


Ensign



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“THE LORD’S PRIMARY
PURPOSE IS TO
PERFECT HIS SAINTS.
THE CHURCH SERVES
TO **SUPPORT** THAT
OBJECTIVE.”

ELDER J. DEVN CORNISH

From “The True Church: ‘For the Perfecting of the Saints,’” page 60.

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

Ensign

A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
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BEING ENOUGH

Sister Jutta Busche learned that she did not need to compete with others to be worthy of love from Heavenly Father (see page 12). Read about another young woman who realized that, despite her weaknesses, she had boundless potential as a daughter of God: lds.org/go/enoughE918.

TURNING TO THE SCRIPTURES

Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery received the Aaronic Priesthood after pondering what they had learned about baptism in the Book of Mormon (see page 62). Read a related story about a sister who, having concerns, found that understanding flooded her mind as she turned to the scriptures: lds.org/go/scripturesE918.



YOUR TRUE WORTH

In “Discovering My Divinity,” the author points out that our individual worth comes from heaven—not from what others have said about our appearance or personality (see 26). Self-confidence attends those who establish a firm foundation in Christ. Read about four ways we can better understand our true worth at lds.org/go/worthE918.

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Libuletswe lost his sight when he was 21. He relearned many things, but he never learned Braille. He wanted to read the scriptures, so he prayed to God for help.

CODY BELL, PHOTOGRAPHER

Libuletswe Gofrey Mokgatle

Gauteng, South Africa

During a home teaching visit, I told the sister we visited, “I cannot read the scriptures because I cannot see. I want to go to a school where I can learn how to read and write Braille.”

Her brother worked at a school for the blind. He helped me apply. I studied Braille every day. I even woke up at night to practice reading Braille. It took me only four months to be able to read it.

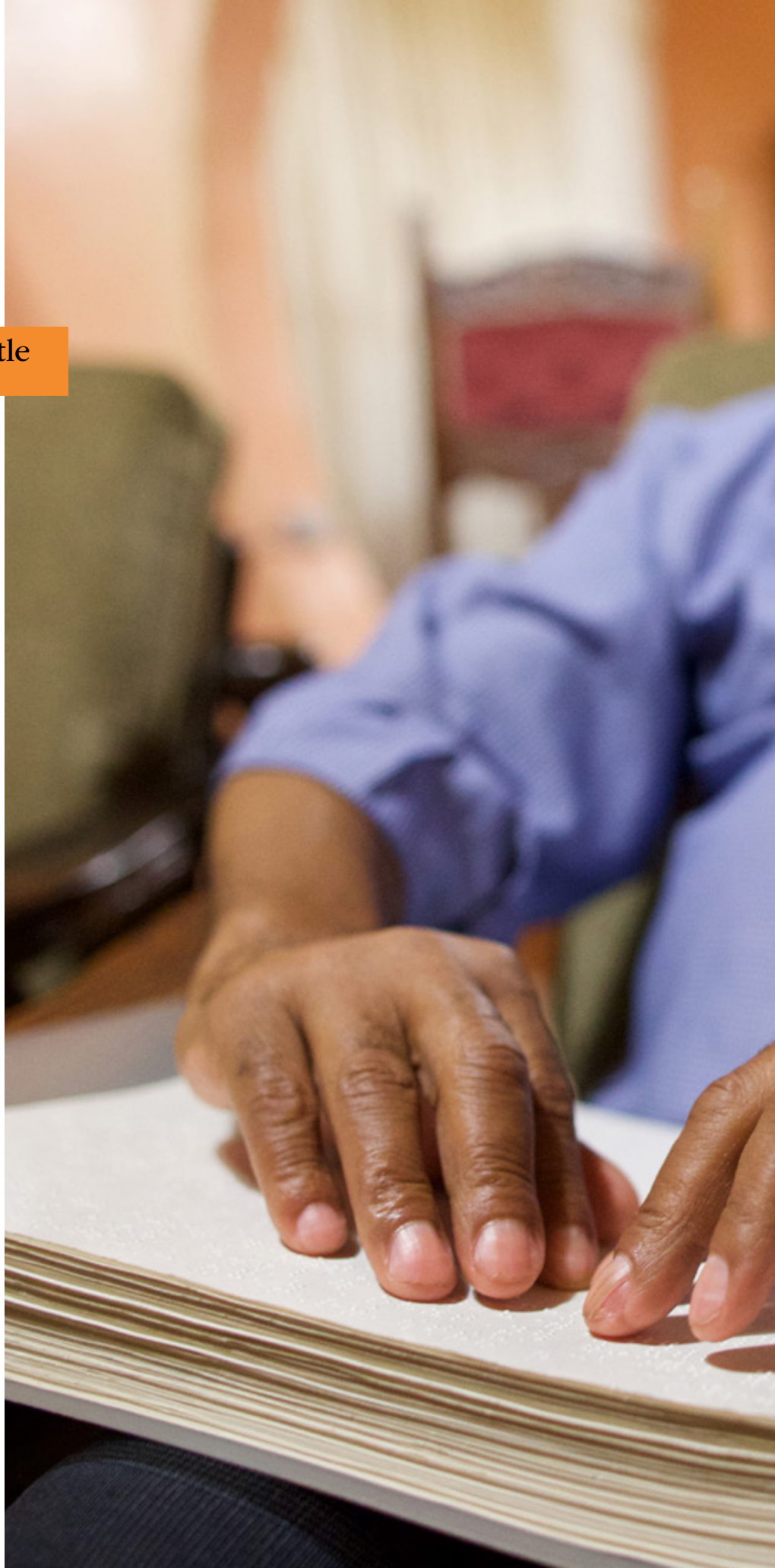
I finished school and told my branch president that I could now read Braille. He gave me a box with a manual for the priesthood and all the scriptures in Braille. I never knew that the Church had those things. It was then that I started really understanding and enjoying the gospel.

I know that the scriptures are true. I learn from them every time I read them. There is always something that I gain from them.

FIND MORE

Learn about the Church’s disability resources at [lds.org/go/9184](https://www.lds.org/go/9184).

You can find more Portraits of Faith at [lds.org/go/18](https://www.lds.org/go/18).





Ministering Principles

COUNSEL ABOUT THEIR NEEDS

You don't have to do this alone. Counseling together can provide the help you need to help others.

God has invited you to minister to an individual or family in your ward or branch according to their needs. How do you find out what those needs are? The principle of counseling, which has been such a focus in the Church, is key.

After discussing what we might consider counseling about, we will explore:

1. Counseling with Heavenly Father.
2. Counseling with the assigned individual and family.
3. Counseling with our companion.
4. And counseling with others assigned to the same individual or family.

Counseling with our leaders is also essential. A future Ministering Principles article in the *Ensign* will explore counseling with leaders as well as the role of ministering interviews in that process.

What We Counsel About

Understanding needs is essential to ministering to one another. But what forms can those needs take, and is there something more than needs that we should find out?

Needs can come in many forms. Those we serve may face challenges that are emotional, financial, physical, educational, and more. Some needs are higher priority than others. Some we will be equipped to help with; others may require us to enlist help ourselves. In our efforts to help meet temporal needs, don't forget that our call to minister includes helping others progress along the covenant path, preparing for and receiving the priesthood ordinances essential for exaltation.

In addition to counseling about an individual's or family's needs, we should seek to learn their strengths. What don't they need help with? What abilities and gifts do they have that could bless others? How are they uniquely suited to help build the kingdom of God? An individual's strengths may be as important to understand as his or her needs.

7 Counseling with Heavenly Father

One of the central tenets of our faith is that Heavenly Father speaks to His children (see Articles of Faith 1:9). When we receive a new assignment to minister to someone, we should counsel with Heavenly Father in prayer, seeking insight and understanding into their needs and strengths. That process of counseling through prayer should continue throughout our ministering assignment.



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.

2 Counseling with Individuals and Families

How and when we approach the individuals and families we are called to serve may vary depending on the circumstances, but counseling directly with the individual or family is essential for building relationships and understanding their needs, including how they want to be helped. Some questions may need to wait until a meaningful relationship has developed. While there's no one right way to do that, consider the following:

- Find out how and when they prefer to be contacted.
- Learn about their interests and backgrounds.
- Come with suggestions for how you could help, and ask for their suggestions.

As we build trust, consider discussing individual or family needs. Ask questions as prompted by the Holy Ghost.¹ For example:

- What are the challenges they face?
- What are their family or individual goals? For example, do they want to be better at holding regular family home evening or be more self-reliant?
- How can we help them with their goals and challenges?
- What gospel ordinances are coming up in their lives? How can we help them prepare?

Remember to offer specific help, such as, “Which night can we bring a meal to you this week?” A vague offer, like, “Let us know if there's anything we can do,” is not very helpful.



3 Counseling with Our Companion

Because you and your companion may not always be together when you interact with the individual or family, it is important to coordinate and counsel together as you seek inspiration as a companionship. Here are some questions to consider:

- How and how often will you communicate with each other as a companionship?
- How can you each use your individual strengths to minister to family or individual needs?
- What things have you learned, what experiences have you had, and what promptings have you received since the last time you spoke about the individual or family?

4 Counseling with Others Assigned

It may be good from time to time to speak with others who are assigned to minister to the same individual or family that you do.

Communicate to Solve Challenges

Elder Chi Hong (Sam) Wong of the Seventy applies an account from Mark 2 to our day to illustrate how counseling together made it possible for four people to figure out how to allow a man with palsy to be in the presence of Jesus.

“It might happen like this,” said Elder Wong. “Four people were fulfilling an assignment from their bishop to visit, at his home, a man who was sick with palsy. . . . In the most recent ward council, after counseling together about the needs in the ward, the bishop had given out ‘rescuing’ assignments. These four were assigned to help this man. . . .

“[When they arrived at the building where Jesus was,] the room was too crowded. They could not get in through the door. I am sure they tried everything they could think of, but they just could not get through. . . . They counseled together on what to do next—how they could bring the man unto Jesus Christ for healing. . . . They came up with a plan—not an easy one, but they acted on it.

“ . . . ‘They uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay’ (Mark 2:4). . . .

“ . . . ‘When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee’ (Mark 2:5).”²



Building relationships is also an important part of counseling together. See the Ministering Principles article “Building Meaningful Relationships” in the August 2018 issue on page 6.

Invitation to Act

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles urged, “Counsel together, use all resources available, seek the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, ask the Lord for His confirmation, and then roll up your sleeves and go to work.

“I give you a promise: if you will follow this pattern, you will receive specific guidance as to the *who*, *what*, *when*, and *where* of providing in the Lord’s way.”³ ■

NOTES

1. See *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 183.
2. Chi Hong (Sam) Wong, “Rescue in Unity,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 14–15.
3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Providing in the Lord’s Way,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 55.

MY CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

April 2018 General Conference



MEEKNESS VS. HUMILITY

"Whereas *humility* generally denotes dependence upon God and the constant need

for His guidance and support, a distinguishing characteristic of *meekness* is a particular spiritual receptivity to learning both from the Holy Ghost and from people who may seem less capable, experienced, or educated. . . . Meekness is the principal protection from the prideful blindness that often arises from prominence, position, power, wealth, and adulation."

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Meek and Lowly of Heart," *Ensign*, May 2018, 32.



Diving Deeper

SMALL AND SIMPLE THINGS

Consider using the following resources to explore the power of small and simple things:

- In general conference: Dallin H. Oaks, "Small and Simple Things," *Ensign*, May 2018, 89.
- In the scriptures: 1 Nephi 16:29; Alma 37:6; Doctrine and Covenants 64:33; 123:16.
- In this issue of the *Ensign*: "A Touch of Faith," 25; "Making Home an MTC," 52; "Jet Lag and the Word of Wisdom," 77.

"GOD WALKS WITH US
ALONG THE
COVENANT PATH

AS WE SEEK HIM

THROUGH
PRAYERFUL
PLEADINGS,
SCRIPTURAL
SEARCHINGS,
AND OBEDIENT
STRIVINGS."

Elder Brian K. Taylor of the Seventy,
"Am I a Child of God?" *Ensign*, May 2018, 14.

Answers to Questions

WHAT SPIRITUAL GIFTS WILL HELP ME MINISTER AS THE SAVIOR DID?

"It seems there are two things [great ministers] do. Great ministers have qualified for the Holy Ghost as a nearly constant companion. And they have qualified for the gift of charity, which is the pure love of Christ. Those gifts have grown in them as they have used them in serving out of love for the Lord. . . .

". . . If you ask with real intent and with faith in Jesus Christ for inspiration, you will receive it in the Lord's way and in His time. . . . He has placed you in the way of other children of God to serve them for Him."

President Henry B. Eyring, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "His Spirit to Be with You," *Ensign*, May 2018, 88, 89.

What questions did you have that were answered by something you heard at conference? Share your experience on our Facebook page: facebook.com/ensign.magazine.

What Will I Do?



We Watched Children While Parents Relaxed

President Russell M. Nelson's talk "Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives" (*Ensign*, May 2018, 93) helped to strengthen our faith in receiving personal revelation on a daily basis. After conference we decided that we would each start our own prayer journal. Every night when we say our couple and personal prayers, we have our prayer journals next to us. After we pray, we wait and listen. We then record thoughts, feelings, and impressions we receive. Sometimes they come immediately and sometimes they come later.

Just recently, we both felt prompted to serve someone specific. We decided to take our friends' kids for the evening so their dad and eight-months-pregnant mom could have a relaxing evening together. Even though we had just moved, are about to have our own baby, and are college students, Heavenly Father blessed us with the time and energy to serve and follow the prompting we had received. We are so grateful for President Nelson's counsel. What a blessing it is to have a living prophet on the earth today who knows exactly what God needs to tell us.

—Ethan and Allie Groen, Utah, USA

Have an experience you would like to share? Submit your story at ensign.lds.org, or share it on our Facebook page.

Ponder This . . .

"What will I teach, or what am I teaching, my children by my acts and attitudes of obedience?"

Devin G. Durrant, First Counselor in the Sunday School General Presidency, "Teaching in the Home—a Joyful and Sacred Responsibility," *Ensign*, May 2018, 44.

Share your thoughts on the *Ensign* Facebook page, or record your thoughts in your journal.

Conference Numbers!

Nearly
40 percent

of Latter-day Saint General Authorities were born outside the 50 United States in the following places:



Germany, Brazil, Mexico, New Zealand, Scotland, Canada, South Korea, Guatemala, Argentina, Italy, Zimbabwe, Uruguay, Peru, South Africa, American Samoa, England, Puerto Rico, Australia, Venezuela, Kenya, the Philippines, Portugal, Fiji, China, Japan, Chile, Colombia, and France.

Have you or someone you know been to one or more of these places?

I THINK I'LL BE MYSELF

By Jutta Baum Busche

This series highlights the lives of devoted women and their messages, excerpted from the book *At the Pulpit: 185 Years of Discourses by Latter-day Saint Women* (2017). The book is available, along with seven bonus chapters, in the Gospel Library app and online at churchhistorianspress.org/at-the-pulpit.

I remember well the adjustments we had to make when we went to live in Utah. My first call in our ward was to serve as a Relief Society teacher. I watched the other teachers very closely and was deeply impressed with their striving for perfection in their teaching. Even their hairdos and immaculate dress showed their striving for perfection. I admired how fluent and articulate they were in the English language. How could I, with my poor English, compete with them and be their teacher? I was eager to learn and was so glad to hear that there was a stake preparation class for Relief Society teachers.

When I attended the training meeting for the first time, I was full of high hopes. I was not prepared for the question I was asked about what kind of centerpiece I would use when I gave my lesson. How incompetent I felt! I had no idea what a centerpiece was or what its purpose in the presentation of a lesson could be. Negative feelings about myself began to undermine my confidence. . . .

I continued to feel inferior as I watched the sisters in my ward and

saw them planting gardens and canning the produce. They exercised daily by jogging. They sewed and bargain-shopped. . . . They took dinners to new mothers and the sick in their neighborhoods. They took care of an aged parent, sometimes two. . . . They were faithful in doing temple work, and they worried about catching up on their journals.

Intimidated by examples of perfection all around me, I increased my efforts to be like my sisters, and I felt disappointed in myself and even guilty when I didn't run every morning, bake all my own bread, sew my own clothes, or go to the university. I felt that I needed to be like the women among whom I was living, and I felt that I was a failure because I was not able to adapt myself easily to their lifestyles.

I could have benefited at this time from the story of a six-year-old who, when asked by a relative, "What do you want to be?" replied, "I think I'll just be myself. I have tried to be like someone else. I have failed each time!" Like this child, after repeated failure to be someone else, I finally learned that



ABOUT SISTER BUSCHE

Jutta Baum (b. 1935) grew up in Dortmund, Germany. She married Enzo Busche in 1955, and the two were baptized on January 19, 1958, in a Dortmund public swimming pool.

In October 1977, they attended a conference in Berlin so that Enzo, a Church regional representative, could translate for President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985). At the end of the conference, President Kimball spoke privately with Enzo and called him to serve in the First Quorum of the Seventy—a full-time position that would require the Busches to move.

Their first assignment was in Munich, Germany, where Enzo led the mission for two years; then they moved to Utah in 1980. They traveled a great deal, visiting Church members all over the world, and Jutta spoke at regional conferences with her husband.

With the dedication of the Frankfurt Germany Temple in 1987, they became its president and matron. Sister Busche had never been a temple worker, so President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) advised her at a training seminar, "The most important thing is to have love and love and love." She took his counsel to heart. She asked temple workers to make it their top priority to help patrons feel God's Spirit.

This message is an excerpt of an address Sister Busche gave at Brigham Young University's Women's Conference in 1989.

I should be myself. That is often not easy, however, because our desires to fit in, to compete and impress, or even simply to be approved of lead us to imitate others and devalue our own backgrounds, our own talents, and our own burdens and challenges. . . . I had to learn to overcome my anxious feeling that if I didn't conform, I simply did not measure up.

. . . When I tried to copy my wonderful sisters as I taught my class with

a special centerpiece and other teaching techniques that were unfamiliar to me, I failed because the Spirit still talks to me in German, not in English. But when I got on my knees to ask for help, I learned to depend on the Spirit to guide me, secure in the knowledge that I am a daughter of God. I had to learn and *believe* that I did not need to compete with others to be loved and accepted by my Heavenly Father. . . .

. . . Our efforts should not be to *perform* nor to *conform* but to be *transformed* by the Spirit. . . .

Many pressures bind us to the world. Being honest in heart frees us to discover God's will for our lives. . . .

. . . Although we might be absorbed in meeting our daily challenges and opportunities for growth, we cannot afford to live one day or one minute without being aware of the power within us. ■



THE WATERMELON LESSON

By Jennie Lovell

A broken watermelon gave me an opportunity to teach—and be taught—about God’s love and the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

My family was asked to bring fruit to a party. So my three children and I went shopping, buying a large watermelon that seemed perfect for the job.

Upon our return home, my children proceeded to bring in our groceries. Somehow, Haven, my youngest, ended up carrying the watermelon. It was much too big and heavy for her to carry, and she could barely get her little arms around it. Just as she stepped into the house, she lost her grip. The watermelon hit the floor and cracked open.

I was angry at first. I thought of the money that would be wasted if the watermelon was inedible. I stepped back from the doorway and struggled to control the fire building inside me. The thought came to me that instead of getting angry, I could take the opportunity to teach my children.

I picked up the split watermelon, rinsed it off, and then sat Haven on the counter beside me. My boys watched closely to see if I was going to lose my temper. I took a deep breath and said to Haven, “How did you feel when you dropped that heavy watermelon?”

Haven looked up at me, her eyes brimming with tears. “I was sad. I knew I let you down.”

I replied, “How is the melon?”

The boys interjected, “It’s busted!”

“Is the fruit still good?”

Haven said, “I think so.”

“Can we save it? Can it be cleaned? Will it still taste the same?”

“Yes!” my children shouted.

I began spooning the watermelon into a bowl. I explained that Heavenly Father knows that we sometimes have challenges or trials that seem too heavy to carry. But we don’t have to

carry them alone. When we ask our Father in Heaven for help, He will help us carry our burden, and our trials will make us stronger. When we make mistakes, He can also help us become clean again. That’s why He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to atone for our sins. There is no burden too heavy that Jesus Christ cannot help us carry. All we must do is repent and rely on Him for strength.

I finished scooping all the watermelon, and Haven quietly asked, “Mom, aren’t you mad at me?”

My eyes filled with tears, and my heart swelled. “No,” I answered. “How can I be mad at you when you were doing your best to help? The Savior can forgive us when we mess up. Just like He can mend what is broken in us, we can fix this watermelon.”

She wrapped her arms around my neck and said, “Thanks, Mom. I love you.”

That watermelon was the sweetest-tasting I have ever eaten. I am so thankful for a merciful Father in Heaven who can turn a broken watermelon into a teaching moment—who can turn anger into love. ■

The author lives in Texas, USA.



FIND OUT WHAT THE LORD WANTS

By Charla Woodbury

As a single mother with seven young children, how could I possibly serve as ward organist?

One Sunday our bishop asked to speak with me after church. My seven children, ages 5 to 12, waited outside his office while we talked.

As I had suspected, the bishop called me to serve in the ward. What I had not suspected was that he would call me to serve as ward organist.

I was a new member of the ward, and I was a single mother. I would have no one to sit with my children while I played during sacrament meeting. Besides, I did not think I played well enough for the calling.

“I can see your difficulty,” the bishop said, smiling. “I have pointed out your situation to the Lord, but the inspiration still came strongly that you should have this calling. It is up to you to decide whether to accept it. Go home and find out what the Lord wants you to do.”

I followed his guidance. I humbled myself and included my dilemma in my prayers. As I prayed, the Holy Ghost filled my heart with such unspeakable joy that I could not deny that my calling had come from the Lord.

At that moment, I changed my prayers. I asked Heavenly Father how I could handle my family during sacrament meeting. In my mind’s

eye, I could see the meeting ruined by distracted children and poorly played organ music.

We held a family council, where I explained my concerns about the calling. The children took turns expressing their feelings, and we took a vote.



The voting was unanimous that I should accept the calling.

I told the children I needed their help. I explained how much I loved them and how distracting it would be if they were irreverent or noisy while I played. Could they govern themselves?

I explained that after I had played the prelude music, opening hymn, and sacrament hymn, I could slip down and sit with them—provided they sat on the front row. I got permission to invite some of them to sit in the choir seats close to the organ, but I told them they had to be reverent. Sitting there would be a privilege they would keep with their good behavior.

When I accepted the calling, the bishop gave me a special blessing—that I could play well and that our family would be blessed for our obedience.

It took a while before my organ playing became acceptable to my ears, but through help from the Spirit, I improved quickly. The year I served as organist was one of our best years of attending church together as a family.

We all worked together for a common goal—the thing, in Nephi’s words, “which the Lord hath commanded” (1 Nephi 3:7). As a result, He blessed us for it. ■

The author lives in Iowa, USA.

This young adult from Ghana knows that even when life seems hopeless, you can always rely on Heavenly Father.



How Eric Learned to Trust God

By Richard M. Romney
Church Magazines

When 21-year-old Eric Ayala of Techiman, Ghana, was 3, he and his mother were at a street-side market when a car veered out of control and struck them.

Now paraplegic, Eric faced challenge after challenge as he grew up without the use of his legs. He eventually obtained leg braces that allowed him to stand, but he soon outgrew them and couldn't afford replacements. He was given a small wheelchair, but outgrew that too. His legs withered, sometimes shaking with spasms, and his feet became deformed.

In Ghana, those with disabilities are often considered a burden. Eric's family had little money, not enough to pay for medical treatment. When Eric was about 10, he developed pressure sores caused by lack of movement and by sitting on wood and concrete. The sores festered, oozing constantly, and they smelled terrible.



As a result, Eric lived outside, on a bench in an open-air shed. His mother, Lucy, and his sisters brought him food, washed his clothes, and helped him bathe. Eric was often drenched by rain and shivered from cold in the night. He learned to love morning sunshine because it brought warmth. Too poor to go to school and unable to work, he spent years in that shed, occasionally venturing into the neighborhood on his wheelchair.

The Beginning of Belief

Rather than becoming resentful, “I started to love and believe in God,” Eric says. “Nobody taught me about Him, but I could see His creations, and I could see the good and bad in people. Sometimes it is hard to believe in Him when life is hard. But then I would see something good come into my life, and I would say, ‘See, God is here, and it is wonderful.’”



Eric had not been formally taught how to pray, but he began calling upon God. He received answers—when he was sick, an unanticipated opportunity to see a doctor; when he asked for relief from his sores, they went away; when he outgrew his small wheelchair, a kind stranger brought him a larger one. “God did many good things in my life,” he says.

Then, in what seemed a miracle, at age 14, Eric was accepted for school. His mother, by cooking for others, had scraped together enough money to buy him a uniform and pay for books and tuition. At school, “I couldn’t go out and exercise with the others,” he explains, “so I stayed inside and studied all the time.” He amazed his headmaster by receiving top scores in math, reading, and writing.

A nun from the hospital donated a new tricycle that Eric could pedal with his hands, making it easier for him to go to school. But as Eric went back and forth, pressure sores opened again. Infection returned, along with the putrid smell as the wounds leaked. Students complained about flies constantly buzzing around Eric. He was 17 when the headmaster told him to go home and get well, or he could not return to school.

Eric’s father had a tiny farm out in the country. He had taken the family to work on the farm, but Eric

remained at home in his shed, alone. Meanwhile, his sores enlarged to huge wounds and infection entered into his bones, a life-threatening condition called osteomyelitis.

Talking with an Obruni

When he was 18, Eric saw his friend Emmanuel Ofosu-hene speaking English with an *obruni* (white man). The *obruni* was a Mormon missionary, Elder Old. “I only spoke Twi, but Emmanuel interpreted for me: ‘I am so sick I think I will die. Can you help me know what to do so I can go to heaven?’

“Elder Old and his African companion sat with me and taught me. For some reason, they started with the Word of Wisdom. I knew they were speaking the truth because I already knew coffee and tobacco were bad.” They also gave Eric a brochure about the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and invited him to church.

“When I went, I saw this Church was different,” he says. “It was reverent.” Even though it took him an hour to push himself to church in his wheelchair, Eric loved the meetings. “I wanted to go up front and be with people,” he says. “But I stayed at the back because I knew I smelled bad.”

Eric told the missionaries, “What I am learning is true.” He also told

them he wanted to be baptized, but doctors had warned him not to get his wounds wet. “I will rely on God to provide answers,” he said. He attended church for about a year and then became too ill and weak to wheel himself there.

Eventually, Eric was taken to the hospital again. In Ghana, patients have to provide their own water, food, bedding, medicine, and bandages. If they have no money, they are not treated. Eric’s mother and sisters did what they could. Eric received food and medical attention infrequently, so he grew weaker.

An Unexpected Visit

Then Eric received some unexpected visitors. Missionaries, Sister Peprah and Sister Nafuna, had seen his photograph at the church and came to see him in the hospital and brought him food. It had been a year since he had been to church, but he told them he still wanted to be baptized.

A few days later, Eric’s sister visited him and found him very ill. She ran home and told their mother. Though their mother had suffered permanent leg damage in the accident with Eric, she walked to the hospital, wincing with every step. “You must come home,” she told Eric. “If you’re going to die, I at least want you near.”

The next morning, the sister

missionaries came to the house. “You weren’t at the hospital,” Sister Peprah said. “So we came here.” With them were Elder and Sister Wood, senior missionaries from New Zealand. They took inventory of needs and promised to return.

A few days later, Eric’s father took the family back to the farm—except Eric, who found himself alone again and without food or water. When Elder and Sister Wood returned and discovered Eric alone and hungry, they brought him food and water. They returned the next day and noticed fluid running down his leg and found a huge open ulcer on his thigh. They immediately took Eric back to the hospital.

The Woods learned of a medical humanitarian team from the United States that would be coming to Ghana. The team would perform surgery for Eric without cost. The surgeon treated the ulcer on Eric’s leg. But when he saw the severity of Eric’s wounds, as well as the osteomyelitis, he determined he could not do all the necessary procedures in Ghana. Based on his recommendation, the humanitarian organization initiated a process that would eventually bring Eric to the United States to receive additional treatment and permanently close his wounds. In addition, a shelter in Winneba, Ghana, run by members of the Church, agreed to have Eric live there when he returned so that he could attend school and complete his education.

The Lord Provided

Elder Wood, an engineer by profession, rebuilt Eric’s hand-pedal tricycle. He performed a similar overhaul on his wheelchair. He also counseled with President Cosgrave of the Ghana Kumasi Mission, a medical doctor. They felt Eric could be baptized if proper precautions were taken.

“Elder Wood wrapped my body in plastic, with tape around the plastic,” Eric explains. “Then he carried me into a font filled with water treated with disinfectant.

I was baptized on June 26, 2016.” Eric had relied on the Lord, and the Lord had provided a way. ■



My greatest trial of faith became the best lesson on discipleship I could have received.



Mountains and Sermons, Trials and Faith

Name withheld

As a full-time missionary, I had a companion who was very difficult for me to get along with. She was an excellent teacher and loved missionary work, but she was also flippant and sometimes even cruel with her criticism. She disparaged everything from my eating habits to my meager language skills to pictures of my family.

I began to feel weighed down by a fog of depression and self-doubt. Although I continued to serve and teach, my actions became more rote than sincere. I started to doubt some of the beliefs that I had clung to all my life, and I felt a rising bitterness enter my thoughts. Why would a loving God subject me to such a difficult situation? Why would He test my faith when I was already sacrificing so much and trying so desperately to do everything right?

Climbing Mountains: The Curious and the Serious

One morning, I stumbled upon a thought I'd recorded in my journal from my branch president in the missionary training center. His thought referenced Matthew 4, around the beginning of the Savior's

ministry, when His miracles began to draw people's attention. The end of the chapter describes the multitude of people who followed Him (see verse 25).

The narrative continues in Matthew 5: "And seeing the multitudes, [Jesus] went up into a mountain" (verse 1). A question arises: Why would Jesus climb up a mountain? The crowd of people was already right behind Him. He could have turned around and taught the multitude right where He was.

One possible answer is that He could have climbed the mountain for the spiritual setting and closeness to God. Throughout the scriptures, mountaintops often symbolize temples, and many prophets—Nephi, Moses, and the brother of Jared, to name a few—have climbed to the tops of mountains as prelude to spiritual experiences. Jesus often went to mountains to commune with God.

However, my branch president speculated that there was another reason why. When Jesus saw the multitude behind Him, He knew that people were following Him for different reasons. Some were curious—they had heard about His miracles

and wanted to see something miraculous themselves. Others might have seen the growing crowd and trailed along like sheep in a herd. A few in the multitude were serious followers; they followed to hear Christ's teachings and learn of Him.

The rest of the first verse in Matthew 5 reads: "And when [Jesus] was set, his disciples came unto him." Although this certainly includes Christ's chosen Apostles, the word *disciple* could encompass more people than the 12 men alone. *Disciple* means "a follower of Jesus Christ who lives according to Christ's teachings."¹ These dedicated disciples of Christ were the ones willing to climb the mountain to hear the Savior—not the curious miracle-seekers or the sheep-like tagalongs—and they were the ones who got to hear the Sermon on the Mount.

God does not just want bystanders; He wants disciples. He

wants us to live the gospel because we love and want to serve Him. So, to separate the *curious* from the *serious*, He will allow us to climb a "mountain"—He will give us trials that will test our faith.

Discipleship despite Trials

The thought resonated with me, and I realized my problems had little to do with my companion and everything to do with my attitude. I recognized that a part of me had decided to serve a mission because I was curious. I had wanted to learn a new language and visit new places. I had been caught up in the excitement and was not as resilient as I could have been. Therefore, when the first mountain to climb came, I had been spiritually unprepared. I had allowed my testimony to be influenced by those around me because my own foundation of faith wasn't strong enough.

In that moment, I promised

Heavenly Father that the actions of others would not influence my faith anymore. I was in charge of my own discipleship, and I should not let my companion's actions or criticism affect my testimony. I decided to be a serious disciple instead of a curious bystander. I prayed that the Lord would help me gain a stronger testimony so I would not doubt again, even when times were hard.

My missionary service became easier from that moment on. Although my companion and situation did not immediately change, my attitude toward discipleship did. I left my mission with a stronger testimony and an assurance that all the trials I had experienced were "for [my] good" (D&C 122:7). God had led—and continues to lead—me to my personal Sermon on the Mount. ■

NOTE

1. Guide to the Scriptures, "Disciple," scriptures.lds.org.



Not Waiting for

Happiness

Trusting that Heavenly Father has a plan for me, I know I don't have to forfeit happiness until I'm married.

By Jessica Howell

I sat glumly on my couch, talking to my roommate. We were discussing the ever-present topic of our marital status: single. Conversation flowed easily as we talked about our familiar predicaments. Why were we still single? What were we doing wrong? Where on earth were our future husbands? Both of us had gone on many dates in the past few months, but nothing had come of it.

I told her that earlier in the day I had been catching up with a recently married friend, who asked me how I was doing and if I was dating anyone. When I responded that I wasn't, she said, "I'm sorry. Hang in there. Don't get discouraged." I accepted the condolences and told her I would be OK, repeating the familiar phrase, "It'll happen when it's supposed to happen."

As I was lamenting to my roommate about my status as a young, very single adult, a thought came to me: Why did I feel like being single made me somehow less of a person?

The Fallacy That Singles Are Miserable

The experience I had with my married friend that day, as well as several others with peers, leaders, and family members, pointed toward the fallacy that being single meant I must be miserable. I realized I had adopted this attitude myself. I often felt like something was wrong with me or I was a failure if I wasn't steadily dating somebody.

Since returning from my mission, I have put a lot of stress on myself to find someone to marry. I've had my fair share of relationships, yet nothing has been lasting. As time passes and I get older, I feel the pressure mounting. As I scan through my social media and see friend after friend get engaged or married, there is a nagging voice in the back of my mind asking why I'm not married yet. What am I doing wrong? How do they make it look so easy? There have been times when I couldn't help but feel that Heavenly Father was withholding the blessing of marriage from me because I was not good enough yet.



A Plan for Each of Our Lives

It is my greatest desire to be sealed in the temple for time and all eternity. I know that the sealing ordinance is very important and necessary if we are to become like our Father in Heaven. But as I have pleaded with God in prayer, fasted, and pored over the scriptures, seeking comfort during lonely times, I have also come to know that He has an individual plan for each of our lives and that He will put people in our path at the exact time they need to be there.

Some get married young; others get married when they are older. That doesn't mean that someone is better than someone else for marrying sooner; it just means that Heavenly Father has a plan for each of our lives. There are lessons to be learned during this sojourn in mortality. These lessons are tailored specifically for us in our individual circumstances, and He "who knoweth all things" (2 Nephi 2:24) knows the best way we can learn them. If anything, these custom-made plans for each of our lives show just how much He understands and loves us.

We Have Been Created to Have Joy

I have come to learn that being single does not mean I have to put off being happy. In 2 Nephi 2:25 we read that “men are, that they might have joy.” I have yet to find a footnote or stipulation on that scripture that says, “Men are, that they might have joy . . . as long as they are not single.” Heavenly Father created us to be happy! I believe that He wants us to make the most of our lives, whether we are single or married, and to find joy in the journey of becoming our best selves.

I have found a lot of comfort from the words of Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“Never stop striving for the best that is within you. Never stop hoping for all of the righteous desires of your heart. But don’t close your eyes and hearts to the simple and elegant beauties of each day’s ordinary moments that make up a rich, well-lived life.”¹

The chances of my being a happy married person drastically increase if I am already a happy single person. How awful it would be if I waited to start enjoying life until I was married. Then, once I was married, would I notice that all of my married friends were having children and put my happiness on hold until I had a child of my own? or a house? or whatever else it seemed I was missing in comparison with others?

There Is Always Good to Be Found

We can always find something that is lacking in our lives, but there is also always good to be found. Day to day, I notice Heavenly Father’s tender mercies and beautiful reminders that He is aware of me. My ability to feel joy doesn’t depend on my marital status—it comes from knowing and trusting in the Lord’s sure promises.² I can trust that Heavenly Father has a plan for me and that He knows what is best. He will guide my footsteps, but that requires me to move forward.

I know that as we have faith and a positive attitude about our lives as young single adults, we will find more joy in each day and realize that His plan is bigger than anything we could imagine for ourselves. As I strive to live with this perspective in mind, I feel that I can say with Mormon, “And now, I do not know all things; but the Lord knoweth all things which are to come; wherefore, he worketh in me to do according to his will” (Words of Mormon 1:7). ■

The author, who since writing this article has married and taken the last name Barker, lives in Idaho, USA.

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Forget Me Not,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 122.
2. See Russell M. Nelson, “Joy and Spiritual Survival,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 81–84.



A Touch of Faith

By Rebecca Anne Weight

Lost in the world,
I long to see
The Lord, the Savior.
He is here.
I hear Him.
I feel Him.
How I wish to meet Him
And look into His loving face,

To touch Him

And be cleansed of my imperfections,
As once a woman did.
Oh, what joy it would be
If also it was said to me,
“Arise, O Daughter;
Thy faith hath made thee whole.”
He stands near,
Within my reach.
If I, even in my weakness,
Reach out for Him,
He will bless me.
He will empower me.
He will strengthen me.
He will heal me,
As that woman was
From long ago.

*See Matthew 9:20–22; Mark 5:25–34;
Luke 8:43–48.*

After years of struggling to accept myself, I finally experienced a miracle that helped me understand my eternal worth.

Discovering My Divinity

By Daiane Korth da Silva

Ever since I was a child, I have struggled with my weight and accepting myself. In the beginning, the nicknames I received because of my weight seemed harmless, but with time, I started to believe that the negative things that were said about my appearance also meant negative things about my personality.

As a teenager, I started to realize that, although I liked my physical characteristics, my body type didn't fit with worldly expectations. And I liked my quiet personality, but it wasn't what people expected from me either—teachers wanted me to speak up in class, boys liked the more talkative girls, and I was told frequently that I needed to be more outgoing than I actually was. Little by little, my self-worth started to languish.

My young adult years found me depressed, uncomfortable in my body, and questioning why the Lord couldn't have made me at least a little pretty and more interesting. I tried more diets than I should have, and ironically, the more I tried to lose weight, the more

weight I gained. Being a single, introverted, and overweight young adult didn't seem very promising.

I felt defeated and decided that I was the way I was, even if I never lost the weight I wanted to or became more extroverted. Although I stopped hating myself so much, I was still far from seeing myself as a beautiful, worthwhile daughter of God. I simply gave up on trying to find my worth.

A Light I Needed

One day a miracle happened while I was reading a talk by Sister Mary G. Cook, wife of Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, from the September 2016 worldwide devotional for young adults titled "Find Joy in Everyday Life." I read: "When we came to this earth, we brought with us our divine nature as children of God. Our individual worth came from heaven." I felt as if my mind was finally opened to a light that I so deeply needed but thought I would never get. I realized that, before, I had felt as if it were wrong to like myself because I didn't fit the worldly

stereotype of what a beautiful, worthwhile woman should be. Now I was ready to admit that I love my introverted and geeky personality, messy curly hair, brown eyes, potato-like nose, big smile, and even my overweight body that still does just what I need it to do. I became grateful for being God's creation. I finally understood that He doesn't create mistakes.

After so many years of emotional and physical struggles and suffering, I finally learned a truth that for many may be obvious: my individual worth has nothing to do with this world! It came from heaven. It has always been with me, even if I was blind to it. It's not decided by media, by my peers, or by anybody but Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, and They see me as valuable enough that the Savior died for me.

A Foundation in Christ

Learning from the Spirit about my value in God's eyes has changed me in so many ways. I fell in love with life again. I feel more gratitude for my countless blessings. I feel a huge desire to try harder to do what's right and believe more in myself and in my dreams. It made me want to be more kind and patient with people around me and brought me closer to the Savior.

The voices of the world keep calling and judging, but now I have a strong knowledge of my worth that I never want to forget. That

knowledge brought me peace and joy that I want to share with everyone I meet. Through that devotional talk, I learned that even my self-worth and self-confidence need to have a firm foundation in Christ so "that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon [me], it shall have no power over [me] to drag [me] down to the gulf of misery and endless wo,

because of the rock upon which [I am] built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall" (Helaman 5:12).

I'm grateful for the Lord and the eternal worth He sees in all of us. I'm grateful for inspired women like Sister Cook who strive to live the gospel and share its wisdom. I'm grateful for this life, for the miracle of our bodies and minds, and for the divinity within each of us. ■

The author lives in New York, USA.



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By Elder David A. Bednar
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

PRESIDENT DALLIN H. OAKS: Following the Lord's Ways

When President Oaks knows what the Lord wants him to do—he does it.

After being called to serve as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in April of 1984, Elder Dallin H. Oaks reflected deeply on his new role and the inevitable changes that would occur in his life.

This was not the first time Elder Oaks had been asked to leave his personal and professional “nets” (see Matthew 4:18–20). In 1970 he resigned his faculty position at the University of Chicago Law School in response to the invitation from Church leaders to become the president of Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, USA. He thoroughly enjoyed teaching, conducting research, and interacting with law students in Chicago. Yet he responded in faith to the request to serve as the eighth president of BYU.

Elder Oaks faced a similar situation in 1984 following his call to the Twelve, as he again left a position and work that he loved as a supreme court justice in the state of Utah. However, this change was different.

In 1970, Elder Oaks reasonably might have thought he would return to his legal career following his service at BYU, which in fact he eventually did. But the call in 1984 was distinctive—a

consecrated commitment of his whole soul and entire life to the Lord. The eternal importance and worldwide scope of his new responsibilities truly were overwhelming.

Elder Oaks described his innermost thoughts about this important transition:

“During this period of introspection, contemplating the way I would spend the rest of my life, I asked myself what kind of an apostle I would be. Would I be a lawyer who had been called to be

an apostle, or would I be an apostle who used to be a lawyer? I concluded that the answer to this question depended upon whether I would try to shape my calling to my own personal qualifications and





experience, or whether I would undertake the painful process of trying to shape myself to my calling.

“Would I try to perform my calling in the world’s ways, or would I try to determine and follow the Lord’s ways?”

“I made up my mind that I would try to change myself to fit my calling, that I would try to measure up to the qualifications and spiritual stature of an apostle. That is a challenge for a lifetime.”¹

The Lord’s divine grace, the experiences of life, a supportive family, and the personal qualities and discipline developed through diligent

The oldest of three children, Dallin (far left) was only seven years old when his father passed away. Growing up, he took violin lessons for a few months but helped his widowed mother for many years.

study and learning, hard work, and loving service have enabled President Oaks to “follow the Lord’s ways” and truly become a valiant Apostle who used to be an attorney.

Many spiritual gifts are evident in the life and ministry of President Dallin H. Oaks.

Faith in the Savior

President Oaks is blessed with the spiritual gift to know by the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (see D&C 46:13–14). He teaches the doctrine of the Savior with clarity and testifies of Him with conviction. The Lord is his light in every aspect of his life.

When Dallin H. Oaks knows what the Lord wants him to do—he does it.

Through his teachings over many years, President Oaks has helped Church members to understand more fully the purpose and importance of the Father’s plan of salvation, the Savior’s Atonement, priesthood authority and keys, the sacred ordinance of the sacrament, the process of not merely “doing” but “becoming,” the distinctions in our lives among good, better, and best, and numerous other gospel principles. His simple and orderly approach to gospel learning has strengthened the faith of Latter-day Saints around the world.



Integrity

President Oaks is a man of integrity. His beliefs and behavior are grounded in gospel principles, and he lives what he believes. Expediency is never an option for him because he is determined to do what is right, even if a course of action does not advance his personal reputation or viewpoint. There are no shortcuts in his life—do things right or not at all.

His integrity is reflected in his willingness to tackle challenging issues and assignments. And he does so in a masterful way—the Lord’s way. He has taught forthrightly about topics such as defending the traditional family, addressing threats to religious liberty, protecting children from the selfish sins of adults, and decrying the evils of pornography.

Meekness

The personal and professional accomplishments of President Oaks are exceptional by any standard. Yet President Oaks exhibits meekness and a spiritual receptivity to learning both from the Holy Ghost and from

President Oaks and his late wife, June, have four girls and two boys (the youngest was born after the photo above was taken).

Dallin Oaks worked as a radio announcer and transmitter engineer and met June while announcing high school basketball games as a college freshman. They were married in 1952.



people with widely diverse backgrounds and experiences.

In one of our quorum meetings, Elder Oaks expressed a strong opinion about a course of action that he believed should be pursued. The reasons he articulated were convincing, and his knowledge about the issue was extensive. His arguments in favor of the action were compelling.

As we counseled together, a member of the Twelve with considerably less seniority expressed agreement with the basic course of action but registered a reservation about the

proposed timing. Elder Oaks could have countered the concern with a response such as “I believe I have more experience with this matter than you do.” But he did not. With no hint of defensiveness or indignation, Elder Oaks asked his quorum member, “Would you please help me understand your reservation about the timing?”

After listening intently to his apostolic associate, Elder Oaks pondered for a moment and then said, “The point you have made is important. I had not considered fully the timing

implications of this action in the way you have, and I am persuaded that the proposal should be reworked based on what we have learned in this discussion.”

Elder Oaks listened to and learned from his fellow quorum member and then walked in the meekness of the Lord’s Spirit (see D&C 19:23) to accomplish the desired outcome. For Dallin H. Oaks, the issue is never about what he wants; it is always about what the Lord wants and about following His ways.

Discernment

President Oaks also is blessed with the spiritual gift of discernment and the ability to recognize the long-term consequences

of proposals, decisions, and actions. This capacity is manifested in a question he often asks himself and others: “Where will it lead?”² A person simply cannot talk or counsel in council with President Oaks and not recognize immediately how this ability has benefited countless individuals and families and the entire Church during his lifetime of service to the Lord.

On a summer night in 1970, President Oaks had a frightening encounter with an armed robber on Chicago’s South Side as he returned to his parked car. His wife, June, was waiting for him in the vehicle.

“Give me your money,” the young mugger demanded.

“I don’t have any,” Brother Oaks replied, showing him his empty wallet.

“Give me your car keys,” he ordered. The keys were locked in the car with Sister Oaks. “Tell her to open the car,” the robber insisted. Brother Oaks said no.

The robber threatened, “Do it, or I’ll kill you.” Brother Oaks said firmly, “I won’t do it.” While the robber repeated his demands and threats, Brother Oaks saw an opportunity to wrestle the gun away from the young man. As President Oaks described in a 1992 general conference message, “Just as I was about to make my move, I had a unique experience. I did not see anything or hear anything, but I *knew* something. I knew what would happen if I grabbed that gun. We would struggle, and I would turn the gun into that young man’s chest. It would fire, and he would die. I also understood that I must not have the blood of



1932: Born in Provo, Utah, USA

1949: Joined the Utah National Guard one year before the Korean War

1952: Married June Dixon in the Salt Lake Temple

1954: Graduated from Brigham Young University with a degree in accounting

1957: Graduated from the University of Chicago Law School

1957–58: Served as clerk for U.S. Supreme Court chief justice Earl Warren

1958–61: Practiced law in Chicago, Illinois, USA

1961–70: Taught law at the University of Chicago Law School

1971–80: Served as president of Brigham Young University

1980–84: Served as a justice in the Utah Supreme Court

1984: Called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

1998: June Dixon Oaks, mother of their six children, passed away

2000: Married Kristen McMMain in the Salt Lake Temple

2002–4: Served as Area President in the Philippines

2018: Called as First Counselor in the First Presidency



that young man on my conscience for the rest of my life.”³

This miraculous manifestation of the gift of discernment enabled President Oaks to resolve the confrontation and ultimately saved his own life and the life of the young robber.

More recently, in a meeting of the Missionary Executive Council, which Elder Oaks chaired at the time, we counseled together about a proposal related to the missionaries serving in a particular area of the world. After all council members had expressed their views on the matter, Elder Oaks asked several questions and summarized what had been learned. He then stated, “I do not feel we are yet settled on this matter. We should wait upon the Lord and not make a final decision now.”

Events a few months later dramatically highlighted the inspiration that attended that decision to wait. The council, acting under the inspired leadership of Elder Oaks, had been blessed to make the right decision, at the right time, and in the Lord’s way to protect the missionaries and prosper the work.

Sense of Humor and Kindness

President Oaks has a delightful sense of humor. For example, at the conclusion of a luncheon attended by all members of the Twelve, one of the Brethren suggested that staying awake during the afternoon would be difficult after enjoying such a delicious meal. President Oaks smiled broadly and replied, “Only if you cannot find a good place to go to sleep.”

He often playfully pokes fun at himself and his baldness. But he also can be a strong defender of those who have little hair on their heads. He frequently declares, “The noble and great always come out on top.”

His warmth and quick wit are endearing, and he is unfailingly considerate and kind. People often comment after being with President Oaks that they loved how he made them feel comfortable because of his sense of humor, the sincerity of his love, and his caring demeanor.

Influence of Righteous Women

With all the accomplishments and accolades associated with his remarkable life, President Oaks is the first to acknowledge the profound influence of three righteous women in his life: Stella Harris Oaks, June Dixon Oaks, and Kristen McMain Oaks.

Dallin Oaks was seven years old when his father, Lloyd E. Oaks, a medical doctor, died of tuberculosis at the age of only 37. He was buried on the 11th anniversary of his marriage to President Oaks’s mother, Stella Harris Oaks. She remained single for the rest of her life and raised their three children.

“I was blessed with an extraordinary mother,” President



Oaks recalls. “She surely was one of the many noble women who have lived in the latter days.”⁴

As a freshman at BYU, President Oaks met June Dixon. They married in 1952 and were blessed to become the parents of six children. “I did not perform at a consistently high level until June came into my life,” President Oaks said. “I owe so much of my accomplishment to her.”⁵ On July 21, 1998, June passed away from cancer.

June and Dallin had talked about the future of their family before she passed away. They agreed that remarrying would be a blessing to him and their family. On August 25, 2000, Elder Oaks married Kristen M. McMain.

Kristen Oaks describes her life with President Oaks with one simple sentence: “We are united in the work of the Lord, and it has showered us with countless blessings.” She creates family gatherings as often as possible because it brings so much joy to the entire family. June is always a part of the conversation.

As President Oaks teaches and testifies about the truths contained in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” he knows firsthand the importance of being a husband and father. He has learned essential lessons about the responsibilities husbands and wives share



Known for making people feel cared for, President Oaks has traveled throughout the world to minister and to share the gospel.

Left: He and his current wife, Kristen, spoke about making family connections at the 2018 RootsTech family history conference.

Dallin H. Oaks as the First Counselor in the First Presidency and President Henry B. Eying as Second Counselor.

President Oaks comes to his new assignment in the presiding quorum of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with the “tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime”⁷—a life devoted to the Savior and His restored Church. President Oaks’s personal discipleship, powerful teachings, and the consistency of his righteous example will influence positively people throughout the world and assist them in following the Lord’s ways. ■

NOTES

1. Dallin H. Oaks, *The Lord’s Way* (1991), 7.
2. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Where Will It Lead?” (Brigham Young University devotional, Nov. 9, 2004), speeches.byu.edu.
3. Dallin H. Oaks, “Bible Stories and Personal Protection,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 39–40.
4. Don L. Searle, “Elder Dallin H. Oaks: ‘It Begins by Following the Other Apostles,’” *Ensign*, June 1984, 14.
5. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Student Body and the President” (Brigham Young University devotional, Sept. 9, 1975), 6, speeches.byu.edu.
6. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, May 2017, 145.
7. See Dallin H. Oaks, “The Dedication of a Lifetime” (Church Educational System fireside for young adults, May 1, 2005), 2, broadcasts.lds.org.

“to love and care for each other and for their children”—and that “in these sacred responsibilities, [husbands and] fathers and [wives and] mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners.”⁶ Consistently and to the best of his ability, President Oaks has lived his family life following the Lord’s ways.

The Dedication of a Lifetime

On April 6, 2018, President Russell M. Nelson was sustained as President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, with President



THE POWER OF FAITH AND Family Stories

We are more resilient in the face of trials when we are familiar with the challenges our own ancestors faced.

By Adam C. Olson
Church Magazines

Rosalene Pacini has always felt a special connection with her great-great-grandmother Elizabeth Xavier Tait because of the faith-filled stories Rosalene grew up with. The stories of Elizabeth's trust in the Lord as she traveled from Bombay to Liverpool to Zion, as well as her endurance through heart-wrenching trials, captured Rosalene's imagination as a young girl.

Those stories also played a role in preparing Rosalene to develop and rely on the same kind of faith when she faced similar challenges in her own life.

LEAVING HOME, LOSING FAMILY

Elizabeth, 1850s, Bombay, India

Elizabeth Xavier was a well-educated young woman who enjoyed a life of ease as part of a wealthy, noble family in India. But life took a challenging turn in 1850 when she married William Tait, a regimental drill master in the British navy who had been baptized by Elder Parley P. Pratt in Scotland.

Elizabeth's family deeply disapproved of her baptism. The stress of strained relationships was followed by the tragedy of losing her first son to cholera. Then, eight months pregnant but yearning to be with the Saints and become an eternal family, Elizabeth sent William and their second son off to prepare a home for their family in Zion.

After the baby was born, Elizabeth's family begged her to forsake her husband and her religion and stay with them. But fixed in her determination to follow the Savior, she left her family and homeland forever, sailing for Liverpool, England.



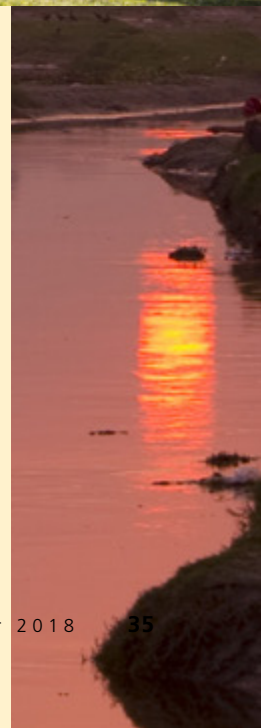
Rosalene, 2003, Colorado, USA

Rosalene grew up as the youngest child in a large family in Enterprise, a small community in southern Utah, USA. She had many opportunities to witness the power of faith in Jesus Christ during her years at home and on her mission. After marrying in the temple, Rosalene embarked on a testimony-stretching journey of her own when her husband started a career that would take her farther and farther from home.

After moving to the state of Colorado, Rosalene watched from afar as her mother battled cancer until passing away a few years later.

"I could have been happy to live in my hometown next to my parents my entire life," she says. "It broke my heart when I had to grow up and move away. Losing my mom was life-shattering. Even now, not a single day goes by that I don't miss her.

"I have to believe that there were days when Elizabeth missed her home desperately. But she believed in Jesus Christ and allowed His power to work in her life. That was enough to carry her through. The same power has helped me as I rely on my Heavenly Father for strength, whether or not my earthly family is close by."



THE STING OF DEATH

Elizabeth, 1856, Liverpool, England

On the long journey by sea from India to England, Elizabeth's infant daughter became seriously ill. She died and was buried in Liverpool. Elizabeth later said that losing her baby was so painful that she didn't know if she could continue. Heartbroken and alone, but encouraged by Elder Franklin D. Richards of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who was serving as president of the European Mission, Elizabeth sailed for Boston, Massachusetts, USA.

Rosalene, 2006, New York, USA

Shortly after the Pacinis moved their growing family to New York, Rosalene went into preterm labor. The doctors considered surgery to deliver the baby because his heart rate kept dropping. But when his heartbeat normalized, the family went home relieved.

At a follow-up appointment a few days later, the doctor couldn't find a heartbeat. Their baby boy was delivered a few hours later—stillborn.

"Losing my baby was heart-wrenching," Rosalene says. "I have never felt as empty as I did after they took his little body from my arms."

The family flew to Utah to bury him next to Rosalene's mother. For weeks after, Rosalene couldn't bear to leave and move on with life.

"I think I understand a little how Elizabeth wondered if she could go on," Rosalene says. "But she did. We may all find ourselves in that place at some point in our lives. But we can't stop. We move forward by relying on our Savior more than we did before, and eventually we recognize the miracles that have surrounded us all along."



EVER ONWARD, BY JOSEPH BRICKEY

THE WINTERS OF LIFE

Elizabeth, 1856, Iowa, USA

After crossing an ocean, Elizabeth found herself in a completely new culture. She traveled by train to Iowa, USA, the end of the westbound railway at the time. Arriving in July 1856, Elizabeth joined the Willie handcart company.

The suffering of the Willie and Martin handcart companies is well chronicled. The companies left late in the season and got caught in an early winter in the Rocky Mountains. Freezing and low on food, more than 200 died.

Among the rescue party sent by President Brigham Young was Elizabeth's husband, William. The couple was reunited in deep snow and freezing wind.

After recovering in Salt Lake City, the couple ended their journey in Cedar City, only a few miles from where Rosalene's began.

Rosalene, 2007, Hong Kong, China

Like Elizabeth generations before, Rosalene soon found herself crossing an ocean to settle in an unfamiliar culture when her husband took a position in Hong Kong.

"Some people thrive on change and adventure, but it was almost too much for me," Rosalene says.

She again found strength in her Savior and in God's plan for her. With the support of her family and dear sisters in her ward, Rosalene came to love and treasure her new surroundings and experiences.



OTHERS HAVE PASSED THIS WAY BEFORE

As we strive to follow Jesus Christ, we all travel through trials—our own plains and oceans to cross and harsh winters to face. But others have passed this way before. We can find hope and strength in their stories of trust in the Savior.

Rosalene recognizes she's likely only in the middle of her journey, but having seen the full scope of Elizabeth's story, she can't help but consider the end of her own.

"Maybe I have some attributes like Elizabeth, maybe I don't. But I hope that when my children see my life, they will see similarities—that we were both faithful to the end and that we allowed our trials to shape us to be more like our Savior."

Recognizing the strength she has gained from those who have passed along before, Rosalene is passing those stories on to her children.

"Knowing their stories, we know they did hard things," Rosalene says. "And we know the reason and the motivation. Now it is my turn to carry that tradition of faith in Jesus Christ and dedication to His gospel, and pass it on to my own children." ■

The stories of their ancestors have helped strengthen the faith of Rosalene Pacini and her family.

FAMILY STORIES IN THE SCRIPTURES

Studies show that children become more resilient to the challenges of life when they are familiar with the stories of challenges their own ancestors faced.¹

In the Book of Mormon, Helaman also recognized the power of connecting his children to family stories that had been passed down through writing and retelling. He told his sons:

"Behold, I have given unto you the names of our first parents who came out of the land of Jerusalem; and this I have done that when you remember your names ye may remember them; and when ye remember them ye may remember their works; and when ye remember their works ye may know how that it is said, and also written, that they were good.

"Therefore, my sons, I would that ye should do that which is good, that it may be said of you, and also written, even as it has been said and written of them" (Helaman 5:6–7).

NOTE

1. See Robyn Fivush, "Collective Stories in Families Teach Us about Ourselves," *Psychology Today*, Feb. 2, 2017, psychologytoday.com/blog/the-stories-our-lives/201702.





By Elder Jeffrey R. Holland
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

PRESIDENT HENRY B. EYRING: Towering Intellect, Childlike Humility

The multifaceted aspects of President Henry B. Eyring's life and character are as pure as they are sometimes paradoxical.

One of President Henry B. Eyring's sons said recently, "My dad can be described in two words: pure motives." Surely everyone who has ever met this new Second Counselor to President Russell M. Nelson, watched him interact with others, or heard him give a sermon would agree. Indeed, it would seem that the wonderfully varied dimensions of Hal Eyring's life (as he has always been known to family and friends) are one long manifestation of a singularly pure virtue, one consistent demonstration of a single "pure motive": to be in both word and deed precisely what God wants His children to be.

President Eyring's method for pursuing that goal is as clear and uncomplicated as the task itself—and no less challenging! From his childhood now through to his 80s, Hal has undertaken these efforts to be right before God by seeking earnestly for—and being willing never to act without—the guidance of the Holy Ghost, a heavenly companion he will reference in almost every conversation he has, every administrative decision he makes, or every public declaration he utters. To

enjoy the companionship of the Holy Ghost is Henry B. Eyring's overarching means to a celestial end. It is a manifestation of his truly childlike humility. It is evidence of his singular spiritual purity.

Ironically, it is the many paradoxes of his life that make the purity of it even more striking. Born to and named for a Nobel-contending chemist, Hal tried his hand at physics and chemistry but chose business for his academic career, a topic about as far from the Eyring tradition as one could get.

With access along the way to significant





wealth, he and his wife, Kathleen, have chosen their entire married life to live modestly and frugally—on occasion almost painfully so (at least as their children laughingly report). Professionally educated at one of the United States' premier universities, tenured as a full professor at another, and visiting fellow at a third, one could not get higher on the educational ladder than Hal had climbed at a relatively young age, yet he left that academic significance and professional security to preside over a virtually unknown two-year college (unknown at least to any and all of his

Left: Growing up in New Jersey, USA, young Henry (seated next to his mother) gained a testimony, even though there were few Church members to meet with. At age 13, he and his family moved to Utah because his father took a position at the University of Utah. Henry played basketball for East High School in Salt Lake City.

Harvard, Stanford, and MIT associates), a school he had never visited—Ricks College—in a city whose location he could not have pointed out to anyone—Rexburg, Idaho, USA.

The purity and paradox go on. Bright beyond the usual examples of that intellectual quality, President Eyring is not willing to depend on his own talent or mental acumen to make any decision on matters that have spiritual consequence. Bold in the fullest measure of that word when needed and strong beyond the customary definition of strength, he simply will not, as President M. Russell

Ballard (and President

Eyring's own children) have noted, "be rushed into making a decision hastily or choosing a course of action without care. He would never act in any way that would put the Church or anyone else he was responsible for at risk."¹

One concluding example of the purity and paradox lying at the very center of Henry B. Eyring's soul might sum up this remarkable man's integrity:

Once President Eyring had a need to provide the sacrament to a group not able to join in the regular setting of a ward sacrament meeting. Before he pursued that kind gesture,



1933: Born in Princeton, New Jersey, USA

1955: Graduated from the University of Utah with a degree in physics

1959, 1963: Received master of business administration and doctor of business administration degrees from Harvard University

1962: Married Kathleen Johnson in the Logan Utah Temple

1962–71: Taught at the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University in California, USA

1971–77: Served as president of Ricks College

1980–85: Served as Church Commissioner of Education

1985: Called as First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

1992: Called to the First Quorum of the Seventy

1992–2005: Served as Church Commissioner of Education

1995: Called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

2007: Called as Second Counselor in the First Presidency

2008: Called as First Counselor in the First Presidency

2018: Called as Second Counselor in the First Presidency

he placed a series of rather urgent calls to the bishop of his ward to seek permission to do so. Of course, the bishop willingly and lovingly granted the request.

I cite this particular incident for a purpose. Surely the lesson is obvious to everyone. This is a member of the First Presidency of the Church asking. This is an ordained Apostle, one holding all the priesthood keys any human being can hold on this earth. This is one who could and does give direction to every other ward and stake priesthood leader in the Church, including the bishop of his own ward in Bountiful, Utah, USA. This is one who can overlay his keys on those of any local leader and as a presiding officer of the Church is often required to do so. But with the purity of heart that characterizes everything he does and the paradox not everyone would be so prepared to demonstrate, this is President Henry B. Eyring scrupulously following the protocol outlined for every lay member of the Church everywhere in the world, humbly presenting his petition before the Lord's anointed and more than willing to take the counsel and abide by the decision of his local leader.

The Roots of His Faith

This rich spirituality and transparent purity of President Eyring's faith began early. Born to Henry and Mildred Bennion Eyring on May 31, 1933, while Henry Sr. was a world-renowned professor at Princeton University, Hal was raised in a region in which there were so few Church members that the Eyrings held Sabbath meetings in their home.

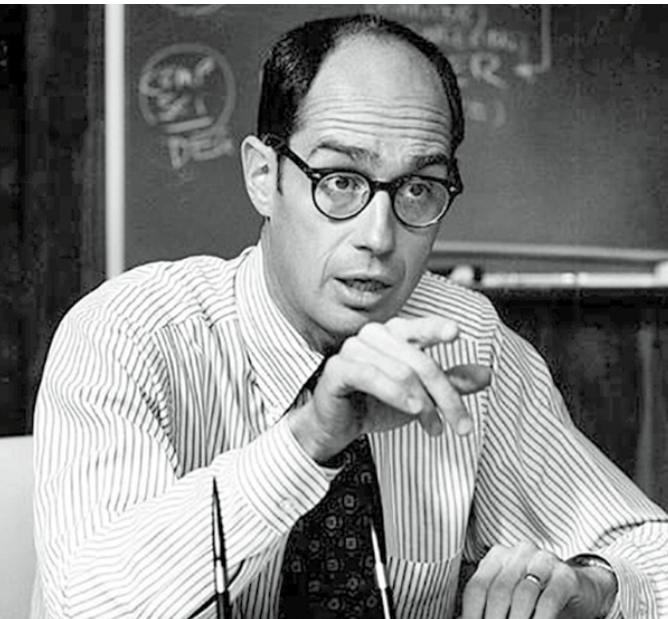
President Eyring would later joke that he and his younger brother, Harden, constituted the whole Primary of the branch, and their older brother, Ted, filled out the entire Young Men program. Their mother, Mildred, was the pianist and music leader, though how she did both he doesn't quite remember.

Not being able to worship with a large ward didn't prevent Hal from beginning to gain a testimony. "I learned then," he recalled, "that the Church is not a building; the Church isn't even a lot of people. I felt close to Heavenly Father and knew [even then] that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is His church; it didn't matter that our little branch met in our dining room."

When Hal was 13, his father took a significant position at the University of Utah. The younger Henry attended early-morning seminary and took some enjoyment in playing on his high school's basketball team, but by his own admission never made any close personal friends.



While feeling sorry for himself one day, he received an impression that would change his life. He felt it was a warning from God: “Someday, when you know who you really are, you will be sorry you didn’t use your time better.” He responded to that prompting by reading the Book of Mormon several times as a teenager. He also felt guided by President David O. McKay’s book *Gospel Ideals*, which, among other things, taught him how to properly treat women, a devotion he would show all of his life to his beloved wife, Kathleen.



Left: President Eyring was on the faculty at the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University before being asked to serve as the president of Ricks College (now Brigham Young University–Idaho).

Above: President Eyring and his wife, Kathy, were blessed with four sons and two daughters.

District presidency, a Church calling Hal had while he was pursuing his graduate work at Harvard University following his undergraduate studies at the University of Utah. As a doctoral student in the summer of 1960, Hal represented the district presidency at a single-adult devotional held at the Cathedral of the Pines in southwest New Hampshire, USA, a natural outdoor amphitheater of note in the region. At the event he saw a young woman in a red and white dress and was impressed by the pure goodness she radiated. He thought, “That’s the best person I’ve ever seen. If I could be with her for the rest of my life, I could be every good thing I ever wanted to be.”

The young woman was Kathleen Johnson from Palo Alto, California, USA, who hadn’t intended to be in New England that summer but, at the insistence of her friend, had attended summer school with her at Harvard. Following that outdoor devotional, Hal arranged to meet Kathy at church one Sunday and was happy to hear she enjoyed playing tennis. Hal had been playing tennis several

A Dream Come True

Since early childhood, Hal’s deepest dreams were to be married and form a family. He thought about his future children so often that he’d already given them the collective nickname “The Redheads,” imagining them with red hair like his mother’s.

This dream finally moved toward fruition during his service as a counselor in the Boston





future seemed bright and clear, even down to the Eyring dream home that Hal had recently outlined in his journal. It would include such niceties as “a room for projects, large enough and rough enough to work on and store a kayak,” along with “at least five electrical outlets by the kitchen table” and “a shed or bathhouse retreat for writing.”

“What do you mean?” Hal asked his wife.

“Couldn’t you do studies for Neal Maxwell?” she suggested, referring to the Church’s new Commissioner of Education. At this, Hal was

times a week with a college friend and was a good natural athlete, so he assumed a game of tennis would be an ideal first date and a way for him to make a terrific impression. What Kathleen didn’t tell him was that she had been the captain of her high school tennis team! “She cleaned me out,” Hal still grumbles about the match. This was the first of his future wife’s remarkable examples of living humbly and then helping her husband to do so.

A New Path

Following their marriage and Hal’s eventual appointment to the faculty of the business school at Stanford University, late one night in December 1970, just a few months before Hal was released as the bishop of the student ward in Palo Alto, Kathy asked a question seemingly out of the blue. As Hal climbed into bed after a demanding day, she leaned over and asked, “Are you sure you’re doing what you ought to be doing with your career?”

Her question caught him by surprise. Everything in their life seemed perfect. The

Called an Apostle in 1995 (above), President Eyring has served as a counselor to three Presidents of the Church: Gordon B. Hinckley (right), Thomas S. Monson, and now Russell M. Nelson.

Right: President Eyring waves from his place as grand marshal in the 2012 Days of ‘47 parade in Salt Lake City, Utah.



truly dumbfounded. He had only met Neal A. Maxwell once, and he knew that Kathleen had never met him at all. He tried to describe to her why such a career shift would not be a good fit for him, yet she insisted he at least pray over the matter. This he did immediately, dropping to kneel by the bed and offering a short prayer. When no answer came, Hal felt the matter decided and soon went to sleep.

The following morning, however, Hal received two distinct spiritual impressions that would forever alter the course of his career and his life. He captured both in his journal. First,

“Don’t use your human judgment to eliminate opportunities presented to you: pray about them all with an open mind.” And second, “Do the tasks you are assigned in the Church and your profession as well as you can; they are preparation.”

The first impression came as something of a rebuke that Hal would forever thereafter live by. After having previously rejected three different job offers without praying over them, into his mind came the words, “Don’t you ever make that mistake again. You don’t know which end is up in your career.”

With this spiritual direction fresh in his mind, Hal was



prepared when less than three weeks later, Commissioner Maxwell called to schedule a meeting with him in Salt Lake City. Brother Maxwell got right to the point. “I’d like to ask you to be the president of Ricks College,” he said. Hal replied that he would have to pray about it. He did and the terse answer he received was, “It’s my school.” The rest, as they say, is history. His service in the Church since then has been as exemplary as it has been conspicuous, moving on to serve as Deputy Commissioner of Education and then Commissioner (twice), followed by calls to the Presiding Bishopric, the Quorum of the Seventy, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and as a counselor to three Presidents of the Church.

But in a very real sense to Hal, no calling in the Church was more important for him than another: “The pressures at every stage of life can tempt us to reject or neglect calls to serve the Savior,” President Eyring has taught. “Some of those calls may seem unimportant, but *my* life, and my family, was changed for the better by my accepting a call to teach a deacons quorum. I felt the love of those deacons for the Savior and His love for them.”²

One concluding paradox: I can think of almost no one I know who would be more adverse to conflict and repulsed by violence than my friend Henry B. Eyring. Yet he graduated as the top ROTC cadet in his class at the University

of Utah and served his country with distinction in the United States Air Force. If one had to go to war—and we most certainly are in one that began in the councils of heaven—you would want, first of all, to be led by someone who hated the very thought of war. But if (spiritual) war it was to be, then you would plead for that leader to think clearly,



even brilliantly, to measure every tactical and strategic option against revealed doctrine, and to live for and seek the confirmation of the Holy Ghost in every decision that he made. Such a singular defense of the sacred in a battle against anything unhallowed or profane demonstrates perhaps the ultimate purity of Henry B. Eyring’s sometimes seemingly paradoxical life. I would be proud to serve on his flight crew, aboard his battleship, or in his foxhole. ■

President Eyring’s biography, *I Will Lead You Along: The Life of Henry B. Eyring*, by Robert I. Eaton and Henry J. Eyring, was invaluable in preparing this article. Some of President Eyring’s firsthand observations and biographical background come from this source.

NOTES

1. Personal correspondence, Apr. 25, 2018.
2. Henry B. Eyring, “To My Grandchildren,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 69.

AN Ensign FOR THE Nations

A signal banner teaches us about how the Lord will gather Israel.



ENSIGN

“In the scriptures, a flag or standard around which people gather in a unity of purpose or identity. In ancient times an ensign served as a rallying point for soldiers in battle” (Guide to the Scriptures, “Ensign,” scriptures.lds.org).

BIBLE FACTS

When Moses raised the brazen serpent on a pole (see Numbers 21:8), the word translated as “pole” is the same Hebrew word that is translated as “ensign” elsewhere. Because those who looked on the serpent were healed, it represents Jesus Christ, the Master Healer (see John 3:14–15; Alma 33:19–22).

In the last days, the “root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people” (Isaiah 11:10) for the gathering of Israel, is Jesus Christ.

An ensign was usually raised on a hill or mountain (see Isaiah 18:3). In former times, mountains often represented or served as temples (see Isaiah 2:2).

MOSES AND THE BRASS SERPENT, BY JUDITH A. MEHR; DETAIL FROM CHRIST AT EMMAUS, BY CARL HENRICH BLOCH; THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WALKING TOWARDS THE DESERT/SEW/UNIVERSAL IMAGES GROUP/BRIDGEMAN IMAGES





DETAIL FROM THE LIVES, BY SIMON DEWEY, PHOTOGRAPH OF PRESIDENT HINCKLEY BY BUSATH PHOTOGRAPHY

“And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. . . .

“And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”

Isaiah 11:10, 12.



HOW TO BE AN ENSIGN

“If we are to hold up this Church as an ensign to the nations and a light to the world, we must take on more of the luster of the life of Christ individually and in our own personal circumstances.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), “An Ensign to the Nations, a Light to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 84.

WHAT WE CAN LEARN

An ensign:

Is raised up. The Lord urges us to look upward, to raise our sights and serve a higher cause—His cause.

Gathers. In the last days, the Lord will gather scattered Israel. He has begun this work by restoring His authority and His Church (see D&C 110:11–12), as well as by sending His servants to preach the gospel. They invite people to “gather” by accepting Jesus Christ, obeying Him, making covenants, and assembling in stakes of Zion in their own lands. “The Book of Mormon and the Church of Jesus Christ are symbolic ensigns to all nations of the earth” (Guide to the Scriptures, “Ensign,” scriptures.lds.org). Also included



in the work of gathering are ordinances performed for deceased ancestors.

Rallies an army. We rally to the Lord’s cause by making and keeping covenants, preaching God’s word, keeping His commandments, and serving in His Church. As we minister to one another and stand up for the cause of truth and righteousness, we join the ranks of the Lord’s army.

Focuses on a rallying point.

The center of our faith, devotion, and service is Jesus Christ. He said, “My Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father” (3 Nephi 27:14). ■



FINDING PEACE

FROM STORIES OF INFERTILITY IN THE BIBLE

When I realized how many stories in the Bible discuss infertility, I knew there was something important to learn from their life lessons.

By Rachel Sheffield

It's hard not to cry when I talk about the struggles with infertility my husband and I endured. I felt hopeful. I felt like a failure. I felt gratitude for the physicians who worked so hard to help us. I felt shattered with each failed treatment. I felt loved by my family and friends. I felt lonely and desolate in my pain. It was a difficult time.

As I searched the scriptures during this time, I noticed there were many couples who suffered from infertility: Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel, Elkanah and Hannah, and Zachariah and Elisabeth. This surprised me. The Bible covers only a tiny piece of a vast history. Why would God inspire prophets to include so many stories of infertility? This felt like the beginning of an answer to my prayers; there was something here for me to learn. So I decided to study each of the women in these stories, and as I studied, I learned four important lessons that helped me grow and find peace despite my struggles with infertility.

1. Infertility is not a reflection of our worthiness or capability

When faced with infertility, I found it hard not to feel like it was my fault, that God didn't trust me for some

reason. Was I not faithful enough? Would I not be a good enough mother? I would lie awake at night after my husband fell asleep, aching to know what characteristic I lacked. My brain said I was being unreasonable. My heart kept me awake. One of the greatest lessons I learned from studying these women in the Bible is that my infertility was in no way tied to God's trust or lack of trust in me.

The amount of information I could find about each childless woman varied, but they all had certain things in common. Their lives were not easy, and childlessness was just one part of that. Most experienced the reproach of others as a result of their childlessness. Several had to wait a long time for children. Yet they kept the commandments and they prayed. After Hannah finally had a son, she brought him to Eli the priest and reminded him of her prayers: "Oh my lord, . . . I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed" (1 Samuel 1:26–27; see also verses 10–12).

They all remained strong and faithful women, even when their prayers and supplications for children weren't immediately answered in the way they expected. And that was the point. Their faith was not contingent on the answer they received or whether they had children in this





life. They had chosen to trust in our Heavenly Father. And I could do the same.

When these women eventually had children, they raised some of the most incredible and faithful men to have lived on this earth: Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samuel, and John the Baptist. As I considered the impact each of these men had on the world, I was struck by the trust Heavenly Father had placed in these women, by the trust He places in anyone He asks to teach His children—mothers and fathers, aunts and uncles, Sunday School teachers, bishops, nursery leaders, and others. In the eyes of God, these women were not defined by their infertility, and neither was I. We are daughters and sons of God, and He believes in us.

2. God's plan involves more than we can presently see

I love the story of Elisabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. We know so little about her and yet I learned so much from her. Elisabeth and her husband, Zacharias, had prayed for children, but those prayers hadn't been

answered in the way they hoped. On top of that, others regarded her with disdain because of her lack of children, which I'm sure only exacerbated her heartache.¹ Despite this, she and her husband remained faithful to the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. They must have been incredible people.

Eventually they were blessed with a son. I wonder how Elisabeth felt when she realized that the timing of her pregnancy was at least in part caused by the fact that her son, John, would prepare the way for the Messiah. Being the faithful woman that she was, she probably used it as a lesson to teach her son to trust in the timing of the Lord.

Elisabeth reminded me that I can see only a tiny sliver of what the Lord sees. This thought kept me going after each failed infertility treatment. I could not understand why the Lord kept directing us down paths that seemed like failures because they didn't end with us having a baby. Now, looking back, I can see how each of those seeming failures was an important stepping-stone on our path to understanding His timing.

President Russell M. Nelson once encouraged the “childless sisters” of the Church to “remember [that] the eternal timetable of the Lord is much longer than the lonely hours of your preparation or the total of this mortal life. These are only as microseconds when compared to eternity.”² I know that there is so much more that He sees and knows about our future, and if we listen to Him, He will always direct us down paths that will *eventually* lead to great happiness.

3. Find joy in the present and appreciate the knowledge you are gaining

Another woman in the Bible whose experience I learned from was Eve. I have always loved and looked up to Eve. She was faithful, courageous, compassionate, and wise. Considering her story through the lens of my struggles with infertility has only deepened my admiration for this incredible woman. I do not know if Eve was fully aware of her inability to have children without leaving the Garden of Eden, but Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the

Twelve Apostles explains that Eve “understood that she and Adam *had* to fall in order that ‘men [and women] might be’ [2 Nephi 2:25] and that there would be joy”³ (see 2 Nephi 2:22–25).

We know how Eve came to view her decision to eat of the fruit in hindsight. After Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden, an angel came and taught them of Jesus Christ and His Atonement (see Moses 5:6–9). Afterwards the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, causing him to testify. Eve happily said, “Were it not for our transgression *we never should have had seed*, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient” (Moses 5:11; emphasis added). She found joy in her decision. I cannot imagine how painful it was to be cast out, to leave the presence of the God she loved. And yet, as she looked back on that decision, she rejoiced in the knowledge she had gained, knowing that, through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, she could eventually return to our Heavenly Father. Eve taught me to find happiness in the present. She could have spent her life wishing she were still in the Garden of Eden, yearning for the life she had left behind. Instead, she found joy in her current situation: in her children, in the knowledge she had gained, and in the power of the Savior’s Atonement. Eve’s lesson was a powerful one for me. During my struggle with infertility, I was often tempted to focus on only what I lacked, but by focusing on the present I too found joy.

Among other things, I was able to use this time to volunteer as an ordinance worker in the temple. Before, I attended the temple because that was what I was supposed to do. But now I love it even more. I have a deep appreciation for the ordinances we receive in the temple. The blessings promised to those who keep their covenants are incredible! And they are given to everyone. Young and old. Physically fit and disabled. Married and unmarried. Those with children and those without. I am a different person because I served in the temple. I value eternal families more. I have a deeper understanding of the Savior’s

Atonement. I pray more consciously. And I know that the greater knowledge and faith I gained from serving in the temple will make me a better mother.

4. We are all mothers

Eve also taught me that being a mother does not have to be tied to having children: both God the Father and Adam called Eve “the mother of all living” (Genesis 3:20; Moses 4:26) before she ever bore a child.⁴ As Ardeth Greene Kapp, who served as Young Women General President and who was never able to have children herself, asked, “Is motherhood reserved only for those who give birth? Was not the sacred mission of motherhood foreordained by God *for all women* before the world was?”⁵ She also observed: “I have come to know that we can all . . . rejoice in the sacred calling of motherhood. To give birth is but one part of this sacred calling.”⁶ This realization was a soothing balm to my broken heart. I was a mother—not in the traditional sense, certainly, but I had a role to play, a responsibility to bear.



Sheri Dew, former Second Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, said:

“Motherhood is more than bearing children, though it is certainly that. It is the essence of who we are as women. It defines our very identity, our divine stature and nature, and the unique traits our Father gave us. . . .

“As daughters of our Heavenly Father, and as daughters of Eve, we are all mothers and we have always been mothers.”⁷

Through Eve’s experience, I realized that motherhood is a calling to love, nurture, and lead those of a younger generation, and I had that calling regardless of whether I bore children. Within days of discovering that I had infertility problems, I was called as a Young Women leader in my ward. I know this was a merciful blessing from a loving Heavenly Father. As I poured my heart into that calling, each girl became like a daughter to me. I felt a love for them that could only have come from their Heavenly Father. I was able to experience what it means to be a mother without bearing children, and it was beautiful.

I am grateful for the stories of these wonderful, righteous women in the Bible. I never expected to relate so deeply to women who lived in such a different time from my own, but their faith and courage in the face of infertility have meant so much to me. I have learned to more fully trust that I am a daughter of God and that He loves me, believes in me, and has a plan for me. I have learned to love the temple and to find opportunities to learn even in the middle of heartache. I have gained a greater understanding of what it means to be a mother. Most importantly, I have learned that even the smallest details in the scriptures can be used by a loving Heavenly Father to give us knowledge and comfort. ■

The author, who is now the mother of two-year-old twins, lives in California, USA.

NOTES

1. See Luke 1:25; see also definition of *reproach* in *New Testament Student Study Guide* (Church Educational System manual, 2007), 53.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “Lessons from Eve,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 87.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Because She Is a Mother,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 36.
4. See Neill F. Marriott, “What Shall We Do?” *Ensign*, May 2016, 11.
5. Ardeth Greene Kapp, *All Kinds of Mothers* (1979), 9; emphasis added.
6. Ardeth Greene Kapp, “Drifting, Dreaming, Directing,” in *Blueprints for Living: Perspectives for Latter-day Saint Women*, ed. Maren M. Mouritsen (1980), 1:84.
7. Sheri Dew, “Are We Not All Mothers?” *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 96, 97.



RESOURCES FOR THOSE STRUGGLING WITH INFERTILITY

Infertility is a physical, mental, and emotional struggle. Medical treatments can also be a huge financial burden for couples. Fortunately, there may be local resources available to help ease these burdens. Many countries have a national infertility association that can provide information about various types of treatments, local infertility clinics, support groups, and financial aid. Below are a few other resources as well. (These resources are not sponsored by the Church.)

Financial Support

- A variety of organizations offer infertility treatment “scholarships.” Some scholarships are open to anyone; others are restricted by geographic area, financial need, or other circumstances.
- Infertility clinics sometimes offer free consultations. Call around to your local clinics to see if they offer this service.
- Some clinics may work with independent organizations to offer infertility treatment “packages” that provide multiple treatments for a single, reduced fee.
- Some medication companies and some infertility clinics offer discounts to self-paying and low-income patients. Ask your local clinic if they have or know of any discount programs.
- The price of fertility drugs and medications can vary widely among pharmacies. Carefully shop around to make sure you are getting medications that are not only at the best price but also medically sound and of high quality.

Emotional Support

- Some areas have both peer-led and professionally led support groups. Peer-led support groups are informal organizations that allow men and women experiencing infertility to discuss their situations with others going through similar experiences. Professionally led support groups are more structured and are led by trained and licensed therapists. You can find information on local support groups through a local fertility clinic or hospital, online at a national infertility association website, or by searching online.
- There are a variety of support resources on social media platforms too, from Facebook support groups to infertility-focused Instagram and Twitter accounts to infertility vlogs on YouTube.
- Although there are many formally organized support resources, many people continue to feel alone as they experience the pains of infertility. If you are suffering from infertility and feel open to sharing that with others, consider organizing a support group in your ward or stake. Or if that feels like too much, consider selectively letting some family members, friends, or ward members know about your struggles with infertility. This may lead to discovering others who have experienced infertility (now or in the past) as they follow your lead and open up to share their own experiences.



LIVE WITH PERFECT HOPE

“If we have faith in Jesus Christ, the hardest as well as the easiest times in life can be a blessing. In all conditions, we can choose the right with the guidance of the Spirit. We have the gospel of Jesus Christ to shape and guide our lives if we choose it. And with prophets revealing to us our place in the plan of salvation, we can live with perfect hope and a feeling of peace.”

President Henry B. Eyring,
Second Counselor in the First
Presidency, “Mountains to
Climb,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 26.



Making Home an MTC

By Jenny Condie

When President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) announced the lowering of the age for full-time missionary service during the October 2012 general conference, I knew it was inspired. But as the mother of a 17-year-old boy, I was also apprehensive, I have to admit. My son seemed so young and unprepared for the mission field. And now he and his three younger brothers would possibly be leaving sooner than we had planned.

As I witnessed the flood of excited young men and women receiving their mission calls and entering the missionary training center following President Monson’s announcement, I thought to myself, “They are so young! How can they be ready?” The answer came to me through the words of an inspired local Church leader: “The home is really an MTC now.”

With these words in mind, my husband and I purchased a copy of *Preach My Gospel* for each of the seven members of our family. We used them as study guides during our regular family scripture study. With our assistance, even

our five-year-old daughter could participate.

We are continually on the lookout for other gospel learning opportunities for our children. We regularly invite missionaries to our home to teach investigators and to visit and dine with our family. Our older sons have taken opportunities to work with them.

We also try to help our children understand the basics of missionary life: obedience, using time wisely, learning to communicate well with others, and so on. We’ve even had role-plays in which our children have received a “mission call” and participated in companionship study and performed service projects.

Our two oldest sons have now completed full-time missions. Words cannot describe the joy and excitement this has brought to our whole family. I believe that as we prayerfully look for ways to make our homes like missionary training centers, we will be inspired and blessed with ideas and opportunities to teach our children. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

For more information, visit lds.org/callings/missionary.

With a little planning, mission preparation can be part of our every day.

MAKING YOUR HOME AN MTC

Whether you and your children are preparing to serve as full-time missionaries or lifelong member missionaries, these ideas can get you thinking about how to make missionary preparation a part of daily life:

- Watch the video “I’ll Go Where You Want Me to Go” ([lds.org/go/whereE918](https://www.lds.org/go/whereE918)) and discuss how sharing the gospel can be part of everyday life.
- Make family scripture study a daily priority.
- Have family and companionship prayers before leaving the house for the day and before going to bed. Pray for missionary opportunities.
- Have your children practice teaching the lessons in chapter 3 of *Preach My Gospel* (2004) in a family home evening or other setting.
- At dinner, discuss opportunities you saw during the day to be an example or share what you believe.
- Help your children begin using a study journal and recording impressions and ideas that come to them from their personal gospel study (see *Preach My Gospel*, x).
- If you served a mission, consider placing keepsakes from your service where your children can see them. Share meaningful experiences from your mission with them.
- Teach your children how to clean, wash clothes, and make simple meals. Invite them to wash their own clothes and help with dinner regularly.
- Use the principles in the missionary guide *Safeguards for Using Technology* ([lds.org/go/safeguardsE918](https://www.lds.org/go/safeguardsE918)) to discuss technology use in your home.
- Use the new standardized missionary interview questions ([lds.org/go/questionsE918](https://www.lds.org/go/questionsE918)) as family home evening topics.



THE GREATEST MISSIONARY WORK

“The greatest missionary work we will ever do will be in our homes. Our homes, quorums, and classes are part of the mission field. Our children and grandchildren are our most important investigators.”

Elder Robert D. Hales (1932–2017) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Our Duty to God: The Mission of Parents and Leaders to the Rising Generation,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 97.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For children: David Dickson, “Family MTC,” *Friend*, Oct. 2013, 26–27.

For teens: C. Scott Grow, “My MTC: Missionary Training Commitment,” *New Era*, Mar. 2008, 40–42.



For parents:

M. Russell Ballard, “Creating a Gospel-Sharing Home,” *Ensign*, May 2006, 84–87.

ELEPHANTS, FATHERS, AND FAMILIES

*Every father has a divine role in raising his children
in truth and righteousness.*

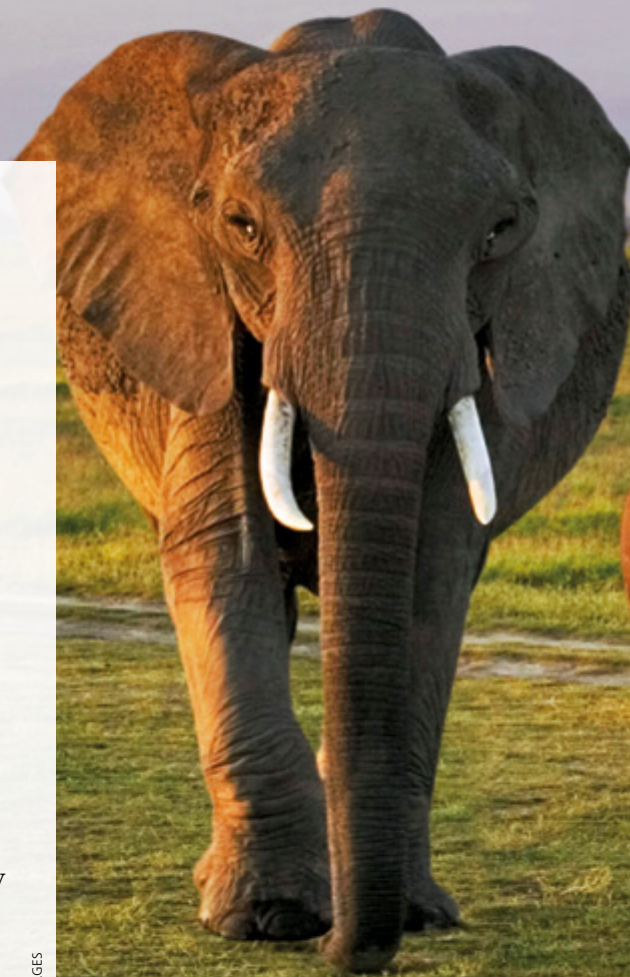
By Sarah Keenan
Church Magazines

About 40 years ago, officials at a national park and game reserve in South Africa were faced with a growing elephant problem. The population of African elephants had grown larger than the park could sustain. Since there was no way for the large adult elephants to be relocated—each adult elephant weighed more than 6,600 pounds (3,000 kg) and adult bull elephants weighed closer to 13,000 pounds (6,000 kg)—it was determined that only the young elephants would be moved to another reserve, and some of the adult elephants would be culled to control the population.

The problem was solved—or so it seemed. Twenty years later, the rangers at the other game reserve began to notice that some of the animals living at the reserve were being injured or killed. When the rangers placed hidden cameras around the reserve to find the culprit, they discovered that it was not poachers who were killing these animals but the juvenile elephants. The young males were abnormally aggressive, terrorizing the other animals in the park and charging humans and tourist vehicles.

The rangers ultimately concluded that the cause of the elephants' unusual and troubling behavior was the lack of a role model—in particular, a father. In normal circumstances, the bull elephants would model behavior for their young, helping them understand how an elephant was supposed to act. Without that guidance, the young elephants became violent and uncontrollable.¹

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION FROM GETTY IMAGES







The Gospel's View of Fathers

Of course, elephants and people are different, but this account does highlight an important gospel principle: the father is a vital cornerstone of the family. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” states, “Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children.” Fathers in particular have the responsibility “to preside over their families in love and righteousness” and “provide the necessities of life and protection for their families.” They work together “as equal partners” with their wives. This divine union is ordained of God and provides an environment where parents can “rear their children in love and righteousness, . . . provide for their physical and spiritual needs, and . . . teach them to love and serve one another, observe the commandments of God, and be law-abiding citizens.”²

Multiple prophets and apostles have also commented on the importance of fathers. President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, stated, “Noble fatherhood gives us a glimpse of the divine attributes of our Father in Heaven.”³ President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) likewise declared, “A father’s calling is eternal, and its importance transcends time.”⁴ He also counseled fathers, saying: “You have a serious responsibility to assume leadership in working with your children. You must help create a home where the Spirit of the Lord can abide.”⁵

Exemplar and Guardian

Whether they are aware of it or not, many boys learn what it means to be a man from observing their fathers. If a father is rude, dismissive, or abusive, his sons are more likely to develop a rude, dismissive, or abusive attitude toward those they interact with, particularly their future spouse and children. If a father demonstrates love and respect toward others and shows a pattern of service in the home, sons will more likely show respect to others and put an increased emphasis on service. A father can teach his sons to react with patience instead of violence and with humility instead of bravado. Many of society’s problems could be reduced if fathers would seek to turn the hearts of their children to Heavenly Father—teaching, by their example, the basic principles of faith, obedience, respect, and fidelity.⁶

A father’s example is particularly important in inspiring sons to be active and worthy priesthood holders. Consider the powerful influence a father can have in teaching his son the purpose of the priesthood and what it means to righteously exercise it. The nature and importance of priesthood blessings, covenants, and callings become clearer to young men as their fathers guide and teach them.

Fathers are role models not just for their sons but for their daughters as well. Elaine S. Dalton, former Young Women General President, advised fathers: “You are your

daughter's guardian in more than the legal sense. Be present in your daughter's life. Let her know your standards, your expectations, your hopes and dreams for her success and happiness. . . . Help her understand the importance of education. Help her understand that the principle of modesty is a protection. Help her choose music and media that invite the Spirit and are consistent with her divine identity. Be an active part of her life."⁷

As I was growing up, my father's loving example taught me about the power of the priesthood and the importance of finding a righteous spouse. I clearly remember the comfort and peace I felt whenever a father's blessing or blessing of healing was given to me. I remember the way my father treated my mother and served our family. I remember the time my father spent with me and my siblings, reading books out loud or playing with us in the backyard. I remember how, even when he had callings or work that required a great deal of his time, my father always found moments to attend soccer games and track meets, talk with us about our lives, and teach us about the gospel. When I started dating in college, I tried to find someone who showed the same dedication, respect, and commitment to the gospel that my father displayed, and my search led me to a wonderful husband.

Father Figures

In the South African game reserve, the solution to the delinquent elephants was to send in male bull elephants in specially designed trucks. As soon as these males arrived, the younger elephants' violent behavior stopped completely. Although these bull elephants were not their literal parents, they were still able to provide an example that the younger elephants could emulate.

Likewise, there are some Church members who have not had fathers present in their lives due to death, abandonment, divorce, or a number of other circumstances. In these cases, various blessings associated with having a father can still be present in their lives through mentors and role models.

A WORD TO SINGLE MOTHERS

The importance of fathers does not diminish the critical role that mothers play in the family, especially in fatherless homes. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland has noted that "no love in mortality comes closer to approximating the pure love of Jesus Christ than the selfless love a devoted mother has for her child,"¹⁰ and President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) declared that "none other can adequately take [a mother's] place."¹¹ Just as much as their husbands, mothers are role models to their children and have a great influence on their children's well-being, testimony, and overall happiness and success. Mary F. Foulger, a former Relief Society general board member, advised mothers raising children alone to "remember that you and the Lord constitute a majority. As your arms encircle your little ones, his arms are there, too. Feel secure, for his arms are lengthened out toward us all the day long."¹²



Those who can serve as role models or father figures include grandfathers, uncles, stepfathers, priesthood leaders, and other worthy men. Even more importantly, members with distant, absent, or abusive fathers can be comforted by the knowledge that "we all have a Father in whom we can trust and to whom we can turn for comfort and counsel. He is our Heavenly Father."⁸ Our Heavenly Father is the perfect example of fatherhood; He cares for us, He nurtures us, and He leads us. Regardless of our circumstance, we can always turn to Him.

Conclusion

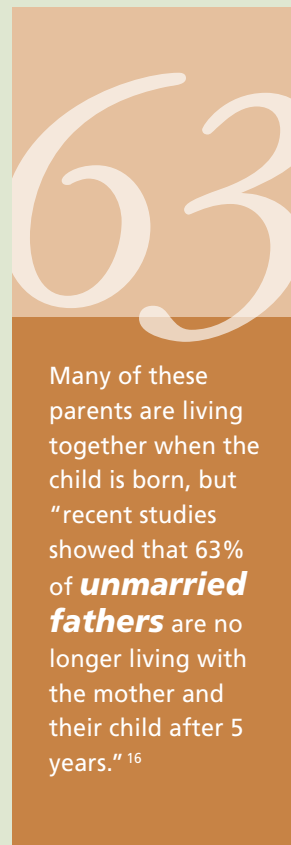
Our Heavenly Father has set a high standard for fatherhood, one that all fathers and father figures will fall short of in this life. Fatherhood is difficult. It exposes faults and weaknesses and requires sacrifice. But, as fathers show love to their families, teach their children the gospel, and follow the example that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have set before them, they can give their children “the key to peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come.”⁹ They can become a cornerstone of strength within their families and an example of righteousness for their posterity. They can become worthy of the divine title of “Father.” ■

NOTES

1. See “The Delinquents: A Spate of Rhino Killings,” CBS News, Aug. 22, 2000, cbsnews.com.
2. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
3. James E. Faust, “Them That Honour Me I Will Honour,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 46.
4. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* (2014), 194.
5. *Teachings: Ezra Taft Benson*, 196.
6. See D. Todd Christofferson, “Fathers,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 94.
7. Elaine S. Dalton, “Love Her Mother,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 78.
8. Kenneth Johnson, “We All Have a Father in Whom We Can Trust,” *Ensign*, May 1994, 30.
9. D. Todd Christofferson, “Fathers,” 94.
10. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Behold Thy Mother,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 48.
11. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Women of the Church,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 69.
12. Mary F. Foulger, “Motherhood and the Family,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 105.
13. Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox, *The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children* (2006), 12, childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/fatherhood.pdf.
14. See Sarah Allen and Kerry Daly, “The Effects of Father Involvement: An Updated Research Summary of the Evidence,” *Father Involvement Research Alliance* (May 2007), 3, fra.ca/cms/documents/29/Effects_of_Father_Involvement.pdf.
15. See Michael Yogman and Craig F. Garfield, “Fathers’ Roles in the Care and Development of Their Children: The Role of Pediatricians,” *Pediatrics*, vol. 138, no. 1 (July 2016), e4.
16. Yogman and Garfield, “Fathers’ Roles,” e4; emphasis added.
17. See “C2, Household Relationship and Living Arrangements of Children Under 18 Years, by Age and Sex: 2016,” United States Census Bureau, census.gov.

INVOLVED FATHERS VS. ABSENT FATHERS

- “From birth, children who have an involved father are more likely to be emotionally secure, be confident to explore their surroundings, and, as they grow older, have better social connections with peers.”¹³
- Children with involved fathers are also better at tolerating frustration and stress.¹⁴



In Strong Arms

By Sharon Price Anderson

*Hush, little one,
dressed in innocence,
encircled in safety.*

*Listen to the love
that blesses you.*

*Be still in strong arms
while one with
priesthood power,
pronouncing your name,
places this new stone
in the foundation
of your faith.*

*Then when dangers lurk
along your way,
trembling your soul,
stumbling your steps,
recall this day.*

*Believe that circles
of unseen angels,
summoned by your name,
will bear you up.*





**By Elder
J. Devn Cornish**
Of the Seventy

The True Church

“For the Perfecting of the Saints”

By now you have had the opportunity to read the first several chapters of volume 1 of the new four-volume narrative history of the Church, *Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days*. It is wonderful to see how the history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, told in its context as experienced by those who lived it, builds our faith and renews our hope. We feel privileged to bring that history forth in a way that can be understood and appreciated across the world and throughout the Church.

The impressions one gets from reading the history of the Church depend largely on what one expects to find in that history. We read the Lord’s own statement that this Church is “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth” (D&C 1:30). So it may seem reasonable to expect that the history of the true Church portray unerring leaders successfully implementing a sequence of revealed directions progressing to a perfect organization that is widely welcomed and embraced. But that is neither what the scriptures describe nor what our history represents, because the perfecting of the Church as an organization was not the Lord’s primary purpose.

What Is the Purpose of the Church?

Nowhere in our scriptures, our doctrine, or the teachings of latter-day apostles and prophets is it taught that the

purpose of the Lord is to perfect or to save the Church. Rather, the purpose of the Church is “for the perfecting of the saints . . . till we all come in the unity of the faith . . . unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12–13). The Lord’s primary purpose is to perfect His Saints. The Church serves to support that objective.

Thus, we will be thrilled by what we find in our history if we expect it to demonstrate how the process of the Restoration not only established the Lord’s true Church on earth but also provided the experiences by which its leaders and members could grow toward perfection as they learned from their triumphs and their mistakes. Their experiences can increase our faith in God and Christ and help us see how our participation in this same divinely directed process can change and bless us. In other words, the history of the Church gives us hope that we too can ultimately be “perfected in [Christ]” (Moroni 10:32).

What Does It Mean That This Is the True Church?

If the leaders and members of the past were able to establish Christ’s Church even though their efforts were sometimes imperfect, and if they sometimes made mistakes, then what does it mean to say that this is the true Church? It means that we may have complete confidence in the validity of the restored priesthood authority, the

saving ordinances, the revealed doctrine, the scriptures, and the united quorums of the Twelve Apostles and the First Presidency. It means that we may know that the Savior Himself directs the Church and that the Holy Ghost will bear witness to all sincere seekers of the truth of these things. It means that by striving to keep the covenants associated with the ordinances, and continually repenting, even imperfect but sincere people like you and me will live in celestial glory with God and Christ and our families forever, through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

We feel privileged to present this narrative history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and we encourage you to continue reading the remainder of the series as each volume comes out. It is faithful to the records and the facts available. We are confident that an honest reading of this history will increase our faith in Heavenly Father's love and in the power of Christ's Atonement, will strengthen our witness of the

divine direction of the Prophet Joseph Smith and of the Restoration, and can give us hope that we too will receive all the blessings promised to the faithful. ■

Elder Cornish was serving as Assistant Executive Director of the Church History Department at the time this article was prepared.

Chapter 7 of *Saints* appears in the following article. The entire first volume is available in 14 languages in print from store.lds.org and free of charge in the Gospel Library app and online at saints.lds.org. It is also available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese on popular e-book and audio book platforms.

To learn more about inspiring events in Church history, join the worldwide devotional, a Face to Face event with Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, on September 9, 2018. Visit YSAface2face.lds.org for details and to submit questions in advance.





A. FRIBERG



Chapter 7

Fellow Servants

This is chapter 7 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 preceding chapters were published in previous issues and are available in 47 languages in the Gospel Library app and at saints.lds.org.

The spring of 1829 was cold and wet well into May. While farmers around Harmony stayed indoors, putting off their spring planting until the weather improved, Joseph and Oliver translated as much of the record as they could.¹

They had come to an account of what happened among the Nephites and Lamanites when Jesus died in Jerusalem. It told of massive earthquakes and storms that devastated the people and altered the shape of the land. Some cities sank into the ground, while others caught fire and burned. Lightning split the sky for hours and the sun disappeared, shrouding the survivors in thick darkness. For three days people cried out, mourning for their dead.²

Finally, the voice of Jesus Christ pierced the gloom. “Will ye not now return unto me,” He asked, “and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?”³ He lifted the darkness, and the people repented. Soon, many of them gathered to a temple in a place called Bountiful, where they spoke of the incredible changes to the land.⁴

While the people talked with one another, they saw the Son of God descend out of heaven. “I am Jesus Christ,” He said, “whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.”⁵ He stayed among them for a time, taught His gospel, and commanded them to be baptized by immersion for the remission of sins.

“Whoso believeth in me, and is baptized, the same shall be saved,” He declared. “They are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God.”⁶ Before ascending to heaven, He gave righteous men authority to baptize those who believed in Him.⁷

As they translated, Joseph and Oliver were struck by these teachings. Like his brother Alvin, Joseph had never been baptized, and he wanted to know more about the ordinance and the authority necessary to perform it.⁸

On May 15, 1829, the rains cleared and Joseph and Oliver walked into the woods near the Susquehanna River. Kneeling, they asked God about baptism and the remission of sins. As they prayed, the voice of the Redeemer spoke peace to them, and an angel appeared in a cloud of light. He introduced himself as John the Baptist and placed his hands on their heads. Joy filled their hearts as God’s love surrounded them.

“Upon you my fellow servants,” John declared, “in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins.”⁹

The angel’s voice was mild, but it seemed to pierce Joseph and Oliver to the core.¹⁰ He explained that the Aaronic Priesthood authorized them to perform baptisms, and he commanded them to baptize each other after he departed. He also said they would receive additional priesthood power later, which would give them authority to confer the gift of the Holy Ghost on each other and on those they baptized.

After John the Baptist left, Joseph and Oliver walked to the river and waded in. Joseph baptized Oliver first, and as soon as he came out of the water, Oliver began to prophesy about things that would soon happen. Oliver then baptized Joseph, who rose from the river prophesying about the rise of Christ’s Church, which the Lord had promised to establish among them.¹¹

Following John the Baptist’s instructions, they returned to the woods and ordained each other to the Aaronic

Priesthood. In their study of the Bible, as well as their translation of the ancient record, Joseph and Oliver had often read about the authority to act in God’s name. Now they carried that authority themselves.

After their baptism, Joseph and Oliver found that scriptures that once seemed dense and mysterious suddenly became clearer. Truth and understanding flooded their minds.¹²

Back in New York, Oliver’s friend David Whitmer was eager to learn more about Joseph’s work. Though David lived in Fayette, about 30 miles (48 km) from Manchester, he and Oliver had become friends while Oliver was teaching school and living with the Smiths. They often talked about the gold plates, and when Oliver moved to Harmony, he promised to write David about the translation.

Letters started arriving a short time later. Oliver wrote that Joseph knew details about his life that no one could have known except by revelation from God. He described the Lord’s words to Joseph and the translation of the record. In one letter, Oliver shared a few lines of the translation, testifying of its truthfulness.

Another letter informed David that it was God’s will for him to bring his team and wagon to Harmony to help

Joseph, Emma, and Oliver move to the Whitmer home in Fayette, where they would finish the translation.¹³ People in Harmony had become less welcoming to the Smiths. Some men had even threatened to attack them, and had it not been for the influence of Emma’s family, they might have been seriously hurt.¹⁴

David shared Oliver’s letters with his parents and siblings, who agreed to welcome Joseph, Emma, and Oliver into their home. The Whitmers were descendants of German-speaking settlers in the area and had a reputation for hard work and piety. Their farm was close enough to



Joseph and Oliver had often read about the authority to act in God’s name. Now they carried that authority themselves.





the Smith home for a visit but far enough away to keep thieves from disturbing them.¹⁵

David wanted to go to Harmony immediately, but his father reminded him that he had two days of heavy work to do before he could leave. It was planting season, and David needed to plow 20 acres and enrich the soil with plaster of paris to help their wheat grow. His father said he ought to pray first to learn if it was absolutely necessary to leave now.

David took his father's advice, and as he prayed,

he felt the Spirit tell him to finish his work at home before going to Harmony.

The next morning, David walked out to the fields and saw rows of dark furrows in ground that had been unplowed the evening before. Exploring the fields further, he saw that about six acres had been plowed overnight, and the plow was waiting for him in the last furrow, ready for him to finish the job.

David's father was astonished when he learned what had happened. "There must be an overruling hand in this," he said, "and I think you had better go down to Pennsylvania as soon as your plaster of paris is sown."

David worked hard to plow the remaining fields and prepare the soil for a successful planting. When he finished, he hitched his wagon to a strong team of horses and set out for Harmony earlier than expected.¹⁶

Once Joseph, Emma, and Oliver moved to Fayette, David's mother had her hands full. Mary Whitmer and her husband, Peter, already had eight

children between the ages of 15 and 30, and the few who did not still live at home resided nearby. Tending to their needs filled Mary's days with work, and the three house-guests added more labor. Mary had faith in Joseph's calling and did not complain, but she was getting tired.¹⁷

The heat in Fayette that summer was sweltering. As Mary washed clothes and prepared meals, Joseph dictated the translation in an upstairs room. Oliver usually wrote for him, but occasionally Emma or one of the Whitmers took a turn with the pen.¹⁸ Sometimes, when Joseph and Oliver tired

of the strain of translating, they would walk out to a nearby pond and skip stones across the surface of the water.

Mary had little time to relax herself, and the added work and the strain placed on her were hard to bear.

One day, while she was out by the barn where the cows were milked, she saw a gray-haired man with a knapsack slung across his shoulder. His sudden appearance frightened her, but as he approached, he spoke to her in a kind voice that set her at ease.

“My name is Moroni,” he said. “You have become pretty tired with all the extra work you have to do.” He swung the knapsack off his shoulder, and Mary watched as he started to untie it.¹⁹

“You have been very faithful and diligent in your labors,” he continued. “It is proper, therefore, that you should receive a witness that your faith may be strengthened.”²⁰

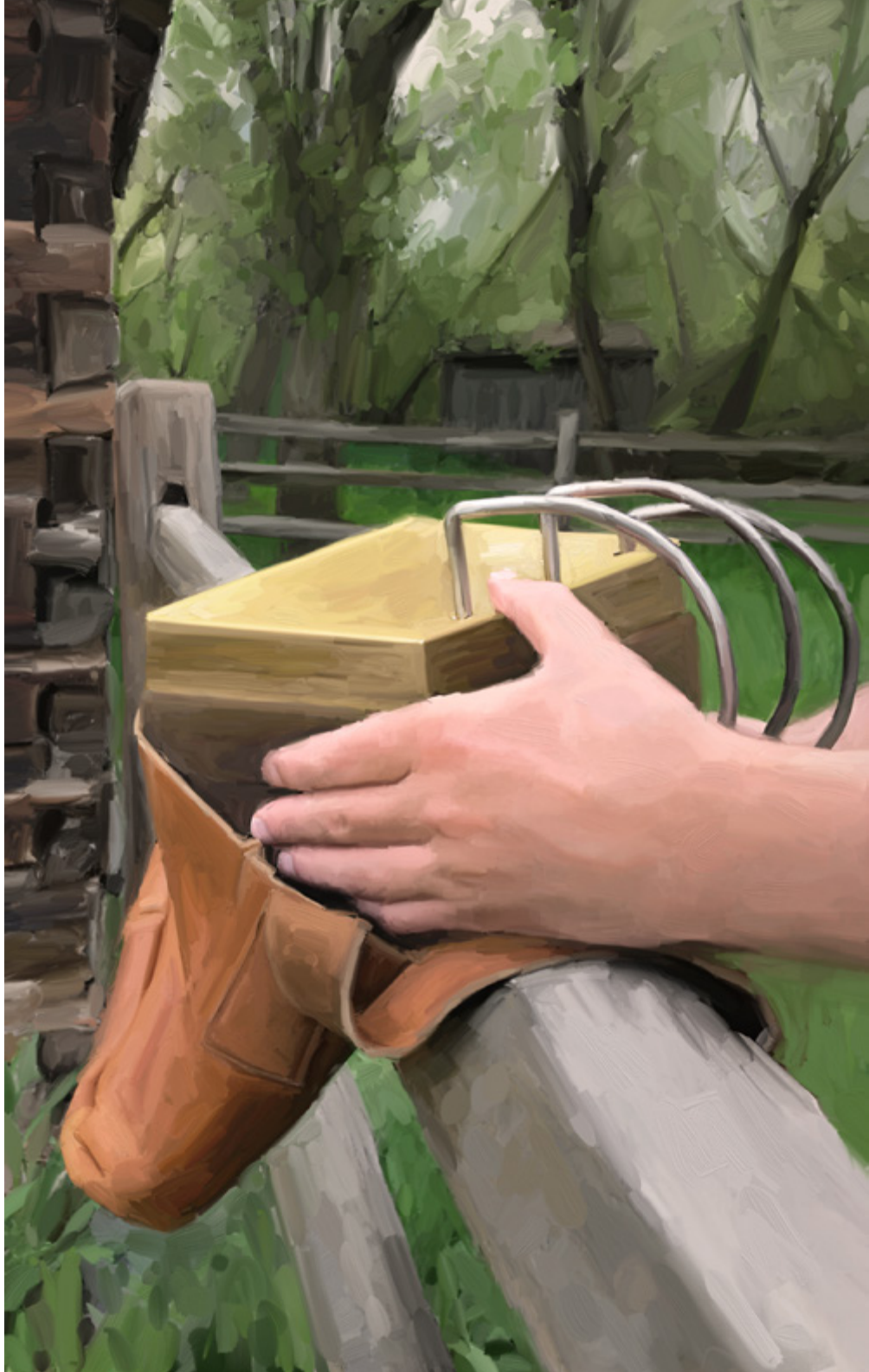
Moroni opened his knapsack and removed the gold plates. He held them in front of her and turned their pages so she could see the writings on them. After he turned the last page, he urged her to be patient and faithful as she carried the extra burden a little longer. He promised she would be blessed for it.²¹

The old man vanished a moment later, leaving Mary alone. She still had work to do, but that no longer troubled her.²²

At the Whitmer farm, Joseph translated rapidly, but some days were challenging. His mind would wander to other matters, and he could not focus on spiritual things.²³ The Whitmers’ small house was always busy and full of

distractions. Moving there had meant giving up the relative privacy he and Emma had enjoyed in Harmony.

One morning, as he was getting ready to translate, Joseph became upset with Emma. Later, when he joined Oliver and David in the upstairs room where they worked, he could not translate a syllable.



He left the room and walked outside to the orchard. He stayed away for about an hour, praying. When he came back, he apologized to Emma and asked for forgiveness. He then went back to translating as usual.²⁴

He was now translating the last part of the record, known as the small plates of Nephi, which would actually serve as the beginning of the book. Revealing a history similar to the one he and Martin had translated and lost, the small plates told of a young man named Nephi, whose family God had guided from Jerusalem to a new promised land. It explained the origins of the record and the early struggles between the Nephite and Lamanite peoples. More important, it bore a powerful testimony of Jesus Christ and His Atonement.

When Joseph translated the writing on the final plate, he found that it explained the record's purpose and gave it a title, The Book of Mormon, after the ancient prophet-historian who had compiled the book.²⁵

Since he started translating the Book of Mormon, Joseph had learned much about his future role in God's work. In its pages, he recognized basic teachings he had learned from the Bible as well as new truths and insights about Jesus Christ and His gospel. He also uncovered passages about the latter days that prophesied of a chosen seer named Joseph, who would bring forth the Lord's word and restore lost knowledge and covenants.²⁶

In the record, he learned that Nephi expanded on Isaiah's prophecy about a sealed book that learned men could not read. As Joseph read the prophecy, he thought of Martin Harris's interview with Professor Anthon. It affirmed that only God could bring forth the book out of the earth and establish the Church of Christ in the last days.²⁷

As Joseph and his friends finished the translation, their minds turned to a promise the Lord had given in the Book of Mormon and in His revelations—to show the plates to

three witnesses. Joseph's parents and Martin Harris were visiting the Whitmer farm at the time, and one morning Martin, Oliver, and David pleaded with Joseph to let them be the witnesses. Joseph prayed and the Lord answered, saying that if they relied on Him wholeheartedly and committed to testify of the truth, they could see the plates.²⁸

"You have got to humble yourself before your God this day," Joseph told Martin specifically, "and obtain if possible a forgiveness of your sins."²⁹

Later that day, Joseph led the three men into the woods near the Whitmer home. They knelt, and each took a turn praying to be shown the plates, but nothing happened. They tried a second time, but still nothing happened. Finally, Martin rose and walked away, saying he was the reason the heavens remained closed.

Joseph, Oliver, and David returned to prayer, and soon an angel appeared in a brilliant light above them.³⁰ He had the plates in his hands and turned them over one by one, showing the men the symbols engraved on each page. A table appeared beside him, and on it were ancient artifacts described in the Book of Mormon: the interpreters, the breastplate, a sword, and the miraculous compass that guided Nephi's family from Jerusalem to the promised land.

The men heard the voice of God declare, "These plates have been revealed by the power of God, and they have been translated by the power of God. The translation of them, which you have seen, is correct, and I command you to bear record of what you now see and hear."³¹

When the angel departed, Joseph walked deeper into the woods and found Martin on his knees. Martin told him he had not yet received a witness from the Lord, but he still wanted to see the plates. He asked Joseph to pray with him. Joseph knelt beside him, and before their words were half-uttered, they saw the same angel displaying the plates and the other ancient objects.



Moroni held the gold plates in front of Mary Whitmer and turned their pages so she could see the writings on them.



"'Tis enough! 'Tis enough!" Martin cried. "Mine eyes have beheld! Mine eyes have beheld!"³²

Joseph and the Three Witnesses returned to the Whitmer house later that afternoon. Mary Whitmer was chatting with Joseph's parents when Joseph rushed into the room. "Father! Mother!" he said. "You do not know how happy I am!"

He flung himself down beside his mother. "The Lord has caused the plates to be shown to three more besides me," he said. "They know for themselves that I do not go about to deceive the people."

He felt as if a burden had been lifted off his shoulders. "They will now have to bear a part," he said. "I am not any longer to be entirely alone in the world."

Martin came into the room next, almost bursting with joy. "I have now seen an angel from heaven!" he cried. "I bless God in the sincerity of my soul that he has condescended to make me—even me—a witness of the greatness of His work!"³³

A few days later, the Whitmers joined the Smith family at their farm in Manchester. Knowing the Lord had

promised to establish His words "in the mouth of as many witnesses as seemeth him good," Joseph went into the woods with his father, Hyrum, and Samuel, as well as four of David Whitmer's brothers—Christian, Jacob, Peter Jr., and John—and their brother-in-law Hiram Page.³⁴

The eight men gathered at a spot where the Smith family often went to pray privately. With the Lord's permission, Joseph uncovered the plates and showed them to the group. They did not see an angel as the Three Witnesses had, but Joseph let them hold the record in their hands, turn its pages, and inspect its ancient writing. Handling the plates affirmed their faith that Joseph's testimony about the angel and the ancient record was true.³⁵

Now that the translation was over and he had witnesses to support his miraculous testimony, Joseph no longer needed the plates. After the men left the woods and went back to the house, the angel appeared and Joseph returned the sacred record to his care.³⁶ ■

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.

Joseph let the Eight Witnesses hold the record in their hands, turn its pages, and inspect its ancient writing.

NOTES

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- 2. 3 Nephi 8; Oliver Cowdery to William W. Phelps, Sept. 7, 1834, *LDS Messenger and Advocate*, Oct. 1834, 1:15–16; see also Kowallis, "In the Thirty and Fourth Year," 136–90.
- 3. 3 Nephi 9:13.
- 4. 3 Nephi 10:9; 11:1.
- 5. 3 Nephi 11:10; 15:21–24; see also John 10:16.
- 6. 3 Nephi 11:33.
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- 8. Oliver Cowdery to William W. Phelps, Sept. 7, 1834, *LDS Messenger and Advocate*, Oct. 1834, 1:13–16.
- 9. Doctrine and Covenants 13:1 (Joseph Smith History, 1838–56, volume A-1, 17–18, in *JSP*, H1:292–94 [draft 2]); Oliver Cowdery to William W. Phelps, Sept. 7, 1834, *LDS Messenger and Advocate*, Oct. 1834, 1:15; Staker, "Where Was the Aaronic Priesthood Restored?" 142–59. **Topic:** Restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood
- 10. Oliver Cowdery to William W. Phelps, Sept. 7, 1834, *LDS Messenger and Advocate*, Oct. 1834, 1:15.
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- 12. Joseph Smith History, 1838–56, volume A-1, 18, in *JSP*, H1:294–96 (draft 2).
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- 14. Joseph Smith History, 1838–56, volume A-1, 18, in *JSP*, H1:296 (draft 2).



15. "Mormonism," *Kansas City Daily Journal*, June 5, 1881, 1; Dickinson, *New Light on Mormonism*, 250; "The Book of Mormon," *Chicago Tribune*, Dec. 17, 1885, 3; Joseph Smith History, 1838–56, volume A-1, 21, in *JSP*, H1:306 (draft 2).
16. Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–45, book 8, [8]; Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith, Interview with David Whitmer, Sept. 7–8, 1878, [10], in Joseph F. Smith to John Taylor and Council of the Twelve, Sept. 17, 1878, draft, Joseph F. Smith, Papers, Church History Library; Cook, *David Whitmer Interviews*, 26–27.
17. Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith, Interview with David Whitmer, Sept. 7–8, 1878, [10], in Joseph F. Smith to John Taylor and Council of the Twelve, Sept. 17, 1878, draft, Joseph F. Smith, Papers, Church History Library.
18. James H. Hart, "About the Book of Mormon," *Deseret Evening News*, Mar. 25, 1884, [2].
19. Skousen, "Another Account of Mary Whitmer's Viewing of the Golden Plates," 40; [Andrew Jenson], "Eight Witnesses," *Historical Record*, Oct. 1888, 621.
20. Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith, Interview with David Whitmer, Sept. 7–8, 1878, [10], in Joseph F. Smith to John Taylor and Council of the Twelve, Sept. 17, 1878, draft, Joseph F. Smith, Papers, Church History Library.
21. Skousen, "Another Account of Mary Whitmer's Viewing of the Golden Plates," 40; [Andrew Jenson], "Eight Witnesses," *Historical Record*, Oct. 1888, 621.
22. [Andrew Jenson], "Eight Witnesses," *Historical Record*, Oct. 1888, 621; Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith, Interview with David Whitmer, Sept. 7–8, 1878, [10], in Joseph F. Smith to John Taylor and Council of the Twelve, Sept. 17, 1878, draft, Joseph F. Smith, Papers, Church History Library; Stevenson, Journal, Dec. 23, 1877.
23. Whitmer, *Address to All Believers in Christ*, 30.
24. "Letter from Elder W. H. Kelley," *Saints' Herald*, Mar. 1, 1882, 68; see also Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 77.
25. Joseph Smith History, 1838–56, volume A-1, 34, in *JSP*, H1:352–54 (draft 2). **Topics:** Book of Mormon Translation; Gold Plates
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34. Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–45, book 9, [1]; 2 Nephi 27:14.
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Suicide

Myths and Facts

By challenging these myths, we hope more people will reach out to those who may need help.



HELP

By **Greg Hudnall**, executive director of Hope4Utah, and **David Wood**, assistant professor of social work at Brigham Young University

You hear about it in the news, on social media, perhaps even in discussions with friends and family: suicide has become a leading cause of death. But what can we do about it? When should we speak up, and when would that make things worse? Are there any phrases or related topics we should avoid?

We invite you to take a minute to learn some of the answers to these questions. In this article, we will discuss several myths we have encountered during our suicide prevention training and while working with those who want to help. We hope that as you become better informed, you will feel empowered to reach out to those who may be at risk for suicide. God will help you hold critical, sometimes uncomfortable conversations—conversations that may save a life.

Myth 1:



Most suicides happen suddenly, without warning.

While some suicides do happen fast and seemingly without warning, that is not the norm. For example, about 80 percent of youth who are struggling will give some sort of warning sign or indicator, especially to close friends. Sadly, those warning signs often go unrecognized,¹ so it's important to be aware of the red flags. The more signs people show, the more they're at risk for suicide.

To discover whether a person is exhibiting warning signs, ask yourself the following questions:

- Are they talking about suicide, saying they want to die, or saying that things will never get better?
- Are they hurting themselves physically?
- Do they seem like they are in emotional pain? Are they struggling to cope with a recent loss in their life?
- Does it seem like they are withdrawing from things they used to enjoy or from people they used to associate with?
- Have they become more worried or anxious? Do they seem unusually angry or are they acting abnormally in another way?²

If you recognize these warning signs in someone, or if you recognize them in yourself, get help from a mental health professional right away. Your bishop can help you connect with these resources.

Myth 2:



If my child is struggling, they just need to read their scriptures, pray, and attend church, and then everything will be OK.

As with physical injuries, mental health conditions usually require more than simply reading scriptures or praying. However, it can be difficult for parents to differentiate between when their child is dealing with the everyday growing pains of youth and when their child is dealing with serious depressive symptoms. Generally, if your child experiences drastic changes in mood, behavior, or relationships in several different areas of life that last for more than two weeks, the problem may not be a "passing mood."³

One in five children ages 13–18 lives with a mental health condition.⁴ If

you feel your child may be suffering from a mental illness, talk with him or her. Offer a priesthood blessing, as they do "inestimable good."⁵ You and your child can find peace through our Savior, who suffered "that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities" (Alma 7:12). Then also seek for professional help. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "If you had appendicitis, God would expect you to seek a priesthood blessing *and* get the best medical care available. So too with emotional disorders."⁶

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM GETTY IMAGES



Myth 3:

Asking a person about suicide makes things worse.

Suicide prevention trainees often ask, “If I ask a person about suicide, won’t it put the idea of suicide into the person’s head?” People pose this question with good

intentions—they don’t want to make the situation worse! In the vast majority of situations, however, asking about suicide *does not* put the idea into a person’s head or make them more inclined to harm themselves.

In fact, asking about suicide in an open, direct, and caring fashion can do the opposite. It can establish a real and meaningful connection while demonstrating care and concern. Asking about suicide brings the problem into the open and lets the person know that it’s OK for them to talk to you about their thoughts and feelings. In many instances, people at risk of suicide feel very alone, and having someone ask them about suicide can be one of the most important ways to break through those feelings of loneliness. You are then more able to help that person.

When you come across a person who may be at risk of suicide, we suggest asking with directness: “Are you thinking of suicide?”

Myth 4:

I have to be a professional health care worker to help someone at risk of suicide.

This is a myth that can lead to harmful inaction. The truth is that family and friends not trained as professionals can play a crucial role in helping those at risk of suicide connect with professional help. Research shows that the vast majority of individuals at high risk of suicide have regular interactions with family and friends, and they tend to express their concerns to family and friends more often than to professionals. Once a person at risk is



connected to professional assistance, family members or friends can continue to help break through desperate feelings of loneliness and crushing feelings of low self-worth. People at risk for suicide need the closeness and connection that family and friends can best provide.

“Individuals who are vulnerable—they need more friends, not fewer,” said Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Individuals who are feeling worthless need to understand God’s plan. They need to know that they’re cared for. . . . We don’t let people who are vulnerable sit by themselves. We sit with them.”⁷

Myth 5:



I should only trust Church-sponsored resources, not community ones.

Suicide is a growing problem in many areas of the world, but the response to suicide in communities throughout the world is also changing for the better. There are many resources in most communities that can link those at risk for suicide to immediate help, such as hotlines. There are also training resources that can teach how to reach out and help a person at risk of suicide.

It's important to be aware of what resources are available in your community so that you can link others to help. A recent official communication to leaders of the Church in English-speaking units stated, "Members and leaders are encouraged to learn about and use trusted local resources to take advantage of formal suicide prevention training and to support community initiatives to prevent suicide."⁸

A great place to start learning more is the Church's website suicide.lds.org. There are many national and international resources listed on this site that can direct members to local resources for training and prevention. The site also includes recently released videos of Church leaders and others speaking on this topic.

Be a Myth-Buster

You can help stop these myths from spreading or being handed down to the next generation. Let's make sure nothing interferes with us reaching out to those who may be at risk for suicide. While we cannot take responsibility for the actions of others, we can take hope and feel confidence in the fact that many suicides *can* be prevented. Family members, friends, and others can play a critical role as they reach out with love and directness. You—yes, *you*—can save a life. ■

NOTES

1. See "FAQs about Suicide," Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of BC, crisiscentre.bc.ca.
2. See "Youth Suicide Warning Signs," youthsuicidewarningsigns.org. The information provided on this website comes from a collaboration between expert panelists who gathered in Rockville, Maryland, in 2013.
3. See Ann MacDonald, "Distinguishing Depression from Normal Adolescent Mood Swings," Harvard Health Publishing, health.harvard.edu.
4. See "Mental Health by the Numbers," National Alliance on Mental Illness, nami.org.
5. Alexander B. Morrison, "Myths about Mental Illness," *Ensign*, Oct. 2005, 33.
6. Jeffrey R. Holland, "Like a Broken Vessel," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 41.
7. Interview with Elder Dale G. Renlund, Jan. 23, 2018.
8. "Suicide Prevention and Ministering," official Church notice, Jan. 17, 2018.



A GENUINE MANIFESTATION OF CONCERN

"A dear friend, . . . over the course of a couple of years, became profoundly clinically depressed. . . . I was worried that if I asked him if he was considering harming himself, that would somehow push him towards that. I know now that that's not true. It's safe to ask someone if they're having suicidal thoughts or if they're having thoughts of harming themselves. I think in most cases the person [at risk] recognizes that that is a genuine, caring manifestation of concern."

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, interview, Jan. 23, 2018.





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

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Some might think that the topic of suicide prevention is too heavy for our children, but the sad reality is that in some places, suicide is currently the leading cause of death for youth and children as young as 10. We can't afford to ignore the topic just because it's hard to talk about! Contrary to popular belief, talking about suicide does *not* make things worse—honest, open communication can do just the opposite.

To support suicide prevention month and World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10, all the Church magazines are running content about suicide prevention, with the hope that you can use it to have meaningful, age-appropriate conversations with your children. For young children, this could mean talking about related topics such as bullying, feelings, and the blessing of having a body. Here are articles from the *Friend* you could use to talk to the children you love.

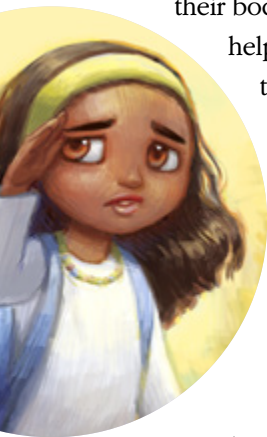
“Feelings First-Aid Kit” (Sept. 2018, page 24)

We teach children how to help their bodies heal—do we also help them understand how to heal emotionally?

Use this object-lesson activity to talk about feelings and healing.

“Practically Popular” (Mar. 2018, page 32)

When a girl starts making popular friends, she starts ignoring a longtime friend. Use this story to teach the importance of including instead of excluding others.



“Forgiving Demi” (Jan. 2018, page 36)

A classmate makes fun of Demi for being so tall. Demi prays and is able to forgive the classmate and feel good about herself. Use this story to talk about bullying, kindness, and how our bodies are beautiful gifts from God.

“A Butterfly for Courtney” (Sept. 2016, page 34)

Elena knows that her friend struggles with depression. She buys her a butterfly necklace to remind her that she is loved.



TALK ABOUT IT

- Help your children create a plan for when they feel sad or upset. An example could be to (1) put words to their feelings by saying, “I am feeling . . .”; (2) pray to Heavenly Father for help; (3) do something active they enjoy; and (4) if the feelings do not go away, tell an adult about how they feel.
- Are you worried about your child? Listen to them. Don't correct them when they tell you how they feel. If you are worried that your older children or teenagers are in danger of suicide, experts suggest asking directly, such as, “Are you thinking of hurting yourself?” If the answer is yes, your bishop can help your family connect with mental health services.

RELATED RESOURCES

- Did you know the Church has a suicide prevention website? Check it out at suicide.lds.org. The site also has resources for those who have lost someone to suicide.
- Many countries have national suicide prevention resources. To find resources in your area, visit iasp.info/resources/Crisis_Centres.
- Jeffrey R. Holland, “Like a Broken Vessel,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 40–42.

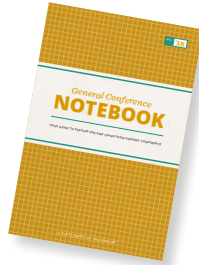
Find stories, activities, and media related to this topic and others at lessonhelps.lds.org. For past *Friend* Connection articles, visit FriendConnection.lds.org.



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

PREPARING FOR GENERAL CONFERENCE

This month’s *New Era* comes with a general conference notebook to help youth prepare to get the most out of general conference.



CHOOSING A BETTER LIFE

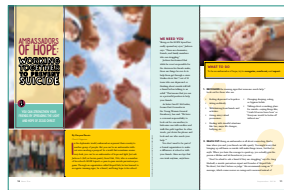
In addition, you’ll find articles about making choices for a better life:



“Choices, Commandments, and God’s Eternal Plan.” Elder Quentin L. Cook teaches us how our choices determine our happiness now and in the world to come (page 2).



“8 Ways Meekness Is Not Weakness.” Check out eight ways we can choose to be meek and thereby become strong (page 6).



“Ambassadors of Hope: Working Together to Prevent Suicide.” See how some youth strengthened their friends at risk by spreading the light and hope of Jesus Christ (page 10).

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Here are some questions answered in this month’s *New Era* (pages 28–29):

How can I resist using bad language if I hear it almost all day every day?

How can I develop unshakeable faith and overcome doubt?

TALK WITH THEM

Here are some questions you might ask:

- How do you plan to prepare for general conference?
- What kinds of choices have you made that have made your life—and the lives of others—better?
- Jesus Christ taught us to be meek. So how does that apply to your everyday life?

TEACH THEM

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

- Read “He Tied My Shoe” (page 24), and talk about small acts of kindness that have made a difference in your life. Invite youth to share similar experiences.
- Read “Music That Moves” (page 16), and talk about how you have been able to connect the gospel to the interests you’ve pursued in your life.
- Read “Prophets: A Sign of God’s Love” (page 32), and share how your life has been blessed and improved by modern prophets. Invite youth to share one way that counsel from a modern prophet has blessed their lives.

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.



LAYING DOWN THE LIFE I HAD PLANNED

When I was six or seven years old, I knew I wanted to be an oceanographer. I focused on my goal, worked hard, and got into a good college. I took several courses in zoology and loved it. But as I got further into my studies, I became fascinated with the human body, particularly on the cellular level. I decided to become a pathologist.

I soon met my future husband, and we decided to get married. Having a family was always part of my plan, but while I knew I could be a great doctor and a great mother, I felt that I couldn't be great at both at the same time. Because family is essential to the Lord's plan of salvation, I decided to become a mother first. I figured that once my kids got into school, I could go back to school myself.

When my youngest child entered kindergarten, I began the application process for a PhD program in nutritional studies at the University of Texas in Austin. Just before submitting my application, I found out I was unexpectedly pregnant with my seventh child. I was in my 40s, and by the time this child entered school, I would be nearly 50.

"A little late to start a new career that takes extensive schooling," I thought.



While I knew I could be a great doctor and a great mother, I felt that I could not be great at both at the same time.

All at once I saw my life's career dreams crumble around me. As I began to despair, a scripture came to my mind and my heart: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). I had always considered this scripture to mean one person dying for another, but now it means so much more.

I realized that the greatest love

I could show was to lay down the life I had planned for myself and give my time and energy to raising my children. I felt that for me, this was what the Lord would have me do. Yes, I could have helped a lot of people as a doctor, but I also know that the greatest eternal impact I can have is in the lives of my own children. ■

Jeannette Cox, Texas, USA



JET LAG AND THE WORD OF WISDOM

Several times a year, my work requires that I travel from Taiwan to San Francisco, California, USA, for training. The problem with traveling between these two places is the 15-hour time difference. Jet lag made me want to sleep during the day, and it kept me awake all night.

Colleagues from all over the world attend these trainings. They told me they coped with jet lag by drinking coffee to keep them awake and drinking red wine to help them sleep.

Some colleagues offered me these drinks, but I politely told them I was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and had promised the Lord I would not drink wine or coffee. Some teased me and said those commandments made my life harder. At times, it felt like I was being mocked by the people in the great

and spacious building in Lehi's dream (see 1 Nephi 8:26–27).

Over time, however, keeping the Word of Wisdom began to feel like a tedious burden. During one sleepless night, I realized my faith was weakening. Thankfully, my wife sent me a message that day encouraging me to keep my faith, rely on God, and keep His commandments regardless of the circumstances. With her encouragement, I started to pray for help and began to look at things differently.

On one trip, I noticed a colleague had two cups of coffee. I asked him about the second cup.

“One cup is not strong enough to keep me alert anymore,” he replied.

I was surprised to notice the same was true for those who drank wine. They needed to drink more to sleep. Sometimes, they even overslept because they drank too much.

Watching my colleagues become more dependent on alcohol and coffee made me realize how important it is to keep the commandments. If I had chosen to disobey the Word of Wisdom, I could have been in the same boat.

My jet lag has not completely gone away, but the situation has improved. One morning, I woke up after a good night's sleep and saw the sunrise. As the sunbeams shone through the window, I realized that with Heavenly Father's help, I can handle any trial, no matter how big or small. I just need to continue to obey, keep my faith strong, and endure to the end. ■
Andrew Lee, New Taipei City, Taiwan

Keeping the Word of Wisdom began to feel like a tedious burden until I noticed a colleague had to have two cups of coffee to stay alert.



AFTER HURRICANE MARIA

My family and I moved to the island of Dominica in the Caribbean in August 2016. We immediately fell in love with the island's beauty, culture, and people. We attended the local branch and learned much from the members there.

On Monday, September 18, 2017, a Category 5 hurricane, Maria, hit our small island. My husband and I watched as homes and vehicles were thrown down the street by the powerful storm. The fury of Hurricane Maria passed directly over the island, and the destruction was devastating. The day after the storm, we walked through the streets and found that the lush and vibrant rainforest of Dominica now looked like a wasteland.

That same morning, we walked to our fellow branch members' homes. Only two homes were unscathed and

livable. Six of the eight member families who lived on the northern side of the island lost everything. Eighty percent of the homes and buildings on Dominica were declared uninhabitable. Despite this tragedy, many families still smiled. When we asked how they were doing, they responded, "We are blessed to be alive."

Because our family heeded the prophet's counsel to be self-reliant, we had food storage. We were able to feed many neighbors, missionaries, and members of our branch. At each meal, we fed an average of 20 people. As we used our food storage to serve and care for those around us, our own burdens felt lighter.

This experience reminded me of Alma and his people, whose "burdens . . . were made light; yea, the Lord did strengthen them that

they could bear up their burdens with ease" (Mosiah 24:15).

Even though we still lived without running water, electricity, and day-to-day comforts, we were strengthened to overcome and to lift others. In the months since Hurricane Maria, I have realized that while it is important to be temporally prepared, we need to be spiritually prepared as well. As we obey and build our testimonies on faith in Jesus Christ, we will have a solid foundation that will not fail when the winds and tempests of life blow around us. ■

Brianne Anderson, Virginia, USA

In September 2017, a Category 5 hurricane hit the island of Dominica. My husband and I watched as homes and vehicles were thrown down the street by the powerful storm.



“AM I YOUR CHILD?”

Even though I had been to church only a few times, my home teacher faithfully visited me. One night he called and asked if I would share some thoughts about eternal families in the next Gospel Principles class.

“Yes, I’d love to,” I said.

I didn’t think much of it until the next morning. That’s when I realized I had agreed to talk about eternal families to a group of people who probably already knew all about it. I didn’t have a clue what I could say to them.

Over the years, I had made choices that separated me from the gospel. How was I supposed to share my thoughts about something I wasn’t sure I even believed? I felt confused. Then the words to the hymn “I Am a Child of God” (*Hymns*, no. 301) came to my mind. I had not heard those words in years, but I knew them by

heart. Then it struck me: I needed to ask God if I actually was His child.

At that time, I was rearranging the furniture in my bedroom, so with my bed askew in the middle of the room, I kneeled next to it and waited for the words to come. What could I possibly say to God? I wasn’t sure He even existed. In that moment, my heart’s deepest desire brought these simple words to my lips: “God, are You really there? And if You are there, am I Your child?”

The answer came immediately. It was as if He had been waiting for me to ask. I felt God say, “Yes, Camille, I am here, and you are my child.”

When I opened my eyes, I was still in my disheveled bedroom. Everything around me was in disarray, but I felt like my life had been put in perfect order. I knew that I was a child of

God, and that was all that mattered.

In class on Sunday, I simply told my story of how I came to know for myself that *I* am a child of God. “If I am His child,” I said, “then so is everyone else.”

It took another three and a half years for me to make all the positive changes I needed to make, but my life has never been the same. Since that day, I have never doubted who I am. I know that Heavenly Father is always there. He loves me because I am His child. ■

Camille Nelson, Utah, USA





By Elder Mark E. Petersen (1900–1984)

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

LED BY LIVING PROPHETS

God always speaks to the people through living prophets.

Editors' note: In July 1972, Joseph Fielding Smith, 10th President of the Church, passed away. President Harold B. Lee was sustained in the October 1972 general conference as the new Church President. This excerpt comes from Elder Mark E. Petersen's talk in that conference.

A new prophet of God . . . is one in a line of inspired men divinely called to minister now and to bring a new revelation from heaven to every man, woman, and child who will hear.

The appointment of [a] new prophet is of momentous import to every person who believes in God, and particularly to every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. . . .

Always when the Lord has had a people on the earth whom He has recognized as His own, He has led them by living prophets to whom He has given guidance from heaven. . . .

A similar line of inspired men now has been established in modern times. This was accomplished as a result of



the Restoration of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ through His latter-day seer, Joseph Smith . . .

Contrary to the general belief, the Lord is a God of communication, a God of revelation. He is a God of light and intelligence, of knowledge and information. He does not deal in darkness, neither does He save anyone in ignorance. His entire plan of salvation rests upon communication with an enlightened people.

Who can worship intelligently if kept in ignorance?

Who can have a meaningful faith without a knowledge of God?

And whence shall this knowledge come if not from the Deity Himself? . . .

Human beings are slow to learn the ways of the Lord, and particularly are they dilatory in accepting the fact that although He is willing to communicate with them, His method of doing so is through inspired living men whom He designates as prophets.

It is a pattern with Him. It is His method of procedure, and He has not changed it. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and so are His methods. . . .

We solemnly testify that communication between heaven and earth has been reestablished in our day. We declare that God is not isolated from the world.

He is not dead. He lives.

He is not blind. He sees.

He is not deaf. He hears.

He is not dumb. He speaks, eloquently, to His living prophets and through them to the world at large.

In this manner God is speaking to you today. ■

From "Another Prophet Now Has Come!" Ensign, Jan. 1973, 116–18. Capitalization standardized.



**BE OF GOOD CHEER:
IT IS I; BE NOT AFRAID,
BY LOZANO MORENO**

When evening came, Jesus stood alone on the land and saw the ship carrying His disciples in the midst of the sea. The wind was contrary to them, and they toiled as they rowed. Jesus came to them by walking upon the sea. When they saw Him, they were afraid.

"And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.

"And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed."

(See Mark 6:47-51.)



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Even living with severe disabilities in Ghana, Eric can still recognize the good in his life.

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