it can help each of us experience *these things* through the stories of others. We can learn from Amanda that even when God sees fit in His infinite wisdom not to prevent evil or suffering, He loves us and He is mindful of us. He hears our prayers and is merciful and kind.

Restored Temple Blessings

Nowhere is that mercy and kindness shown to us better than in the temple. At its heart, *Saints* is the story of restored temple blessings. The first volume ends as thousands of Latter-day Saints receive sacred ordinances in the Nauvoo Temple in 1846. The second volume will culminate in the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple and the Saints beginning to receive ordinances there in 1893. The third volume will

conclude with European Saints beginning to gather to the temple in Switzerland in 1955. The fourth volume will bring the story up to the present, when temples dot the earth and Saints all around the globe receive the ordinances of exaltation, as the prophets envisioned long ago.

In the Lord's house we make covenants and are endowed with the power to overcome the effects of the Fall, including evil and suffering in this world. We receive protection and ultimately power to come forth in the Resurrection, sealed to loved ones forever.

Saints will help us keep covenants by enlarging our memories in sacramental ways. It will help us to always remember what the Savior has done for us. Without records of God's dealings in the past, we could not "remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men" (Moroni 10:3). For these reasons we are indebted to the Lord and to the Saints who recorded their experiences of His love for them. The Lord commanded Joseph Smith to record his experiences (see Doctrine and Covenants 21:1). He commanded a Church historian working under Joseph's direction to "keep the church record and history continually" (Doctrine and Covenants 47:3). He commanded that the history include "all things which shall be for the good of the church, and for the rising generations" (Doctrine and Covenants 69:8).

With these revelations and the covenant promise to always remember the Savior in mind, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles began planning *Saints* 10 years ago. Now we encourage you to read it, trusting that it will assist you in understanding God's plan, seeing how merciful the Lord has been, enduring faithfully in good times and bad, gaining Christlike empathy for others, and keeping the covenants leading you to exaltation. ■

NOTES

1. Examples include Nephi (1 Nephi 17:23–43), King Benjamin (Mosiah 1), Limhi (Mosiah 7), an angel of the Lord to Alma (Mosiah 27), Alma (Alma 9:10), Mormon (Mormon 3:17–22), and Moses (Exodus 13:3).
2. Joseph Smith, in "History, circa Summer 1832," 2, josephsmithpapers.org.
3. See "History, 1838–1856, volume A-1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834]," 3, josephsmithpapers.org.
4. See "Revelation, 12 January 1838–C," [1], josephsmithpapers.org.
5. See *Saints*, volume 1, chapter 30, "Fight Like Angels."
6. "Letter to Presendia Huntington Buell, 15 March 1839," [1], josephsmithpapers.org.





CHAPTER 8

The Rise of the Church of Christ

This is chapter 8 of the new four-volume narrative history of the Church titled Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days. The book is available in 14 languages in print, in the Church History section of the Gospel Library app, and at saints.lds.org. The previous chapters were published in past issues and are available in 47 languages in the Gospel Library app and at saints.lds.org.

In early July 1828, with manuscript in hand, Joseph knew the Lord wanted him to publish the Book of Mormon and spread its message far and wide. But the publishing business was unfamiliar to him and his family. He had to keep the manuscript safe, find a printer, and somehow get the book in the hands of people willing to consider the possibility of new scripture.

Publishing a book as long as the Book of Mormon would also not be cheap. Joseph's finances had not improved since he started the translation, and all the money he made went toward providing for his family. The same was true for his parents, who were still poor farmers working land they did not own. Joseph's only friend who could finance the project was Martin Harris.

Joseph set to work quickly. Before he completed the translation, he had filed for the book's copyright to protect the text from anyone who might steal or plagiarize it.¹ With Martin's assistance, Joseph also started looking for a printer who would agree to publish the book.

They went first to Egbert Grandin, a printer in Palmyra who was the same age as Joseph. Grandin declined the proposal at once, believing the book was a fraud. Undeterred, Joseph and Martin kept searching and found a willing printer in a nearby city. But before accepting his offer, they returned to Palmyra and asked Grandin once more if he wanted to publish the book.²

This time, Grandin seemed more willing to take the project, but he wanted to be paid \$3,000 to print and bind 5,000 copies before he even started work. Martin had already promised to help pay for the printing, but to come up with that kind of

money, he realized he might need to mortgage his farm. It was an enormous burden for Martin, but he knew none of Joseph's other friends could help him with the money.

Troubled, Martin began to question the wisdom of financing the Book of Mormon. He had one of the best farms in the area. If he mortgaged his land, he risked losing it. Wealth he had spent a lifetime accruing could be gone in an instant if the Book of Mormon did not sell well.

Martin told Joseph his concerns and asked him to seek a revelation for him. In response, the Savior spoke of His sacrifice to do His Father's will, regardless of the cost. He described His ultimate suffering while paying the price for sin so that all might repent and be forgiven. He then commanded Martin to sacrifice his own interests to bring about God's plan.

"Thou shalt not covet thine own property," the Lord said, "but impart it freely to the printing of the Book of Mormon." The book contained the true word of God, the Lord assured Martin, and it would help others believe the gospel.³

Although his neighbors would not understand his decision, Martin obeyed the Lord and mortgaged his farm to guarantee payment.⁴

Grandin signed a contract and began to organize the massive project.⁵ Joseph had translated the text of the Book of Mormon in three months, assisted by one scribe at a time. It would take Grandin and a dozen men seven months to print and bind the first copies of the 590-page work.⁶

With a publisher hired, Joseph returned to Harmony in October 1829 to work his farm and be with Emma. Oliver, Martin, and Hyrum, meanwhile, would oversee the printing and send Joseph regular updates on Grandin's progress.⁷

Remembering the despair he had felt after losing the first pages he translated, Joseph asked Oliver to copy the Book of Mormon manuscript page by page, making a duplicate

to take to the printer so punctuation could be added and the type set.⁸

Oliver enjoyed copying the book, and letters he wrote at the time were saturated with its language. Echoing Nephi, Jacob, and Amulek from the Book of Mormon, Oliver wrote to Joseph about his gratitude for Christ's infinite Atonement.

"When I begin to write on the mercies of God," he told Joseph, "I know not when to stop, but time and paper fail."⁹

That same spirit drew others to the Book of Mormon as it was being printed. Thomas Marsh, a former printer's apprentice, had tried to find his place in other churches,

but none of them seemed to preach the gospel he found in the Bible. He believed that a new church would soon arise that would teach restored truth.

That summer, Thomas felt led by the Spirit to travel hundreds of miles from his home in Boston to western New York. He stayed in the area three months before turning toward home, uncertain why he had traveled so far. At a stop

along the way back, however, his host asked if he had heard about Joseph Smith's "golden book." Thomas told the woman he had not and felt compelled to learn more.

She told him he should talk to Martin Harris and directed him to Palmyra. Thomas went there immediately and found Martin at Grandin's printshop. The printer gave him 16 pages of the Book of Mormon, and Thomas took them back to Boston, eager to share the first taste of this new faith with his wife, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth read the pages, and she too believed they were the work of God.¹⁰

That fall, while the printers made steady progress on the Book of Mormon, a former judge named Abner Cole began publishing a newspaper on Grandin's press. Working at night in the shop, after Grandin's staff went home, Abner had access to printed pages from the Book of Mormon,

|||||
*"Thou shalt not covet
thine own property," the Lord
said to Martin Harris, "but
impart it freely to the printing
of the Book of Mormon."*
|||||

which was not yet bound or ready for sale.

Abner soon began poking fun at the “Gold Bible” in his newspaper, and during the winter he printed excerpts from the book alongside sarcastic commentary.¹¹

When Hyrum and Oliver learned what Abner was doing, they confronted him. “What right have you to print the Book of Mormon in this way?” Hyrum demanded. “Do you not know that we have received a copyright?”

“It is none of your business,” Abner said. “I have hired the press and I will print what I please.”

“I forbid you to print any more of that book in your paper,” Hyrum said.

“I don’t care,” Abner said.

Unsure what to do, Hyrum and Oliver sent word to Joseph in Harmony, who returned to Palmyra at once. He found Abner at the printing office, casually reading his own newspaper.

“You seem hard at work,” Joseph said.

“How do you do, Mr. Smith,” Abner replied dryly.

“Mr. Cole,” Joseph said, “the Book of Mormon and the right of publishing it belong to me, and I forbid you meddling with it.”

Abner threw off his coat and pushed up his sleeves. “Do you want to fight, sir?” he barked, pounding his fists together. “If you want to fight, just come on.”

Joseph smiled. “You had better keep your coat on,” he said. “It’s cold, and I am not going to fight you.” He calmly continued, “But you have got to stop printing my book.”

“If you think you are the best man,” Abner said, “just pull off your coat and try it.”

“There is law,” Joseph responded, “and you will find that out if you did not know it before. But I shall not fight you, for that will do no good.”

Abner knew he was on the wrong side of the law. He calmed down and stopped printing excerpts from the Book of Mormon in his newspaper.¹²

Solomon Chamberlin, a preacher on his way to Canada, first heard about the “Gold Bible” from a family he lodged

with near Palmyra. Like Thomas Marsh, he had moved from church to church throughout his life but felt dissatisfied with what he saw. Some churches preached gospel principles and believed in spiritual gifts, but they did not have God’s prophets or His priesthood. Solomon felt the time was coming when the Lord would bring forth His church.

As Solomon listened to the family talk about Joseph Smith and the gold plates, he felt electrified from head to toe, and he determined to find the Smiths and learn more about the book.

He set out for the Smith house and met Hyrum at the door. “Peace be to this house,” Solomon said.

“I hope it will be peace,” Hyrum replied.

“Is there anyone here,” asked Solomon, “that believes in visions or revelations?”

“Yes,” Hyrum said, “we are a visionary house.”

Solomon told Hyrum about a vision he had seen years before. In it, an angel had said that God had no church on the earth but would soon raise one up that had power like the Apostles’ church of old. Hyrum and the others in the house understood what Solomon said and told him they shared his belief.

“I wish you would make known some of your discoveries,” Solomon said. “I think I can bear them.”

Hyrum invited him to stay at the Smith farm as a guest and showed him the Book of Mormon manuscript. Solomon studied it for two days and went with Hyrum to Grandin’s printing office, where a printer gave him 64 printed pages. With the unbound pages in hand, Solomon continued on to Canada, preaching everything he knew about the new faith along the way.¹³

By March 26, 1830, the first copies of the Book of Mormon had been bound and were available for sale on the ground floor of Grandin’s printing office. They were tightly bound in brown calfskin and smelled of leather and glue, paper and ink. The words *Book of Mormon* appeared on the spines in gold letters.¹⁴

Lucy Smith treasured the new scripture and saw it as a

and faith. For by doing these things the gates of hell shall not prevail against you.”²³

Later, Joseph stood beside a stream and witnessed the baptisms of his mother and father into the Church. After years of taking different paths in their search for truth, they were finally united in faith. As his father came out of the water, Joseph took him by the hand, helped him onto the bank, and embraced him.

“My God,” he cried, burying his face in his father’s chest, “I have lived to see my father baptized into the true church of Jesus Christ!”²⁴

That evening, Joseph slipped away into some nearby woods, his heart bursting with emotion. He wanted to be alone, out of sight of friends and family. In the 10 years since his First Vision, he had seen the heavens open, felt the Spirit of God, and been tutored by angels. He had also sinned and lost his gift, only to repent, receive God’s mercy, and translate the Book of Mormon by His power and grace.

Now Jesus Christ had restored His Church and authorized Joseph with the same priesthood that Apostles had held anciently when they carried the gospel to the world.²⁵ The happiness he felt was too much for him to hold in, and when Joseph Knight and Oliver found him later that night, he was weeping.

His joy was full. The work had begun.²⁶ ■

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

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

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12. Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–45, book 9, [9]–[12]; Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1845, 166–68.
13. Chamberlin, Autobiography, 4–11.
14. Copyright for Book of Mormon, June 11, 1829, in *JSP*, D1:76–81; John H. Gilbert, Memorandum, Sept. 8, 1892, photocopy, Church History Library; “Book of Mormon,” *Wayne Sentinel*, Mar. 26, 1830, [3]. Some books were also bound in sheepskin.
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17. Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism*, 60–61.
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19. Joseph Smith History, circa Summer 1832, 1, in *JSP*, H1:10; Doctrine and Covenants 27:12–13 (Revelation, circa Aug. 1830, in Doctrine and Covenants 50:3, 1835 ed., at josephsmithpapers.org); Oliver Cowdery to Phineas Young, Mar. 23, 1846, Church History Library; “Joseph Smith Documents Dating through June 1831,” in *JSP*, D1:xxxvii–xxxix; see also Cannon and others, “Priesthood Restoration Documents,” 163–207. **Topic:** Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood
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DON'T BE A
Cold-Gravy Spouse

My relationship with my wife had gone cold. But together we renewed our marriage.

By Mark Clayton

“I still love you, but I am not in love with you anymore,” my wife told me.

As a professional marriage counselor, I knew this was serious. When I hear a client say this to a spouse, it usually means, “I want a divorce.”

We were driving home from the Las Vegas Nevada Temple. Ironically, we had just witnessed a young couple get sealed for eternity. I had asked my wife to drive so I could work on the Gospel Doctrine lesson I would teach the next day. My wife was willing to drive, but after nearly two hours of silence while I worked, she wasn't feeling very close to me.

That had recently been our pattern. I hadn't been a very good husband lately because I was so caught up in doing “more important” things. Once she made her announcement, however, I finally understood what was truly important and what was not.

A Marriage Gone Stale

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) once said, “Many couples permit their marriages to become stale and their love to grow cold like old bread or worn-out jokes or cold gravy.”¹

Simply put, I had become a “cold gravy” husband. Fortunately, my wife was not telling me she wanted a divorce. She was telling me she wanted a good husband.

I asked her what I could do to be better. She gave me a list that included things like cleaning out the storage shed, being more aware of finances, and knowing the details of our kids' schedules. Sadly, none of it was new to me.

I knew I had to reevaluate my priorities to put my marriage at the top. I started working on the list right away. I cleaned the shed, began regular budget meetings with my wife, and put my kids' schedules into my cell phone calendar. My wife also worked harder to feel in love with me again. We increased the consistency of date nights and of prayers as a couple and spent more quality time together. Ultimately, we were able to renew our marriage.

In contrast to our story, I often see unhappy endings when marriages grow stale. I saw it many times as a bishop. Some couples just aren't willing to put in the work required to renew their marriage. And there are those who might ask, “Is that so wrong? Can't we go on living the gospel and being a good person and let our marriages be what they are?”

The family proclamation states, “Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other. . . . [They] will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.”²

That is a sobering perspective. Our marriages are important to God, and we are expected to do everything we can to keep them alive and strong.

That being said, we cannot have complete control over a relationship that involves someone else's agency. In cases of abuse, leaving a marriage may be the only option. I have the utmost empathy for people in these heart-wrenching situations. We can find peace in the promise that “faithful members whose

circumstances do not allow them to receive the blessings of eternal marriage and parenthood in this life will receive all promised blessings in the eternities.”³

Beautiful, Sweet, and Growing

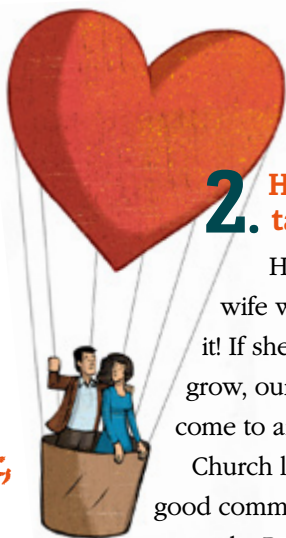
President Kimball had this counsel for cold-gravy spouses: “These people will do well to reevaluate, to renew their courting, to express their affection, to acknowledge kindnesses, and to increase their consideration so their marriage again can become beautiful, sweet, and growing.”⁴

So how can we do this? Here are some suggestions based on my experiences as a husband, marriage counselor, and bishop.

1. Admit your marriage could use some work.

While serving as a member of the Presidency of the Seventy, Elder Joe J. Christensen said, “Any intelligent couple will have differences of opinion. Our challenge is to be sure that we know how to resolve them.”⁵

Everyone has marriage and family problems. We risk becoming cold-gravy spouses if we do not admit our marriages could always use some work.



2. Have heart-to-heart talks about problems.

How lucky I am that my wife was willing to talk about it! If she had let her hard feelings grow, our marriage might have come to an unhappy ending.

Church leaders often emphasize good communication in marriage. For example, President Russell M. Nelson said: “Communicate well with your spouse. . . . Couples need private time to observe, to talk, and really listen to each other.”⁶ In *Gospel Topics* we read, “Couples can strengthen their marriage as they take time to talk together and to listen to one another, to be thoughtful and respectful, and to express tender feelings and affection often.”⁷

Tender implies discussing matters at the level of our feelings—having heart-to-heart talks. Contention or arguing is of the devil (see 3 Nephi 11:29; Doctrine and Covenants 10:63).

It is an attempt to prove yourself right and your partner wrong. On the other hand, conflict resolution is of God, and it requires humility and vulnerability.

3. Channel your anger away from your spouse by taking a time-out.

Time-outs are necessary to keep hard feelings from building up. Elder Christensen taught: “When differences do arise, . . . there are instances when it is best to take a time-out. Biting your tongue and counting to ten or even a hundred is important. And occasionally, even letting the sun go down on your wrath can help bring you back to the problem in the morning more rested, calm, and with a better chance for resolution.”⁸

4. Validate your spouse's feelings so your spouse knows that you are really listening and that you really care.



One Latter-day Saint marriage and family counselor said:

“Almost every relationship will thrive if there is a healthy dose of validation.

“Validation begins with paying attention to what your spouse is saying. . . . By verbally acknowledging your spouse’s emotions, fears, thoughts, or concerns, you are communicating validation and conveying appreciation, love, and respect.”⁹

My wife had been asking me to clean out the shed for a while because she was worried about mice and spiders. To me, mice and spiders belong outside, and since the shed is outside, I wasn’t worried about it. But after our talk, I realized that I had not validated her feelings or taken her emotional concern to heart. I promptly cleaned out the shed to show my wife that what is important to her is important to me.

In my counseling practice, I have boiled down communication skills to what I see as the three crucial skills described above: heart-to-heart talks, time-outs, and validation (recognizing, of course, that other professional counselors may emphasize communication skills differently). While I teach only three basic skills, I find it takes most of our therapy time to help couples apply them (no, it is not as easy as it seems). Once couples are able to apply these three key skills, they usually feel much better in their marriages.



The Music of Marriage

To improve our marriages, we each need to tune in to the emotional reality beneath the behavioral surface.

Elder Wilford W. Andersen of the Seventy described a similar idea when he counseled us to strive to hear the music of the gospel instead of just dancing the steps. “We learn the dance steps with our minds, but we hear the music with our hearts,” he explained. “The dance steps of the gospel are the things we do; the music of the gospel is the joyful spiritual feeling that comes from the Holy Ghost. It brings a change of heart and is the source of all righteous desires. The dance steps require discipline, but the joy of the dance will be experienced only when we come to hear the music.”¹⁰

Can we hear the music in our marriages, or are we trying to dance without a tune? Feeling the music requires soft hearts. Have our feelings become hardened and distant, or are our hearts soft? Do we feel and express love for our spouses? Do they feel and express love for us?

If we cannot hear the music now, we can work with our spouses until we can. Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, “No matter how flat your relationship may be at the present, if you keep adding pebbles of kindness, compassion, listening, sacrifice, understanding, and selflessness, eventually a mighty pyramid will begin to grow.”¹¹

I was lucky that my wife had a forgiving heart and was willing to work with me. We were able to renew the music in our marriage. But we still need regular tunings!

My personal and professional experience is that when couples work hard together in humility, their marriages become stronger and happier than ever before—no matter how cold the gravy was. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

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

EVERY BODY IS BEAUTIFUL

As children grow up, they become more aware of their bodies—what their bodies can do and how to take care of them. They also start noticing how their bodies are the same and different from those of other people. As parents and leaders, we can help children realize that *every* body is a beautiful gift. Let's help them value their bodies for what they can do, not how they look. And let's make sure they know that saying mean things about their bodies or another person's body is never OK. Here are some *Friend* stories (from this month's issue and past issues) that you could use to start a conversation about body image with your children.



"Nick's New Look" (Oct. 2018, page 32)

A boy with alopecia deals with classmates making fun of him and learns not to gauge his sense of worth based on what others think. A similar story, featuring a girl who is tall for her age, is "Forgiving Demi" (Jan. 2018, page 36).

"What's on Your Mind?" (Oct. 2018, page 34)

A page of tips in response to the question "Sometimes I don't like the way I look. How can I learn to love my body?"

"My Body Is a Temple" (July 2014, page 24)

This poster talks about why we have bodies, what's great about our bodies, how we should treat our bodies, and more.



Find stories, activities, and media related to this topic and others at lessonhelps.lds.org. For past *Friend* Connection articles, visit FriendConnection.lds.org.

TALK ABOUT IT

- Do your children know anyone with health issues or disabilities that affect how their bodies look or move? Instead of ignoring these differences, answer your child's questions. If your child says something insensitive to someone with a disability, say, "I'm sorry—my child is still learning," and encourage a healthy interaction. For more ideas on this topic, see the May 2018 "For Parents of Little Ones" (inside back cover).
- Encourage your children to give compliments about more than just how people look. Practice giving compliments instead about what they do—talents, skills, good choices, and so on.
- What if people are making fun of someone because of the way they look? Role-play situations where your children practice standing up for themselves or other people. Come up with ideas together about how they could show love to a classmate who has been bullied.

RELATED RESOURCES

- "Helping Children Appreciate Their Bodies," *Ensign*, June 2015, 72–75.
- *A Parent's Guide*, available on LDS.org, is a Church resource for talking to children about body maturation, sexuality, and intimacy in age-appropriate ways.



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

Learning to Live by the Spirit

This month’s *New Era* contains articles that help youth understand how to be led by the Spirit in their learning and living:



“Learning in the Lord’s Way.” Elder David A. Bednar teaches how to invite the Holy Ghost to be the teacher and follow the Lord’s patterns for learning (page 2).



“My Quarterback Question.” Elder S. Gifford Nielsen talks about how he made big decisions by asking God, receiving His direction, and trusting Him (page 18).



“Lost in the Forbidden City.” See how a young woman was guided by the Spirit after getting lost in an unfamiliar place (page 16).

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Here are some questions answered in this month’s *New Era* (pages 42–43):

How can I invite the Spirit into my home when people are fighting or arguing?

Is a testimony more than just feelings?

TALK WITH THEM

Here are some questions you might ask:

- In your experience, how do you feel the Holy Ghost speaks to you? Have you noticed any patterns in your life when it comes to being guided or taught by the Spirit?
- How can you show Heavenly Father that you trust Him and the spiritual guidance He gives you?
- Will you tell about an experience you’ve had when you obeyed a prompting from the Holy Ghost?

TEACH THEM

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

- Read “The Battle for Your Agency” (page 6), and talk about how consistently making good choices has helped you experience true freedom. Invite youth to share similar experiences.
- Read “Really Seeing the Gospel” (page 24), and share how the Lord has helped you or others you know to see beyond your limitations and grow in the gospel.
- Read “Paths That Prepare You for Your Future” (page 32), and talk about the things that helped lead you down the path to your future. Invite youth to check out “Discovering Your Path” on page 35 to learn more about their own possible paths.

SEND US YOUR SUGGESTIONS

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

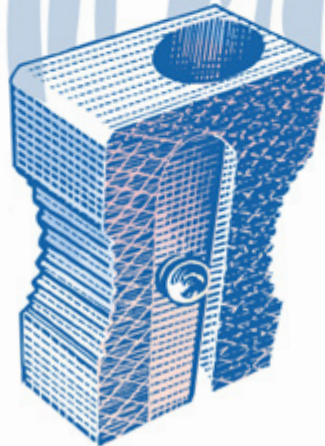


EGGS, FUSES, AND FAITH

One of our goals as a family is to save enough money to make a down payment on our own home. Without that goal, I might waste my weekends watching television, waiting for financial opportunities to come to me.

As a driver for a mining company in northern Chile, I work four days away from home at the mines and then have three days off—Saturday through Monday. To supplement our income and savings toward a home, we decided to start selling eggs. Our plan was to take orders from friends, neighbors, and Church members; buy about 1,000 eggs each week from a wholesaler; and then pick up and deliver the eggs on Saturdays and Mondays.

My wife, Laura, and I decided we would bring our two children with us on deliveries and enjoy the time together. As we were on our way to buy our first batch of eggs, however, disaster struck. One of our children, playing with a small metal pencil sharpener, tossed the sharpener and it landed squarely in the empty cigarette lighter receptacle. Sparks flew, and our van lost all electrical power, coming to



When a small metal pencil sharpener landed in the empty cigarette lighter receptacle, our van came to a sudden stop. We had blown a fuse.

a sudden stop right in the middle of a highway. We had blown a fuse.

As we sat there holding up traffic and wondering what to do, we became so frustrated that we felt like crying. But at that moment, I remembered that the Lord has promised to lift us and help us if we put our trust in Him. A calmness came over me. I realized I

couldn't just sit there complaining. We had a problem, and with God's help, we would solve it.

Laura and I turned to each other and said, "We have to show faith." We said a prayer and dried our tears. Then, with Laura steering, I got out to push the car. Several people jumped out of their cars and helped me.

We pushed the car about 200 meters before finding a safe place off the highway to park. As the car rolled to a stop, I noticed that we had parked right in front of a car stereo shop.

I located the blown fuse, walked inside the shop, and asked, "Do you have one of these?"

The clerk replied, "Of course."

I bought a fuse and put it in place, the car started right up, and off we went. The egg wholesaler was just about to close when we pulled up. We bought our eggs and made our deliveries.

When we have challenges, we need to remember to ask our Heavenly Father for help. I know He will answer us as we move forward and show our faith in Him. ■

Alvaro Alcaino, Antofagasta, Chile

A BLESSING IN MY MOTHER'S HANDWRITING

One evening I was pondering what message to give at an upcoming ward conference. I had been studying the scriptures throughout the week, and although I had received great instruction and insights, I still had no clear direction of what the Lord wanted me, as stake president, to share with members of the ward.

In heartfelt prayer, I asked for guidance from the Spirit to direct my thoughts. Then I opened the scriptures and began reading again. My mind immediately turned to the ward's goals that the bishop and I had recently discussed. One of those goals was to utilize *Preach My Gospel* in sharing the gospel with friends and neighbors.

I felt impressed to include *Preach My Gospel* in my own study that evening. I pulled out a copy and opened it to no page in particular. On that page, I found two handwritten scripture references—1 Nephi 8:8–11 and 1 Nephi 11:21–22. As I looked closer, I realized those references were written in my mother's handwriting. My sweet mother had passed away several years earlier, two months after her 80th birthday. She was an

example of courage and selflessness who always saw the good in people. And she loved the scriptures.

I opened the scriptures to those verses to see what prompted her to write them down. As I read them, my mind immediately opened to the message that I should give. It was a simple message that members of the Church who have tasted the delicious fruit of the gospel may sometimes forget that many others are seeking that same fruit. We need to reach out and tell them where to find it.

I thought of my sweet mother as

I looked through the rest of *Preach My Gospel*. There was no name, no other notes, or anything to indicate that the book had ever belonged to her. I sat in awe as I reflected on the chain of spiritual promptings that led to this moment. The Spirit confirmed to me that I had been directed in my thoughts, just as I had been praying for. Little did my mother know, however many years ago she wrote those references, that the Lord would use them to be the answer to her son's humble prayer. ■

Douglas Hedger, Nevada, USA

While preparing for ward conference, I opened *Preach My Gospel* to a page with scripture references written in my mother's handwriting.



A MIRACLE IN THE LORD'S HOUSE IN KYIV

My family and I were excited to be traveling by car from Romania to Kyiv, Ukraine, for the dedication of the temple in August 2010. Knowing that this would be the temple for the Saints in the Romania/Moldova Mission, we traveled for about 14 hours just to be there. When we arrived, we met another group who had also traveled from Romania. We were all happy to be in Kyiv for this sacred event.

On the day of the dedication, our group from Romania was assigned to watch the dedication via broadcast in a room on the ground floor of the temple. Some began to express their disappointment. They had hoped to participate in the dedication with the prophet in the celestial room. Some even said that they could have just stayed at home and watched the broadcast from their chapel in Romania.

I began to pray in my heart, “Heavenly Father, how can we help these members from Romania have an unforgettable experience in Thy house?”

I still hadn't received an answer when the dedicatory session began. Soon we learned that the prophet, President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018), was going to come down and put the cornerstone into place. Perhaps this could be our answer!



I prayed for a way for the prophet to come and greet the Romanian Saints.

“I don’t ask for this for myself,” I prayed, “but for my brothers and sisters.”

After the cornerstone ceremony, President Monson walked by our room on his way back to the celestial room. Suddenly, I felt in my heart that I should stand and invite him to come in our room.

I stood and said, “Our prophet! Come and see us. We are from Romania.”

He didn’t seem to hear me. Then, a moment later, he came back. “Romania!” he said and entered the room.

He greeted all of us and said he loved us very much. My heart was full as I watched the joyful faces of our dear members. “Thank you, dear

I prayed in my heart, “Heavenly Father, how can we help these members from Romania have an unforgettable experience in Thy house?”

Father,” I prayed, “for this miracle in Thy house.”

When the prophet left the room, no one was sad anymore. I felt that we were in the most blessed room in the temple. It was an experience I will never forget. ■

Doru Vasile, Bucharest, Romania

A SMILE OF ACCEPTANCE

One night our ward held an activity that we had spent hours preparing for. After the activity a young investigator said goodbye to me but a few minutes later returned and asked, “Bishop, when do I need to come back?” I told him Sunday, and the boy quickly said, “No, isn’t there another activity?” He had had such a good time with the youth of our ward that he wanted to come back.

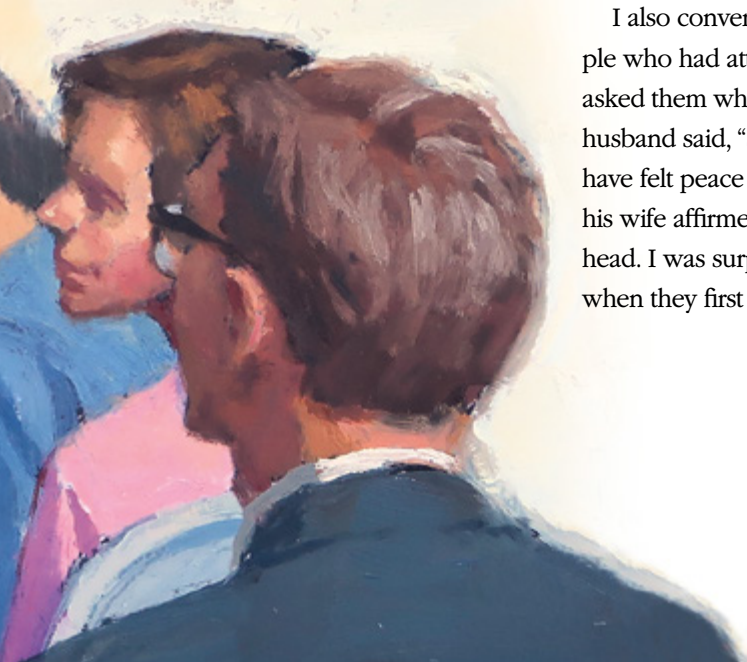
I also conversed with a visiting couple who had attended the activity and asked them what they had thought. The husband said, “Since we got here, we have felt peace and tranquility,” which his wife affirmed with a nod of her head. I was surprised by this because when they first arrived, there had been

a lot of people talking and making a racket. But he continued and looked at me and asked, “That’s the Holy Ghost, right?” Surprised, I could only say yes.

There had been a lot to do to get ready for this activity, so that night when everything ended, the only thing I had wanted to do was go home and go to bed. Because of how tired I was, I had not been able to think over my conversations with the investigators. When I got home, I said my prayers and got into bed, but I couldn’t sleep; in my mind I pictured the Lord smiling. It was a smile of acceptance. At that moment I began to remember the wonderful things that had happened at the activity.

I understood that the diligence and love of the ward members had made it possible for the hearts of those three investigators to be touched. I understood that the smile of acceptance was for what we were doing. I couldn’t avoid crying, and I felt so grateful for the gift that the Lord gave us. He had given us a smile of acceptance. I testify that the Lord’s words are true; that when we bring but one soul to Him, great will be our joy in the kingdom of the Father (see Doctrine and Covenants 18:15). ■

Franklin Romero, Manabí, Ecuador





By President James E. Faust (1920–2007)

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

OUR SUSTAINING SUPPORT

Spiritual guidance in large measure depends upon being in harmony with . . . prophets, seers, and revelators.

I desire to speak about the sacred offices of those priesthood leaders who have been “called and chosen” (Doctrine and Covenants 55:1) to guide the Church in this day. . . .

. . . My Brethren [in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles], without exception, are good, honorable, and trustworthy men. I know their hearts. They are the servants of the Lord. Their only desire is to labor in their great callings and build up the kingdom of God on earth. Our Brethren who are serving in this day and time are proven, tried, and true. . . . Their hearts are so pure, their experience so great, their minds so sharp, and their spiritual wisdom so deep that it is a comfort just to be in their presence.

. . . [When I was called, I was counseled] that the most important thing I should do is to always be in harmony



with my Brethren. . . . That resonated as something I wanted to do with all my heart.

. . . I have concluded that spiritual guidance in large measure depends upon being in harmony with the President of the Church, the First Presidency, and the Quorum of the Twelve—all of whom are sustained . . . as prophets, seers, and revelators. I do not know how we can expect to be in full harmony with the Spirit of the Lord if we are not in harmony with the President of the Church and the other prophets, seers, and revelators. . . .

My counsel to the members of the Church is to support the President of the Church, the First Presidency, Quorum of the Twelve, and other General Authorities with our whole hearts and souls. If we do, we will be in a safe harbor. . . .

We also need to support and sustain our local leaders, because they also have been “called and chosen.” Every member of this Church may receive counsel from a bishop or a branch president, a stake or a mission president, and the President of the Church and his associates. None of these brethren asked for his calling. None is perfect. Yet they are the servants of the Lord, called by Him through those entitled to inspiration. Those called, sustained, and set apart are entitled to our sustaining support. ■

From an October 2005 general conference address.



EDMUND BLAIR LEIGHTON (1852-1922), *THE BLIND MAN AT THE POOL OF SILOAM*, 1879, OIL ON CANVAS, 40 X 50 1/4 INCHES. BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART, PURCHASED WITH FUNDS PROVIDED BY JACK R. WHEATLEY, 2014.

**THE BLIND MAN AT
THE POOL OF SILOAM,
BY EDMUND BLAIR
LEIGHTON**

*"He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. . . .
"If this man were not of God, he could do nothing" (John 9:11, 33).*

YOUNG ADULTS

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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS



ENGLISH