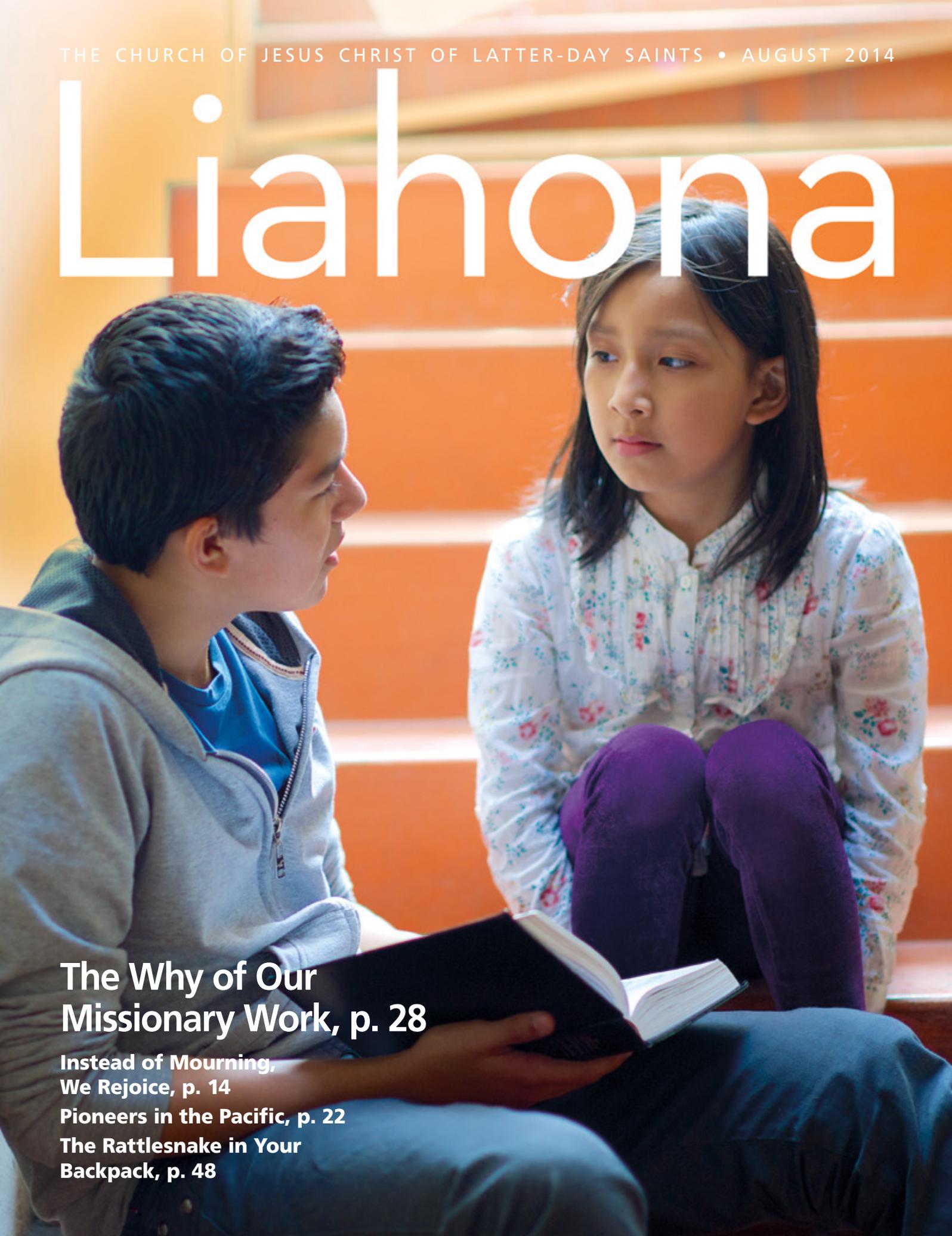


Liahona



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Backpack, p. 48**



"All are born with the Light of Christ, a guiding influence which permits each person to recognize right from wrong. What we do with that light and how we respond to those promptings to live righteously is part of the test of mortality."

President Boyd K. Packer,
President of the Quorum of the
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Family Home Evening Ideas

This issue contains articles and activities that could be used for family home evening. The following are two ideas.



"Banana Bread Missionaries," page 54: Consider making banana bread with your family (or any other treat your family enjoys) and delivering it to people your family feels inspired to share the gospel with. You can share the same message that the banana bread missionaries do, extend an invitation to a Church activity, or attach a pass-along card.

"Wholesome Activities Will Strengthen My Family," page 74: Think about having some "kids' choice" family home evenings this month. The children can choose the activities, lessons, and topics that are most interesting to them and take turns being in charge. Encourage each child to consider the needs of other family members when choosing the activities and lessons.

IN YOUR LANGUAGE

The *Liahona* and other Church materials are available in many languages at languages.lds.org.

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By President
Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Second Counselor
in the First Presidency

GOD'S Harvest

A woman named Christa once worked for a small seed company. She loved her job. It was a source of immense wonder that each tiny seed she sold had the capacity to transform itself into something quite miraculous—a carrot, a cabbage, or even a mighty oak tree.

Christa loved sitting at her computer taking orders and answering questions. But one day she received a complaint that puzzled her.

“The seeds don’t work,” the customer said. “I bought them two months ago and still nothing.”

“Did you plant them in good soil and give them enough water and sunlight?” Christa asked.

“No, but I did my part,” the customer replied. “I bought the seeds. After all, they are *guaranteed* to grow.”

“But you didn’t plant them?”

“Heavens no. That would mean getting my hands dirty.”

Christa thought about this and decided that planting guidelines would have to be written. She resolved what the first guideline would be: “You must follow planting instructions for the seeds to sprout. You can’t set them on the shelf and expect them to grow.”

It wasn’t long before another complaint puzzled her.

“The seeds aren’t producing,” a customer claimed.

“Did you plant them in good soil?” Christa responded.

“Did you give them the appropriate amount of water and sunlight?”

“Oh, yes,” the customer insisted. “I did all that—exactly as it says on the package. But they don’t work.”

“Did anything happen at all? Did they sprout?”

“Nothing happened,” the customer said. “I planted them just as directed. I was hoping to have tomatoes for dinner. Now I am very disappointed.”

“Wait,” Christa replied. “Are you saying you planted the seeds today?”

“Don’t be ridiculous,” the customer replied. “I planted them a week ago. I was not expecting to see tomatoes on the first day; I was patient. Let me tell you, there has been a lot of watering and waiting between then and now.”

Christa knew she would have to add another guideline: “These seeds conform to the laws of biology. If you plant the seeds in the morning and expect to eat tomatoes later that week, you will be disappointed. You must be patient and wait for the work of nature to unfold before you.”

All went well until Christa received another complaint.

“I’m very disappointed in your seeds,” the customer began. “I planted them just as the package recommended. I gave them water, made sure they had sunshine, and waited until finally they produced their harvest.”

“Sounds like you did everything right,” Christa said.

“That’s all very fine,” the customer replied. “But what I got was zucchini!”



“My records show that those were the seeds you ordered,” Christa said.

“But I don’t want zucchini; I want pumpkins!”

“I’m not following.”

“I planted the seeds in my pumpkin patch—the very same soil that produced pumpkins last year. I praised the plants every day, telling them what beautiful pumpkins they would become. But instead of large, round, orange pumpkins, I got long, green zucchini. Tons of them!”

Christa knew then that guidelines might not be enough and that it was necessary to state a principle: “The seed you plant and the time of the planting determine the harvest.”

The Law of the Harvest

The Apostle Paul taught about God’s harvest:

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

“For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but

he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:7–9).

In recent times, the Lord has given us additional wisdom and insight into this immutable law:

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

Discuss with those you visit how the law of God’s harvest applies to relationships, conversion and testimony, or career and educational goals. You could read and consider scriptures related to this law, such as Proverbs 11:18; 2 Corinthians 9:6; and Alma 32. Encourage them to review previous goals and set new goals to achieve righteous outcomes. Help them develop a plan to act consistently in order to reach their long-term purpose.

“There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—

“And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated” (D&C 130:20–21).

What we sow, we reap.

God’s harvest is unimaginably glorious. To those who honor Him, His bountiful blessings come in “good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over. . . . For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Luke 6:38).

Just as earthly seeds require effort and patience, so do many of the blessings of heaven. We cannot put our religion on a shelf and expect to harvest spiritual blessings. But if we plant and nurture gospel standards in the daily life of our family, there is a high probability that our children will grow up to produce spiritual fruit of great value to them and to future generations.

God’s answers to our prayers do not always come immediately—sometimes they do not appear to come at all—but God knows what is best for His children. Assuredly, one day we will see more clearly; and on that day we will recognize the goodness and generosity of heaven.

In the meantime, our goal and great joy is to walk in the footsteps of our Master and Savior and to live good and refined lives so that the promised and precious harvest of God’s priceless blessings can be ours.

What we sow, we reap.

That is the law of heaven.

That is the law of God’s harvest. ■

Plan Your Harvest

God’s law of the harvest is that if we want something later, we have to work for it now. If we want to grow a garden, we need to plant the seeds, water them, and protect them from weeds. If we don’t do this, we won’t have any harvest later!

This garden shows some good “fruit” you may want in your life. On the lines below, write some things you can do this month to help you receive these blessings.



Prayerfully study this material and seek to know what to share. How will understanding the life and roles of the Savior increase your faith in Him and bless those you watch over through visiting teaching? For more information, go to reliefsociety.lds.org.

The Divine Mission of Jesus Christ: Messiah

This is part of a series of Visiting Teaching Messages featuring aspects of the mission of the Savior.

The scriptures teach that we can dwell in the presence of God “through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah” (2 Nephi 2:8). *Messiah* is “an Aramaic and Hebrew word meaning ‘the anointed.’ . . . In the New Testament Jesus is called the Christ, which is the Greek equivalent of *Messiah*. It means the anointed Prophet, Priest, King, and Deliverer.”¹

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testified: “I know [Jesus Christ] is the Holy One of Israel, the Messiah who will one day come again in final glory, to reign on earth as Lord of lords and King of kings. I know that there is no other name given under heaven whereby a man [or woman] can be saved.”²

“[Jesus Christ] is the Savior and Redeemer of the world,” said President



Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency. “He is the promised Messiah. He lived a perfect life and atoned for our sins. He will ever be at our side. He will fight our battles. He is our hope; He is our salvation; He is the way.”³

Additional Scriptures

John 1:38–41; 4:25–26, 40–42; 2 Nephi 6:13; 25:16–17

NOTES

1. Guide to the Scriptures, “Messiah”; scriptures.lds.org.
2. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Only True God and Jesus Christ Whom He Hath Sent,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 42.
3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Way of the Disciple,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 78.



Faith, Family, Relief

From the Scriptures

Female disciples of Christ have been witnesses of His role as the Messiah. Mary Magdalene was a disciple of Jesus Christ. She was the first to see “the stone taken away from the sepulchre” on the morning of Christ’s Resurrection. She “stood without at the sepulchre weeping” after discovering that His body was no longer in the tomb.

Then “she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

“Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

“Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.” Mary recognized that He was not the gardener but Jesus Christ, the Messiah. (See John 20:1–17.)

Consider This

Why is it important to understand the Savior’s role as the Messiah?

APRIL 2014 CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

“What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken; . . . whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38).

As you review the April 2014 general conference, you can use these pages (and Conference Notebooks in future issues) to help you study and apply the recent teachings of the living prophets and apostles and other Church leaders.

DOCTRINAL HIGHLIGHTS



Put God’s Laws First

“The word *religion* literally means . . . ‘to tie back’ to God. The question we might ask ourselves is, are we securely tied to God so that our faith shows, or are we actually tied to something else? . . . Many put other priorities ahead of God. . . . God’s laws must ever be our standard. In dealing with controversial issues, we should first search for God’s guidance. . . .

“The temptation to be popular may prioritize public opinion above the word of God. . . . Even if ‘everyone is doing it,’ wrong is never right. . . . I pray that you will be securely tied back to God, that His eternal truths will be etched on your heart forever.”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Let Your Faith Show,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 29, 30, 31.

Get ideas for evaluating your priorities at lds.org/go/priorities814.

PROPHETIC PROMISE



Hope

“I suggest that you take both the short and the long view as you try to give the inheritance of hope to your family. . . . There are things you can do early, when those you love are young. Remember that daily family prayer, family scripture study, and sharing our testimony in sacrament meeting are easier and more effective when children are young. . . . After all we can do in faith, the Lord will justify our hopes for greater blessings for our families than we can imagine.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “A Priceless Heritage of Hope,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 25.

Find ways to leave a legacy for your family at lds.org/go/legacy814.



GO AND DO

President Thomas S. Monson asked us to “take the time to read the conference messages when they . . . are printed in coming issues of the *Ensign* and *Liahona* magazines, for they are deserving of our careful review and study.”

From “Until We Meet Again,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 115.



FILL IN THE BLANK

1. “Coupled with prayer, _____ carries the power to protect families.” See lds.org/go/reeves814 or Linda S. Reeves, “Protection from Pornography—a Christ-Focused Home,” 17.
2. “Knowledge . . . comes only through personal _____ and _____.” See lds.org/go/packer814 or President Boyd K. Packer, “The Witness,” 94.
3. “The gospel ‘is not weight; it is _____.’ It carries us.” See lds.org/go/stevens814 or Jean A. Stevens, “Fear Not; I Am With Thee,” 83.
4. “Obedience . . . is a choice between _____ and God’s unlimited wisdom and omnipotence.” Find out at lds.org/go/perry814 or see Elder L. Tom Perry, “Obedience through Our Faithfulness,” 103.

Answers: 1. the Book of Mormon; 2. prayer, pondering; 3. wings; 4. our own limited knowledge and power

DRAWING PARALLELS



Love

Some of the most important topics are addressed by more than one general conference speaker. Here is what three speakers said about love:

- To youth: “Take heart. Pure Christlike love flowing from true righteousness can change the world.” —Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Cost—and Blessings—of Discipleship,” 8.
- To women: “As we look beyond our differences in age, culture, and circumstance . . . , we will be filled with the pure love of Christ.” —Bonnie L. Oscarson, “Sisterhood: Oh, How We Need Each Other,” 121.
- To men: “We . . . have committed to be a people who love God and our neighbor and who are willing to demonstrate that love through word and deed. That is the essence of who we are as disciples of Jesus Christ.” —President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Are You Sleeping through the Restoration?” 61.

Learn about what President Monson and others had to say about expressing love to all at lds.org/go/love814.



The Priesthood

“Priesthood power blesses all of us,” said Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in his talk, “The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood.” “Priesthood keys direct women as well as men, and priesthood ordinances and priesthood authority pertain to women

Questions to consider:

- What are priesthood keys, and why are they necessary?
- What is the relationship between priesthood keys and priesthood authority?
- Are the blessings of the priesthood restricted by gender?

What this means for me:

- What authority is delegated to me when I receive assignments

as well as men.” Because we all need to understand the priesthood better, Elder Oaks clarified key principles in his conference talk regarding the power, keys, and authority of the priesthood. The following questions can help you study his message.

or callings from one who holds priesthood keys?

- What responsibilities do I have in my current assignment or calling that I need to fulfill?
- What can I learn about God’s love for me from this talk, and how would I share it with someone who has questions?

You can study this talk at [lds.org/go/oaks814](https://www.lds.org/go/oaks814).

ANSWERS FOR YOU

Each conference, prophets and apostles give inspired answers to questions Church members may have. Use your May 2014 issue or visit [conference.lds.org](https://www.lds.org/conference) to find answers to these questions:

- How does the Resurrection resolve the questions about the true identity of Jesus Christ of Nazareth? Find out at [lds.org/go/dtc814](https://www.lds.org/go/dtc814) or see D. Todd Christofferson, “The Resurrection of Jesus Christ,” 111.
- What is the relationship between obedience and agency? Find out at [lds.org/go/hales814](https://www.lds.org/go/hales814) or see Robert D. Hales, “If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments,” 35.
- What blessings do we receive as we make and keep sacred covenants? Find out at [lds.org/go/wixom814](https://www.lds.org/go/wixom814) or see Rosemary M. Wixom, “Keeping Covenants Protects Us, Prepares Us, and Empowers Us,” 116.

JOB

“I do not know of anything that members of the Church need more than they need the conviction and perseverance of Job.”¹ —Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

I was known as a man who feared God and avoided evil.² The Lord blessed me with seven sons and three daughters, and He granted me great material wealth, including “seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred [donkeys], and a very great household.”³

Satan believed that I would cease to be righteous and that I would curse the Lord if I no longer prospered temporarily. The Lord allowed Satan to test me but would not allow him to harm me physically. Satan caused my livestock to be stolen or destroyed and sent a strong wind to knock down my house, killing my 10 children inside. Rather than cursing the Lord, I “rent [my] mantle, and shaved [my] head,

and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped” the Lord.⁴

When Satan saw that I would not curse God, he wanted to test me with physical trials. The Lord allowed Satan to do so but would not allow him to take my life. Satan afflicted me with “sore boils from the sole of [my feet] unto [my] crown.”⁵ Still I retained my integrity, refusing to curse the Lord. My friends mourned with me.

My friends told me that my suffering was caused by my own wickedness and that I must repent, but I knew that I was a righteous man.⁶ The Lord later commanded my friends to repent. They were told to make a burnt offering and to have me pray for them.⁷

After seeing my faithfulness, the Lord caused my great

suffering to cease, and He blessed me with “twice as much as [I] had before.”⁸ I now had “fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand [donkeys],” as well as seven more sons and three more daughters.⁹ The Lord truly rewarded me richly for my faith and patience.

I have seen the hand of the Lord in my life, both in my afflictions and in my prosperity. I boldly testified: “I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”¹⁰ ■

Although Job was not a prophet, his life, testimony, and endurance during trials can be an inspiration to us.

NOTES

1. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Never Give Up,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 8.
2. See Job 1:1.
3. See Job 1:2–3.
4. See Job 1:7–22.
5. Job 2:7.
6. See Job 22–27.
7. See Job 42:7–9.
8. Job 42:10.
9. See Job 42:12–13.
10. Job 19:25–26.



THE PROMISE OF OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

By Jarolyn Ballard Stout

When my husband was diagnosed with cancer, I felt like our world came crashing down. With eight children to care for, how would I ever do it alone?

It was a cloudy Sunday morning as I stood at the kitchen sink finishing the breakfast dishes. My two youngest children were watching a scripture video in the family room by the kitchen. I was lost in thought, and my cheeks were wet from tears. I couldn't get my mind off the cancer that had invaded our home. My husband had been fighting it for several years, but now it had spread. My faith seemed to be wavering. My mind was crowded with "what if?" thoughts.

Suddenly the scripture video interrupted my thoughts with words from a calming voice: "Peace, be still. . . .

"Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" (Mark 4:39–40).

I dropped the dishrag and turned to look at the TV. The video was about the Savior calming the storm. It was as if the words had been spoken to me by the Savior Himself. A feeling of warmth and peace flooded over me. It was a reminder to stick to the faith I had learned so much about through the years of cancer. It was a faith buttressed by words in my patriarchal blessing.

I received my patriarchal blessing when I was 15. One sentence that then seemed just to describe a part of my temple marriage now held great promise for me. It spoke of the righteous priesthood holder I would marry and said that he would "help thee, guide thee and aid thee, not only in thy youth but clear into thy later years."

As I read and reread my patriarchal blessing during the years of battling cancer, that sentence gave me great hope. Each time, I found renewed faith in the promise of our future together. I remembered the great comfort that the Spirit had given me when my husband was first diagnosed. I memorized that part of my patriarchal

blessing, and when cancer tests came back with poor results, I remembered that promise.

I learned to let the Savior carry us, I learned that I must keep my faith constant, and I learned to combat mounting fears with faith. The video that morning reminded me to rely on the Lord.

Having faith gives me the ability to let Jesus Christ carry my burden. Just as the people of Alma who were in bondage did not feel the burden on their backs (see Mosiah 24:14), so it is for our family with fighting cancer. Our family has been able to face cancer without feeling the burdens it could bring.



LEARNING THE PAINFUL LESSONS

"Difficulties come into our lives, problems we do not anticipate and which we would never choose. None of us is immune. The purpose of mortality is to learn and to grow to be more like our Father, and it is often during the difficult times that we learn the most, as painful as the lessons may be."

President Thomas S. Monson, "God Be with You Till We Meet Again," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 111.



My husband still undergoes tests to track the cancer cells or to find possible tumors. We still have medical bills and the remaining side effects of treatments. And I still pray every day that my husband will have no more cancer. I pray that we will both live to old age. I also say to Heavenly Father, “Thy will be done.”

I do not know when the “later years” spoken of in my blessing will come. I hope the words in my blessing mean that my husband and I will be able to go on a mission when our children are raised. I hope they

mean that my husband will lead our horse while giving rides to our grandchildren and will bounce our grandchildren on his knee. But I know that whenever God takes him from this earth, it will be in His time.

I no longer worry about when those “later years” are. It does not matter. I trust that the Lord will honor that promise made to me in my patriarchal blessing. He has taken care of us through these years, and He will take care of us in the future. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

If you have not received your patriarchal blessing, consider talking to your bishop or branch president about receiving one. If you have a patriarchal blessing, do you read and ponder it often? Do you have faith in the Lord's promises?

WE KNOW WHERE HE IS

By Hernando Basto

Our focus as an eternal family will always be centered on God.

When the faces of two young men appeared in the upper portion of the door to our home in Colombia, we thought they were standing on something in order to see through the door. They were not; they were just very tall! Our three-year-old son, Pablo Ezequiel, looked up at them with astonishment. Within days they were his best friends.

Our family—Ludy, my wife; Erika; Yesica; and little Ezequiel—was looking for the Lord. We were living some gospel principles already: we prayed at mealtime, we prayed as a family, and we did family activities. Our lives were based on our family union. The appearance of those two “large angels,” as Ezequiel called the elders, confirmed our practices of strengthening the family and focusing on God.

Using the scriptures as their guide, Elders Fa and Fields taught us the path. We had been asking the Lord where we should worship. The Book of Mormon and the restored gospel gave the answers to each of the questions we had over the years in our family discussions. The answers fit perfectly, and we soon became members of the Church. One year later we made

covenants and were sealed together as an eternal family in the Bogotá Colombia Temple.

We felt such joy knowing that we had started our children on the gospel path. The Spirit was present in our lives and home, and Ezequiel, then four, offered a prayer that we will never forget. He said, “Dear Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for this beautiful little boy that I am, amen.” We all said amen and hugged amid smiles. That little boy was our joy.

In the following years, we made it a habit to go to the temple regularly and were able to go two or three times each year. We live 420 km (260 miles) from the temple, but that has never seemed far to us. Preparing to go to the temple was always fun for us. Family history work is a priority for our kids, and they loved doing baptisms for the dead. There was always reverent preparation and then a celestial experience in the house of the Lord.

Ezequiel grew in spirit and in faith. His mother was his most prized treasure. He always had a special compliment for her. One day he told his mother, “Mama, I love you more than dinosaur bones!” We all laughed



because looking for dinosaur bones was his favorite activity.

Our precious son Ezequiel shared 14 years of his life with us in the gospel that unites us. He was always quick to obey. His love radiated through our home. His sisters and the



emptiness that his passing has left is filled by the knowledge that he was called by the Lord to serve a mission elsewhere. Ezequiel's funeral service was so special that many people felt prompted to investigate the Church. I always hoped he would serve a mission, and now he is. Because of the plan of salvation, we know where Ezequiel is and whom he is with.

Our focus is still on our family and on God. It is our testimony that God lives and has a plan for our lives. We must continue in faith. The absence of a loved one reminds us of the divine plan.

Some of the most comforting words we have found are from the Prophet Joseph Smith. In our hearts we recognize their truthfulness: "The Lord takes many away, even in infancy, that they may escape the envy of man, and the sorrows and evils of this present world; they were too pure, too lovely, to live on earth; therefore, if rightly considered, instead of mourning we have reason to rejoice as they are delivered from evil, and we shall soon have them again" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 176).

The hope of seeing Ezequiel again on the morning of the Resurrection gives courage to our souls and helps us endure the dark days. ■

The author lives in Colombia.

To watch an inspiring video about the effect of the Savior's Atonement and Resurrection on our lives, visit easter.mormon.org.

Saints in the scriptures were his role models. He was full of life and activity. He never missed his seminary classes. He filled our home with happiness. He was reverent when he passed the sacrament. But our life together changed when Ezequiel was called

home to our Heavenly Father. We miss him more than we can describe.

A rare infection took him from us. Despite the intense pain of his departure, we are certain that we will be with him again. We have the promise made in our temple sealing. The

NEWS OF THE CHURCH

Visit news.lds.org for more Church news and events.

New Area Leaders Assigned

The First Presidency has announced changes in area leadership assignments, effective on August 1, 2014. All members of Area Presidencies are members of the First or Second Quorum of the Seventy.

The Seventy are called by revelation, under the direction of the First Presidency, to assist the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in their ministry throughout the world.

“The history of the Seventies really goes back to the Old Testament,” said President Boyd K. Packer of the

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.¹ The first reference to the Seventy is found in Exodus 24:1, and they are later referred to in Numbers 11:16–17, 25, when they are gathered to assist Moses.

During Christ’s mortal ministry, He called the Seventy, instructed them in a manner similar to the Twelve Apostles, and sent them out “before his face,” explaining that those who heard their voices would hear His voice (see Matthew 10:1, 16–17; Luke 10).

“We believe in the same organization that existed in the primitive Church,” President Packer said. “And it included Seventies.” (See Articles of Faith 1:6.) In today’s rapidly growing Church, the Seventy play an important role in assisting the Twelve. “Seventies by delegation can do anything the Twelve tell them to do,” President Packer said.² ■

NOTES

1. Boyd K. Packer, in “The Twelve and the Seventy, Part One: Revelation and the Role of the Seventy” (video), LDS.org.
2. Boyd K. Packer, in “The Twelve and the Seventy.”

Presidency of the Seventy



Ronald A. Rasband

Assists in all areas



L. Whitney Clayton

**Utah North
Utah Salt Lake City
Utah South**



Donald L. Hallstrom

North America Northeast



Richard J. Maynes

**North America Northwest
North America West**



Craig C. Christensen

**Idaho
North America Central**



Ulisses Soares

North America Southeast



Lynn G. Robbins

North America Southwest

Africa Southeast



Stanley G. Ellis

First Counselor



Carl B. Cook

President



Kevin S. Hamilton

Second Counselor

Africa West



Terence M. Vinson

First Counselor



LeGrand R. Curtis Jr.

President



Edward Dube

Second Counselor

Asia



Randy D. Funk

First Counselor



Gerrit W. Gong

President



Chi Hong (Sam) Wong

Second Counselor

Asia North



Koichi Aoyagi
First Counselor



Michael T. Ringwood
President



Scott D. Whiting
Second Counselor

Brazil



Jairo Mazzagardi
First Counselor



Claudio R. M. Costa
President



Marcos A. Aidukaitis
Second Counselor

Caribbean



Claudio D. Zivic
First Counselor



J. Devn Cornish
President



Hugo E. Martinez
Second Counselor

Central America



Adrián Ochoa
First Counselor



Kevin R. Duncan
President



Jose L. Alonso
Second Counselor

Europe



Patrick Kearon
First Counselor



José A. Teixeira
President



Timothy J. Dyches
Second Counselor

Europe East



Randall K. Bennett
First Counselor



Bruce D. Porter
President



Jörg Klebingat
Second Counselor

Mexico



Paul B. Pieper
First Counselor



Benjamín De Hoyos
President



Arnulfo Valenzuela
Second Counselor

Middle East/Africa North



Bruce A. Carlson



Larry S. Kacher

Administered from Church headquarters

Pacific



O. Vincent Haleck
First Counselor



Kevin W. Pearson
President



S. Gifford Nielsen
Second Counselor

Philippines



Shayne M. Bowen
First Counselor



Ian S. Ardern
President



Larry J. Echo Hawk
Second Counselor

South America Northwest



W. Christopher Waddell
First Counselor



Juan A. Uceda
President



C. Scott Grow
Second Counselor

South America South



Jorge F. Zeballos
First Counselor



Walter F. González
President



Francisco J. Viñas
Second Counselor



By Elder
Yoon Hwan Choi
Of the Seventy

Be Strong AND OF A Good Courage

“The head of the presidential guard has announced that we are going to have a big party because our performance was so great!” shouted one of the guards.

I should have been happy, but as soon as I heard the news, I started to pray. I knew that our celebration would become a drinking party. I was spiritually strong enough not to drink, but I did not want my fellow guards to have a hard time because of me.

Military duty is mandatory for all South Korean young men, so I joined the army right after I finished my full-time mission. I was assigned to the presidential guard. My fellow guardsmen knew that I would never drink any alcoholic beverage because I was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. When the party was announced, they started to become nervous because they would be in trouble if I did not drink when our commanding officer gave the order to do so at the party.

There was a tradition that at celebrations the commander would stand before each guard, one at a time, and fill the guard’s glass with liquor. Then the guard would hold up the glass and say, “Thank you, sir!” and drink the liquor at once.

In military life, disobeying any order from a senior officer is insubordination and can cause big trouble not only for the person disobeying but also for the members of his corps. In the worst case, insubordination could even result in being sent to jail, and this made my fellow guards nervous.

The day of the party arrived, and we 10 guards sat around the table. Each had an empty glass in front him. I was sitting in the third chair. Our commander entered and filled the first glass. The guard held up his glass and said, “Thank you, sir!” Then he drank.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY MICHAEL S. PARKER

Our commander moved to the second guard and did the same. Then it was my turn. I was ready to keep the Word of Wisdom, and I kept praying in my heart for the sake of my fellow guards. When our commanding officer filled my glass, with a loud voice I said, "Thank you, sir!" Then I was going to say I was sorry and could not drink.

At that moment, his secretary entered and said, "Sir, you have a phone call." Our commander turned to him and said, "I'm busy."

I was still holding the glass when the secretary added, "Sir, it's the president." Our commander replied, "Oh, OK," and then he immediately left.

Suddenly the second guard switched his empty glass with mine and quickly drank the liquor. Soon afterward our commander returned, saw my empty glass, and said, "Oh, you finished already!" Then he moved to the fourth guard. Everyone took a deep breath and relaxed.

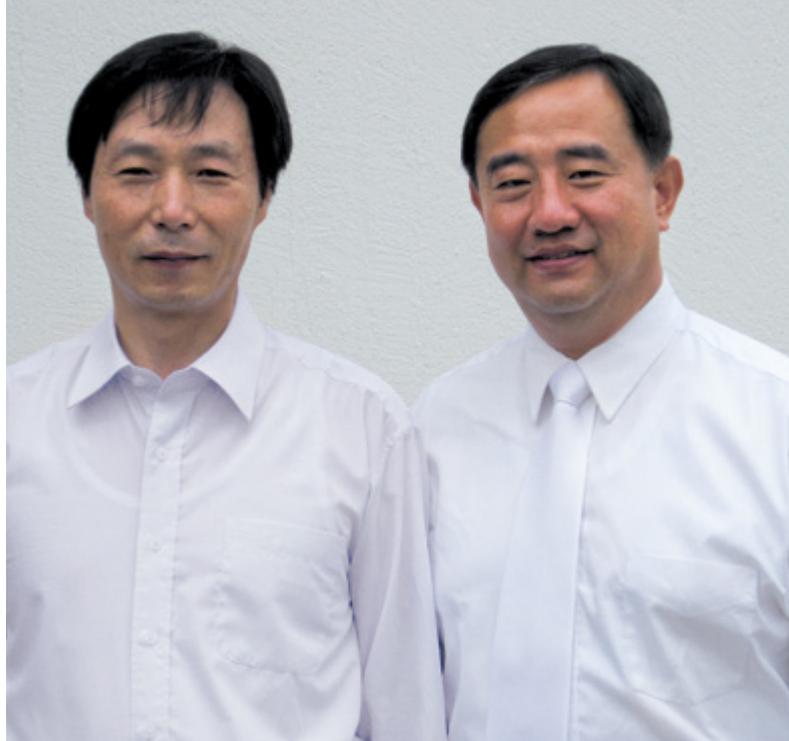
Thirty-five years later, long after I had finished my military duty, I received a phone call from a branch president of the Church in South Korea. He asked me if I remembered a Mr. Park from my military service.

"Of course I do," I answered. I had served with Mr. Park, and he had respected my beliefs and had often protected me in difficult situations.

The branch president gave me Mr. Park's phone number, and I called him right away. As I spoke with him, Mr. Park told me that during our time together as presidential guards, he had seen a light emanating from me and had felt that he should help me. Afterward, whenever he had a hard time, he said he thought about me.

Mr. Park told me that he had two sons he wanted to be like me. He had even taken his sons to church at a Latter-day Saint chapel. One of them had been baptized, though Mr. Park had not. That son, however, was now less active. Mr. Park wanted my help and advice.

I went to see Mr. Park a week later. We had a nice visit, and I soon began to meet with his son and encourage him to return to the Church. He humbly accepted my counsel, became active, and served a full-time mission.



Thirty-five years after Mr. Park saw me exercise my faith while we were serving together in the military, I baptized him a member of the Church.

Through his letters home while serving a mission, he motivated his father and helped prepare him for baptism. On a summer day the year following our first visit, I baptized Mr. Park a member of the Church.

What a great miracle! Their lives had been changed because of the faith exercised by a young man 35 years before.

Avoiding Snares and Traps

In the Old Testament, Joshua taught the children of Israel about the snares and traps they would encounter while living in a wicked world:

"Know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you" (Joshua 23:13).

For me, anticipating the trouble I could have caused my fellow guardsmen was a trap that could have tempted me to drink alcohol. However, I chose the right and was ready to obey the Word of Wisdom regardless of the consequences.

I learned from my experiences in the military that the Lord will bless and protect His children if we are "strong and of a good courage" (Joshua 1:6). For example, He

protected the Israelites when they crossed the River Jordan. But first, the priests who carried the ark of the covenant showed their faith and courage by stepping into the overflowing river. Only then did the Lord “cut off . . . the waters” and make the river “stand upon an heap” (see Joshua 3:13–17).

To “be strong and of a good courage,” we need to “cleave unto the Lord” (Joshua 1:6; 23:8). We cleave unto the Lord as we hold personal and family scripture study, personal and family prayer, and family home evening. We also cleave unto Him as we partake of the sacrament, magnify our callings, worship in the temple often, obey the commandments, and repent when we fall short. These practices allow the Holy Ghost to abide with us and help us recognize and avoid snares and traps.

“Beginning when we are very young, those responsible for our care set forth guidelines and rules to ensure our safety,” President Thomas S. Monson has said. “Life would be simpler for all of us if we would obey such rules completely. . . .

“Obedience is a hallmark of prophets; it has provided strength and knowledge to them throughout the ages. It is essential for us to realize that we, as well, are entitled to this source of strength and knowledge. It is readily available to each of us today as we obey God’s commandments.”¹

Moving Forward in Faith

Shortly after President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, was called as a General Authority, he went to Elder Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) for counsel. President Packer recalled:

“He listened very carefully to my problem and suggested that I see President David O. McKay [1873–1970]. President McKay counseled me as to the direction I should go. I was very willing to be obedient but saw no way possible for me to do as he counseled me to do.

“I returned to Elder Lee and told him that I saw no way to move in the direction I was counseled to go.



COURAGE TO STAND FOR PRINCIPLE

“We will all face fear, experience ridicule, and meet opposition. Let us—all of us—have the courage to defy the consensus, the courage to stand for principle. Courage, not compromise, brings the smile of God’s approval. Courage becomes a living and an attractive virtue when it is regarded not only as a willingness to die manfully but also as the determination to live decently.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Be Strong and of a Good Courage,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 69.

He said, ‘The trouble with you is you want to see the end from the beginning.’ I replied that I would like to see at least a step or two ahead. Then came the lesson of a lifetime: ‘You must learn to walk to the edge of the light, and then a few steps into the darkness; then the light will appear and show the way before you.’”²

As children of our Heavenly Father, we sometimes want to understand in detail the things that we must accept or accomplish in faith. However, we don’t need to understand all things. We just need to step forward as the Lord has asked us to do and as the priests of the Israelites did in entering the overflowing River Jordan. Although we cannot see or understand all things, the Lord will help us walk on dry ground if we are “strong and of a good courage.”

We will have the power to stand strong as we live by His words—seeking and following His guidance in the scriptures and from His servants. Yes, we live “in enemy territory,”³ but the enemy cannot conquer the Lord, our Savior, who was sent to help us and to save us.

I know we can be true disciples of Jesus Christ by “standing obedient and strong on the doctrine of our God.”⁴ As we exercise the courage to do so, we stand in holy places, no matter where we are. ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Obedience Brings Blessings,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2013, 89, 90.
2. Boyd K. Packer, “The Edge of the Light,” *BYU Today*, Mar. 1991, 22–23; see also *Old Testament: Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual* (1996), 84.
3. Boyd K. Packer, “Counsel to Youth,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 16.
4. Robert D. Hales, “Stand Strong in Holy Places,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2013, 51.



Tonga

A LAND DEDICATED TO GOD

By Harvalene K. Sekona

Principal of Liahona Middle School, Tonga

Less than a decade after The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized in New York, USA, an island kingdom thousands of miles away in the vast Pacific Ocean turned toward Christianity. In 1839 King George Tupou I of Tonga committed his country, his people, and his posterity to God's protection. The king's proclamation "God and Tonga are my inheritance" became Tonga's motto. Religion plays a great role in Tonga because of this legacy; to this day, every Tongan observes the Sabbath as a day of worship.

The First Missionaries

While serving in the Samoa Mission, Elders Brigham Smoot and Alva Butler were assigned to take the restored gospel to the islands of Tonga. Upon their arrival in 1891, they held an audience with King George Tupou I, who granted them permission to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. With encouraging prospects, more missionaries were called to the islands and were anxiously engaged in spreading the gospel. Unfortunately, the growth of the Church was not as fruitful in Tonga as in the other Polynesian islands of Tahiti, Hawaii, New Zealand, and Samoa. In 1897 the missionaries were ordered to



In 1891, Elders Brigham Smoot and Alva Butler met with King George Tupou I and received permission to preach the gospel among his people.

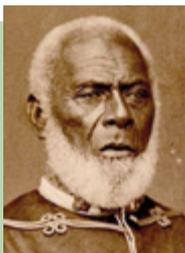
Building Up a Christian Civilization

As the gospel spread throughout the islands, various Church schools were established. In 1947 the Church leased a large piece of land and began building a new school, Liahona College, now known as Liahona High School.

Dedicated in 1953 by Elder LeGrand Richards (1886–1983) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, it was to become a “guiding light” to all who would enter, and it was to prepare young people to become leaders and to influence others for good. Present also at the dedication was Queen Salote Tupou III, who endorsed the school as an instrument for building a “Christian civilization” that

TIME LINE

► 1839: King George Tupou I commits Tonga to Christianity.



1891: First Latter-day Saint missionaries are sent to Tonga.

1892: First convert, Alipate, is baptized and confirmed.

1897: The mission is closed and the missionaries return to Samoa.



◀ 1907: Missionary work resumes; the Church opens a school in Neiafu.

return to Samoa, and the few converts in Tonga were left without Church leadership for a time.

A People Remembered

“Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, . . . remember those who are upon the isles of the sea?” (2 Nephi 29: 7).

The Lord did not forget the Saints in the island kingdom of Tonga. In 1907, Elders Heber J. McKay and W. O. Facer arrived in Neiafu, Vava’u, where they started a branch and a small school. Soon missionary work began to prosper, and several branches and Church schools were established throughout the islands over the next few years.

As in other parts of the world, the Church in Tonga had its share of opposition, but this time the gospel was here to stay. As missionary work flourished, Church leaders were called from among the local Tongan members so that when foreigners were evacuated, as during World War II, the Church could continue to thrive.

unites people of all walks of life. Since the school’s establishment, thousands of Liahona High School graduates have served as missionaries, Church leaders, and prominent community leaders.

Today there are two Church-sponsored high schools in Tonga: Liahona High School, on the main island of Tongatapu, and Saineha High School, on the island of Vava’u. There are also five Church-sponsored middle schools: three in Tongatapu, one in ‘Eua, and one in Ha’apai.

A Prophecy Fulfilled

When President David O. McKay (1873–1970) and his wife, Emma Ray, visited Tonga in 1955, the Saints treated them like royalty. This was the first visit of a Church President to the islands. During their short visits to Tongatapu and Vava’u, they held meetings with the members and felt of their love and devotion as Tongans performed music and dances and gave speeches and feasts.

During President McKay’s visit to the Saints in Vava’u, he was inspired to reveal that he had seen a vision of “a temple on one of these islands, where the members of the Church may go and receive the blessings of the temple of God.” One member recorded the Tongans’ response: “The entire congregation burst into tears.”¹

Nearly 30 years later, in August 1983, the Nuku’alofa Tonga Temple was dedicated by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), then a counselor in the First Presidency. I remember as a teenage girl how Latter-day Saints from the outer islands and Tongans from overseas came for the auspicious occasion. I was privileged to attend one of the dedicatory sessions and be part of the

the stakes in Tongatapu and to come up with a presentation that would spiritually prepare the Saints for the temple dedication the next day. The event would be broadcast and televised live to the outer islands as well as to Tongan stakes around the globe, so this was a mighty task.

The production was titled “The Treasure That Lasts.” It consisted of cultural dances from Tonga, Hawaii, Tahiti, New Zealand, Fiji, and Samoa. The story line was that of a couple who, having lost their young child, searched the many Polynesian islands for a treasure that would appease their loss. Although they found gifts at each island, none could soothe their pain. When they returned to Tonga,

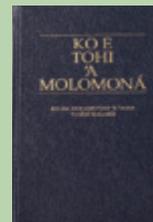
1916: *The Tongan Mission is organized.*

1922: *An exclusion law prohibits foreign missionaries from entering Tonga.*



◀ 1924: *The exclusion law is repealed due to efforts from local members and mission president M. Vernon Coombs.*

1926: *The Church opens a school called The Makeke, meaning “arise and awake.”*



◀ 1946: *The Book of Mormon is published in Tongan.*

choir. I remember the warm feeling I felt when I heard President Hinckley speak, and I knew then that he was called of God. When we sang “Hosanna Anthem,” I understood too how much the Lord loves His children.

The Savior has always remembered the people on the isles of the sea, and on that day President McKay’s prophecy was fulfilled.

Rededication of the House of the Lord

Because of the increasing Church growth in Tonga, the temple was closed for about two years for renovation. Among other work, rooms were enlarged, a sealing room was added, and Polynesian motifs were added to walls and ceilings.

At the beginning of 2007, my husband and I were called to produce a cultural celebration for the rededication of the temple. The event was to be held on November 3, a day before the rededication sessions.

Our aim was to involve as many youth as possible from



As a young Apostle, President Thomas S. Monson (center) visited Tonga in 1965. With him are the mission president and his wife, Patrick and Lela Dalton.



they were introduced to the gospel by missionaries and learned of “the treasure that lasts”—eternal families and the blessing of someday being reunited with their child who had passed away.

During the week of the rededication, it rained heavily. At our final rehearsal, on November 2, the skies were overcast. I asked the youth to return to their homes and pray for good weather so they would be able to perform for Tonga and for those who would be watching via satellite, especially the prophet. That night it rained hard,

that eternal families are the treasure that lasts and that temples are built to bring such blessings to pass.

A People Dedicated to the Lord

Today the Church continues to grow in Tonga, and leadership positions are held by native members. Chapels dot the islands, and the increase of missionaries is hastening the work. The Church schools are firmly established and continue to prepare valiant missionaries, future leaders, and worthy mothers and fathers.

► 1953: Elder LeGrand Richards dedicates Liahona High School; it becomes one of the largest and most successful schools in Tonga.



► 1955: President David O. McKay visits Tonga.



1960: *The Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price* are translated into Tongan.

1968: Tonga's first stake, the Nuku'alofa Stake, is created.



and the next morning the weather was still foreboding.

On Saturday evening, 3,000 young people gathered at Teufaiva Stadium to hear from Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who had been sent to rededicate the temple due to President Hinckley's frail health. I will never forget the performance. Everything fell into place. The weather was perfect, the sound system that had malfunctioned earlier was excellent, and those young men and young women danced their hearts out.

We had witnessed a miracle. Heavenly Father heard the prayers of His children and kept the rain away. At the same time, we were able to set the tone for the temple dedication the next day, reminding members



Missionaries help load relief supplies that were sent from Tongatapu to Ha'apai after a cyclone hit Tonga's northern islands in January.

The Saints are no longer required to make that long journey by boat to the main island for general conference. Instead, technology has enabled members to remain within their stakes to watch general conference and the area conferences broadcast from New Zealand.

Amid the turmoil of changes arriving on Tonga's shores, the Saints continue their legacy of faith. They are a people who were committed to God 175 years ago. They are a people who today continue to dedicate their lives and all that they have to the Lord. ■

NOTE

1. R. Lanier Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea: A History of the Latter-day Saints in the Pacific* (1986), 472.

GROWTH OF THE CHURCH IN TONGA *

15	517	1,185	2,975	15,842	35,227	46,623	61,470	Temples: 1
1897	1917	1930	1950	1970	1990	2000	2013	Stakes: 19
								Districts: 2
								Missions: 1



* As of January 2014



◀ 1976: President Spencer W. Kimball visits Tonga and speaks to 10,600 members at an area conference in Nuku'alofa.

▶ 1983: The Nuku'alofa Temple is dedicated.



1991: 3,000 LDS youth perform for King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV in a Church centennial celebration.

1997: President Gordon B. Hinckley visits Nuku'alofa, speaks to some 11,400 people, and meets with the king.

2007: The Nuku'alofa Temple is rededicated.

THE FAITH OF HIS FATHERS

Since the arrival of the first Mormon missionaries, many great miracles have come to pass in the Lord's work in Tonga. One such miracle occurred on June 13, 2010, when Lord Fulivai and his family were baptized. Lord Fulivai is the first Noble of the Realm to join the Church. He is a great-great-grandson of 'lki Fulivai, a noble from Vava'u, who invited the Latter-day Saint missionaries to return to Tonga in 1907.

Lord Fulivai was baptized along with his wife, Lady Helen, and their two older children; the youngest was not yet eight. Attending this historic event were the temple, mission, and stake presidents, along with

prominent government leaders, other nobles, and family members.

One year later, on June 16, 2011, the Fulivai family was sealed for time and all eternity in the Nuku'alofa Tonga Temple.

I had the privilege of talking with the Fulivai family recently. When asked to identify the greatest blessing of joining the Church, Lady Fulivai replied without hesitation that it is the eternal blessings for families. Lord Fulivai expressed that the gospel provided him with answers to lifelong questions. He believes the gospel is the doorway for his posterity to partake of God's greatest blessings.



By Elder D. Todd
Christofferson
Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles



Why We Share the Gospel

*As Latter-day Saints, we each have a missionary purpose—
to invite others to come unto Christ.*

The first chapter of *Preach My Gospel* asks a question that applies to every member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: “What is my purpose as a missionary?”

The answer, summarized in one sentence, is given there as follows: “Invite others to come unto Christ by helping them receive the restored gospel through faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.”¹

Members As Missionaries

We are all asked to be missionaries. And to be effective in sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, we must have this purpose in our mind, feel it in our heart, accept it in our soul, and act upon it. When we do, it both inspires and guides us in sharing the gospel. We must keep clear the distinction between the purpose of sharing the gospel, on the one hand, and the means of achieving that purpose, on the other hand.

It is not our purpose just to participate in discussions about the gospel or to talk to anyone and everyone we can about the Church or merely to set goals and make plans. These things are important, but they are a means to an end, and that end is bringing people to Christ.



BE READY TO SHARE

“Your exemplary lives will attract the interest of your friends and neighbors. Be ready to give an answer to those who ask why you live as you do. Be ready to give a reason for the hope and joy that they see in you [see 1 Peter 3:15]. When such questions come, you might respond by saying, ‘Let’s ask the missionaries! They can help us!’ ”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Catch the Wave,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2013, 45.

Centered in Missionary Purpose

Consider some examples of what happens when our efforts to share the gospel are centered in missionary purpose:

1. We will teach people in a way that helps them truly understand the gospel and why and how they should repent. We will listen to and respond to what is in the investigator’s mind and heart.
2. We will seek and listen to the Holy Ghost to discern who is feeling the Spirit as we talk.
3. Planning—as families, in ward councils, and with full-time missionaries—will become a tool for ensuring that the things that need to happen to bring about conversion and baptism are, in fact, identified, remembered, and followed through for each individual investigator.
4. We will rejoice in our opportunity to feast upon the word of God because our study will have purpose. We will be searching for answers to our investigators’ questions of the soul as well as our own.
5. We will invite people to attend Church meetings, not simply because we believe that is what we are supposed to do but also because we understand that participation in church is essential for the investigator to develop a stronger desire for baptism and to establish a foundation for enduring to the end in the gospel covenant. With that ultimate purpose in mind, the invitation to attend church will have greater urgency, the explanation of the importance of Sabbath worship and what to expect in a Latter-day Saint Sunday service will be

different, and the spirit that attends our words will have a persuasive power that would not otherwise be present.

Internalize and Understand

Please do not ignore chapter 1 of *Preach My Gospel* and its question “What is my purpose as a missionary?” Internalize the purpose of bringing people to Christ through the principles and ordinances of the restored gospel, and you will understand that sharing the gospel is not a program; it is a cause—the cause of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Internalize the purpose of inviting people to come unto Christ, and you will understand that the world has no access to atoning grace and salvation but through The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. You will understand what sharing the gospel is all about, and you will be up and about your Father’s business. You will know that the full-time missionaries, as did the sons of Mosiah, teach “with power and authority of God” (Alma 17:3), and you will invite them to teach the gospel to those to whom you have already extended the invitation to “come and see” (John 1:39).

Our Invitation—Come unto Christ

For me, the missionary purpose captures the majesty of the work and the glory of God (see Moses 1:39). What endeavor is more magnificent than bringing the children of God to ultimate salvation through the grace of their Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ? Remember that our missionary purpose is not only to warn others but also to save them, not only to teach but also to baptize, not only to bring others unto Christ but also to make them steadfast in Christ to the end.

Our invitation to the world is to come unto Christ. Coming unto Christ is an abbreviation, a way of describing in three words the plan of salvation. It means to obtain the fruits of His Atonement and Resurrection—ultimately eternal life. Eternal life depends on the exercise of our moral agency, but it is possible only through the grace of Jesus Christ. To come unto Him means to do what is required to lay hold upon that grace—the pardoning, sanctifying, transforming, redeeming power of His infinite, atoning sacrifice.

This good news, the gospel, is best expressed by Jesus Himself in the Book of Mormon:

“Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you—that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

“And 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, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil—

“And for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works” (3 Nephi 27:13–15).

Glad Tidings and Good News

Thus, at its foundation, the gospel, or good news, is that we have a Father in Heaven who, because of His love for us, sent His Only Begotten Son to redeem us from sin and death. The Son, in perfect obedience to the Father, to whom He gives the glory, offered His life to that end. He purchased us with His blood, and we answer to Him for our lives (see 1 Corinthians 6:19–20). He is now our Judge. He is justice personified.

The gospel message of glad tidings further declares that because of His atoning sacrifice, Jesus is also mercy personified. His mercy, merits, and grace are sufficient to pardon and cleanse us so that in the Day of Judgment we may stand holy and without spot before Him. (See 2 Nephi 2:8; Moroni 10:32–33.)



The missionary purpose in *Preach My Gospel* explains what must be done for this to happen. As it states, being pardoned and cleansed requires “faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.”²

Further in 3 Nephi 27, the Savior finishes His statement of what constitutes His gospel:

“And it shall come to pass, that whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled [with the Holy Ghost]; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world. . . .

“And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.

“Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel” (3 Nephi 27:16, 19–21).

Faith and Commitment

As we share testimony of the gospel by the Spirit, those who are willing to hear will receive sufficient witness to begin to have faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement. That faith will give them the will to repent. Members and full-time missionaries can, again by the Spirit, teach them what changes they need to make and invite and commit them to act. The ultimate commitment we invite the investigator to accept and act upon is baptism in water. This baptism is followed by, or better said, completed by, the reception of the Holy Ghost, which brings a remission of sins as well as sanctification (see 2 Nephi 31:17).

This condition of standing justified and spotless before the Lord can be preserved throughout life if one continues to live by faith, repenting as needed and reinvigorating the baptismal promises. We call that enduring to the end. Those who endure to the end will have no fear of being judged according to their works, for they

JOIN IN THE WORK OF SALVATION

Learn how you can personally help with conversion, retention, and activation at [hasteningthework](https://www.lds.org/hasteningthework).

You can find additional information about the joy of sharing the gospel at [lds.org/topics/missionary-work/change](https://www.lds.org/topics/missionary-work/change), and you can learn how to share the gospel online at [lds.org/church/share](https://www.lds.org/church/share).

will have been the works of faith and repentance and baptism of water and of the Spirit.

First Principles First

Hyrum Smith's statement captured in *Preach My Gospel* is profound: "Preach the first principles of the Gospel—preach them over again: you will find that day after day new ideas and additional light concerning them will be revealed to you. You can enlarge upon them so as to comprehend them clearly. You will then be able to make them more plainly understood by those [you] teach."³

In this statement, Hyrum Smith, the Patriarch, is explaining that these first principles, the heart of the gospel, are not fully comprehended in one review. Added light and deeper understanding will come over time in multiple revelatory experiences.

As members bear their testimonies and ask the full-time missionaries to assist them by teaching the gospel, remember that a growing comprehension of the gospel comes not only from study but also as we participate in sharing the gospel. If we study, prepare, and share gospel principles by the Spirit, we will "be able to make them more plainly understood," and the Spirit will instruct and bear witness to all who participate—members, missionaries, and investigators alike.

The Why, What, and How

The why, the what, and the how of missionary work are more compellingly proclaimed in the Book of Mormon than anywhere else. It is filled with examples of those who understood and labored to fulfill the missionary purpose. It contains the clearest expositions anywhere in scripture of the fundamental doctrines we should teach. It carries a converting spirit and a witness of the truth of these same doctrines. It will convert all who read it and pray about it with a sincere heart and with real intent (see Moroni 10:3–5).

The Book of Mormon establishes Jesus Christ in His true character as the Son of God and the Holy Messiah.



It inspires faith in Him. It brings people to Christ. We are eternally indebted to its authors and to the Prophet Joseph Smith for translating it by the gift and power of God.

I bear my witness that, as the Lord lives, the Book of Mormon is true. Its testimony of Jesus Christ is true. Its translator, Joseph Smith, is the great Prophet of the Restoration. Learn from the Book of Mormon, study it, teach from it, love it, and act upon it, and you will learn why we share the gospel and that it is our privilege and duty to invite and help others to come unto Christ. ■

From an address delivered at the seminar for new mission presidents at the Provo Missionary Training Center on June 22, 2008.

NOTES

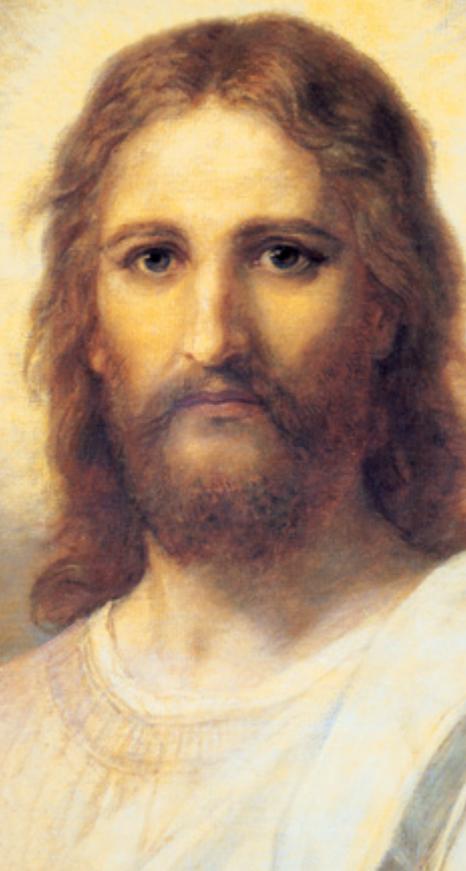
1. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 1.
2. *Preach My Gospel*, 1.
3. *Preach My Gospel*, 6.

WORKING AS ONE

Members and missionaries can see themselves in the work of salvation as they live the gospel joyfully and as they invite others to participate in activities, Church services, and other events.

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: “We are all in this together. With fellow ward members and missionaries, we plan and pray and help one another. Please keep the full-time missionaries in your thoughts and prayers. Trust them with your family and friends. The Lord trusts them and has called them to teach and bless those who seek Him” (“It’s a Miracle,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 79).

GOD'S EVERLASTING COVENANT



What we refer to as the Abrahamic covenant is in reality the new and everlasting covenant as it was given to Abraham and his posterity. It was new to Abraham because he received it as part of a new dispensation of the gospel, but it is everlasting in that the same covenant is extended to all of God's children in all gospel dispensations, beginning with Adam.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained what this covenant entails: "The new and everlasting covenant is the gospel of Jesus Christ. In other words, the doctrines and commandments of the gospel constitute the substance of an everlasting covenant between God and man that is newly restored in each dispensation" ("The Power of Covenants," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2009, 20).

This chart provides an overview of God's everlasting covenant as it was renewed in Jesus's day and again in our own. It shows how the Lord has fulfilled and continues to fulfill His covenant promises to us, including those promises He made to Abraham.

51 Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem in the land of Canaan. Through His Atonement and ministry, He fulfilled many of the promises made to Abraham and the ancient prophets.
Luke 1:68-75; 2:4-7

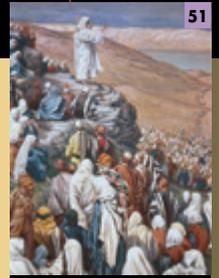
52 PROPHECY
 In the latter days and during the Millennium, the Lord will fulfill all the promises He made to the house of Israel.
Joseph Smith Translation, Luke 3:4-11 (in Bible appendix)

53 PROPHECY
 The leaders of the Jews would reject the Messiah. He would be crucified and rise from the dead on the third day. He will return to the earth later in power and glory.
Luke 9:22, 26-27

DISPENSATION: Eastern Hemisphere
THE MERIDIAN OF TIME: Western Hemisphere
*** A.D. 1** **30**



TRIBE OF JUDAH



TRIBE OF JOSEPH

(Joseph's descendants include the Nephites and Lamanites)



LOST TEN TRIBES OF ISRAEL

61 PROPHECY
 The coming forth of the Book of Mormon would be a sign that God had begun to fulfill His covenant with His people.
3 Nephi 21:1-7; 29:1-4

62 PROPHECY
 Jesus Christ will establish His covenant among all those who receive the gospel.
3 Nephi 21:20-25

63 The Apostle Peter was told in a vision that Gentiles may receive the ordinances and blessings of the gospel. See prophecy 62.
Acts 10; Galatians 3:26-29

ILLUSTRATION OF OLIVE BRANCH BY LAURENT RENALTI/HEMERA/THINKSTOCK

* Early dates are approximate, and spacing is not proportional.

54 Moses and Elijah gave priesthood keys to Peter, James, and John.

Matthew 17:1-8;
Guide to the Scriptures,
"Transfiguration";
scriptures.lds.org

55 PROPHECY
 The city of Jerusalem will be destroyed and its people killed and scattered.

Joseph Smith—Matthew
1:4-20

56 PROPHECY
 The world will kill the Apostles and fall into apostasy. God will restore all things in the latter days.

Matthew 17:11;
John 15:18-16:3

57 The Son of God suffered and died for the sins of the world and was resurrected from the dead. See prophecies 41 and 53.

Mark 14:32-65; 15:1-38;
16:6-14

58 The Apostles were commanded to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations.

Matthew 28:16-20

59 After His Resurrection, Jesus Christ appeared to "other tribes of the house of Israel, whom the Father hath led away out of the land."

3 Nephi 15:15; 16:1-3

60 PROPHECY
 God will gather His people throughout the earth and fulfill all His promises.

3 Nephi 16:5; 20:10-13;
21:26-29

Jesus Christ—Twelve Apostles

Jesus Christ—Twelve Disciples

35

100

500

THE GREAT APOSTASY

54 55 56

57 58 59 60 62
61

63 64 65 67 69
66 68

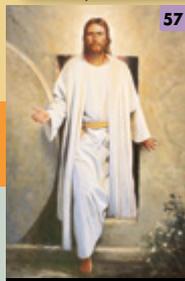
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PROPHECY: ALLEGORY OF ZENOS

(ABOUT 400 B.C.—A.D. 100)

After some time, the master of the vineyard and his servant returned to the vineyard and found good fruit on all trees. The tame olive tree roots caused the wild branches to bring forth good fruit. The branches from the tame olive tree—scattered throughout the vineyard—prospered, even when they were planted in poor locations. One branch planted in a good location had both good and bad fruit. (See Jacob 5:15-28.)

ALLEGORY OF ZENOS (ABOUT A.D. 100-1400)

After the master and his servant nourished the trees of the vineyard, they found much fruit on the trees, but all of it was bad. The tame olive tree had all sorts of bad fruit because the wild branches had overcome the strength of the roots. The fruit of the branches from the tame olive tree were all corrupt. Even the one branch with good and bad fruit had died. The Lord of the vineyard wept and asked, "Who is it that has corrupted my vineyard?" The servant said, "Is it not the loftiness of thy vineyard?" The Lord of the vineyard decided to try one more time to save his vineyard. (See Jacob 5:29-51.)



70

64 The Jews in Jerusalem were killed and scattered by the Romans. See prophecy 55.

Guide to the Scriptures,
"Jerusalem";
scriptures.lds.org

65 PROPHECY
 The gospel of Jesus Christ will be restored in the latter days by angelic ministry.

Revelation 14:6-7

66 PROPHECY
 The Lord will gather His Saints in a great latter-day missionary work.

Revelation 14:14-16

67 PROPHECY
 Satan will be bound for a thousand years, and Christ will reign upon the earth.

Revelation 20:1-6

68 PROPHECY
 There will be a new heaven and a new earth, and the city of New Jerusalem will come down from heaven.

Revelation 21:1-10,
22-27

69 The original Apostles were rejected and killed. The ordinances of the gospel were lost. See prophecy 56.

2 Thessalonians 2:3;
Revelation 12:1-6

70 Lehi's descendants became wicked and rejected the gospel.

Mormon 8:1-10;
Moroni 1

71 Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith, preparing the way to restore the new and everlasting covenant. See prophecy 33.

Joseph Smith—History 1:14–20; Doctrine and Covenants 1:17–23

72 The angel Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith. The Book of Mormon was later translated and published. See prophecies 33 and 61.

Joseph Smith—History 1:27–54

73 John the Baptist and Peter, James, and John appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, restoring the priesthood of God to the earth. See prophecy 65.

Joseph Smith—History 1:68–73

74 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized in Fayette, New York, USA. See prophecies 42 and 62.

Doctrine and Covenants 20–21

75 PROPHECY
The servants of the Lord from all dispensations will partake of the sacrament together.

Doctrine and Covenants 27:5–14

76 PROPHECY
The Lord Jesus Christ will dwell on the earth for a thousand years during the Millennium. See also prophecy 44.

Doctrine and Covenants 29:10–11

77 PROPHECY
Satan will be loosed again and will reign for a short time, and then the end of the earth will come.

Doctrine and Covenants 43:29–33

**DISPENSATION:
THE FULNESS OF TIMES**

Prophet Joseph Smith

1830

1900

2000

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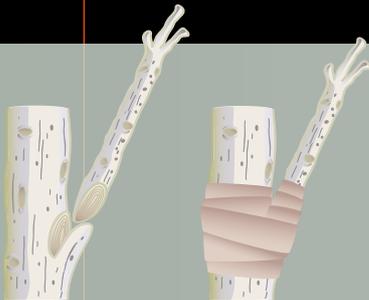
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84



86



ALLEGORY OF ZENOS (ABOUT 1800–MILLENNIUM)

The Lord of the vineyard asked his servants to graft the natural branches back into the tame olive tree and to graft the wild branches back into their original trees. He asked them to carefully graft the branches “according as the good shall grow.” Other servants were brought to help, but they were few. He promised the faithful servants joy in the fruit of his vineyard. (See Jacob 5:52–73.)

79 PROPHECY

All faithful Saints will be caught up to meet Christ when He returns.

Doctrine and Covenants 88:95–98

80 PROPHECY

The devil and his armies will be defeated by Michael the archangel and the hosts of heaven in a great, last battle after the Millennium.

Doctrine and Covenants 88:110–116

81 Moses, Elias, and Elijah conferred the priesthood keys needed to restore the everlasting covenant. See prophecy 65.

Doctrine and Covenants 110:11–16

82 The Saints in Nauvoo built a temple, and ordinances for the dead were restored.

Doctrine and Covenants 124:29–34

83 The headquarters of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was established in the western part of North America. See prophecies 42, 60, and 62.

Isaiah 2:2–3

84 The gospel of Jesus Christ is being preached throughout the world. Every person will have the opportunity to accept the gospel. See prophecies 60 and 62.

85 The blessings of the priesthood were extended to every worthy person without regard for race. See prophecy 62.

Official Declaration 2

78 PROPHECY

Jesus Christ will stand on Mount Zion and the Mount of Olives, the continents will become one land, and the twelve tribes will receive their inheritances.

Doctrine and Covenants 133:17–35; Articles of Faith 1:10

1 Jesus Christ appears at Jerusalem (in the Holy Land) and the New Jerusalem (in North America). See prophecy 78.

2 Jesus Christ returns to the earth in power and glory at His Second Coming. The lost tribes of Israel and the city of Enoch are restored. See prophecies 52, 53, and 78.

3 The disciples of Christ are resurrected. See prophecy 79.

4 The sons of Levi present an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.

5 A great sacrament meeting is held with all the disciples of Christ from all dispensations. See prophecy 75.

JESUS CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL REIGN

ALLEGORY OF ZENOS

All the trees of the vineyard began to bring forth good fruit. They became "like unto one body; and the fruits were equal." The Lord of the vineyard blessed his servants for their diligent efforts and gloried in the fruit of his vineyard. (See Jacob 5:74–76.)



ALLEGORY OF ZENOS

Evil fruit again came to the vineyard. The Lord separated the good from the bad fruit. The bad fruit was cast away, and the vineyard was burned. (See Jacob 5:77.)

"Blessed are you for receiving mine everlasting covenant, even the fulness of my gospel, sent forth unto the children of men, that they might have life and be made partakers of the glories which are to be revealed in the last days, as it was written by the prophets and apostles in days of old" (D&C 66:2).

86 Temples are being built across the world, making the ordinances of the gospel available to all people—living and dead.

Doctrine and Covenants 124:37–42

6 The Millennium ushers in peace for a thousand years. The earth is renewed. See prophecies 44, 52, 53, and 76.

7 Satan is loosed. See prophecy 77.

8 The great and final battle takes place. Satan and his armies are defeated. See prophecy 80.

9 After all people have been resurrected, they will come to the Final Judgment and either inherit a kingdom of glory or be cast out. Satan is banished forever.

10 Earth becomes sanctified and glorified. See prophecy 68.

A FLOOD OF HAPPY MEMORIES

Because of old plumbing and an unsound foundation, my childhood home flooded whenever a storm produced enough rain. Because storms in Virginia, USA, can last for hours, water invaded frequently.

We lived in that home during most of my growing-up years, so I thought flooding was normal.

After several storms, we improved our flood-fighting tactics and learned to

work together. Storms often hit in the middle of the night, and my parents would wake us all up to work at our posts as the water encroached through the basement like slow-moving lava. My brother and father would bucket out the stairwell while my sister and I quickly sopped up water with towels to save the carpet.

We giggled as we jumped and danced on those towels, feeling the

squishy wetness between our toes and through our pajama legs. Mom hurriedly wrung out the drenched towels, hurled them into the dryer, and brought new ones fresh for stomping. When we were satisfied the house was safe, we went to the kitchen to dry off and enjoy hot cocoa and cookies for our labors. Then, if it wasn't yet time for school, we would try to go back to sleep.

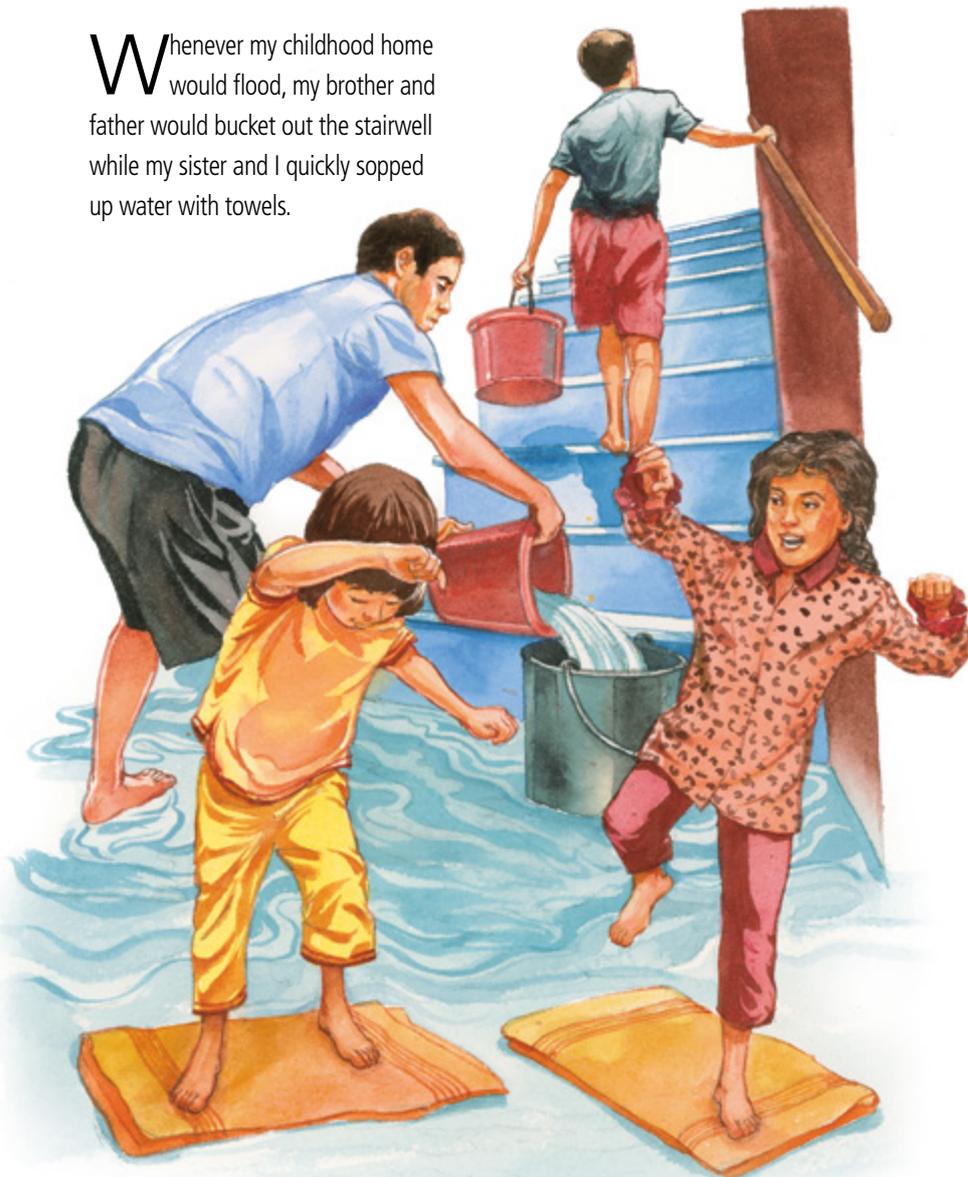
These floods must have given my parents great anxiety, but I remember them as some of the happiest moments of my childhood, even with the booming thunder and the flashing lightning. In fact, the smell of wet carpet still makes me nostalgic for family time.

My parents could have fought the flooding alone, but I'm so glad they employed all of us in defense of our home. Fighting the water was a joyous event because we were together and we each played a part.

Now that I am grown, I think about those days and wonder how I can create the same joy of working together in my own children. Though grateful that my home does not flood, I know that something unwanted will inevitably encroach upon our family.

No matter what trouble my family may deal with in the future, I hope we stay together and work together in defending our values, our faith, and each other. Then perhaps, even in adversity, we can laugh, smile, and feel happy as we labor side by side. ■

Gina Sconiers, Utah, USA



PRIESTHOOD BLESSINGS GIVEN AND RETURNED

Some years ago while our family was eating dinner with another couple from our ward, we received a phone call from the emergency department of our local hospital. An official asked my husband, who was serving as stake president at the time, if someone from our Church could come see a 17-year-old youth who had suffered a serious head injury.

Upon arriving, my husband learned that the young man had fallen from a balcony onto a cement sidewalk 30 feet (9 m) below. He was unconscious and not expected to live.

My husband and the brother who ate dinner with us gave the young man a blessing. His family, who lived a thousand miles (1,610 km) away, was contacted and apprised of his condition.

Miraculously, after a few days of intensive care, the young man regained consciousness and began to heal. For four weeks his parents visited him daily in the hospital. Then they flew him home to Arizona, USA, so he could complete his recovery.

How marvelous it was to witness the healing power of the priesthood work in a way to give this young man a second chance at a healthy future. And how grateful I was for a husband and other ward members who are prepared to perform priesthood service and act with divine authority.

I felt deeply for the young man's parents, who were so far from their son

during his crisis. I was glad, however, to know that they felt somewhat reassured when they learned that their son had received a priesthood blessing and that Church members were glad to help.

My empathy for those parents greatly increased a few years later when I received a phone call informing me that my own son, living 2,000 miles (3,220 km) away, had been hit by a car while riding his bicycle to the university where he was working and studying. Though I felt powerless to help him, I was thankful and comforted to know that the full-time missionaries were called to give him a priesthood blessing and that a ward in St. Paul, Minnesota, USA, had responded to his family's needs. Ward members brought meals to his home and helped his wife, who had given birth just the day before the accident, care for their other three children.

Imagine how my gratitude increased when I learned that the missionary who had blessed my

I was thankful and comforted to know that the full-time missionaries were called to give my son a priesthood blessing.

son was the same young man who had received a blessing from my husband five years before. I was amazed that the service given had returned in full measure!

My faith in and prayers of gratitude to my loving Heavenly Father have continued to increase as I contemplate that He knows all of us and what we will need. I believe that this young missionary was there so we could see the foreknowledge of God in a very personal way. ■

Julie Keyes, British Columbia, Canada



I KNEW GOD WOULD PROVIDE

Before I joined the Church, my husband became seriously ill. I prayed hard, asking God to let my husband live for the sake of our five children and the baby I was expecting. But my prayers were in vain.

When my husband died, my love for God and my faith and trust in Him died as well. I was overwhelmed with the responsibilities now on my shoulders. Fortunately, my parents were there to help.

One day a few years later, I heard a knock at my door. Two strangers stood there with friendly smiles and a book in their hands. They introduced themselves as missionaries from The

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I had never heard of their church. They left when I told them I was busy, but I continued to think about them.

The next day I saw them showing their book to a neighbor. Curious, I came closer. The missionaries noticed me and asked again if they could visit me. I was surprised by my answer: “Yes, anytime!”

As I listened to the missionary lessons and studied the Book of Mormon, I realized the mistakes I had made in life, repented of my sins, and grew closer to God. When my parents heard that the elders were teaching

The day of my baptism I was nervous, but I entered the water and was baptized.

me, however, they were upset. They threatened to disown my children and me. The missionaries invited me to be baptized, but I refused because we couldn’t live without my parents’ help.

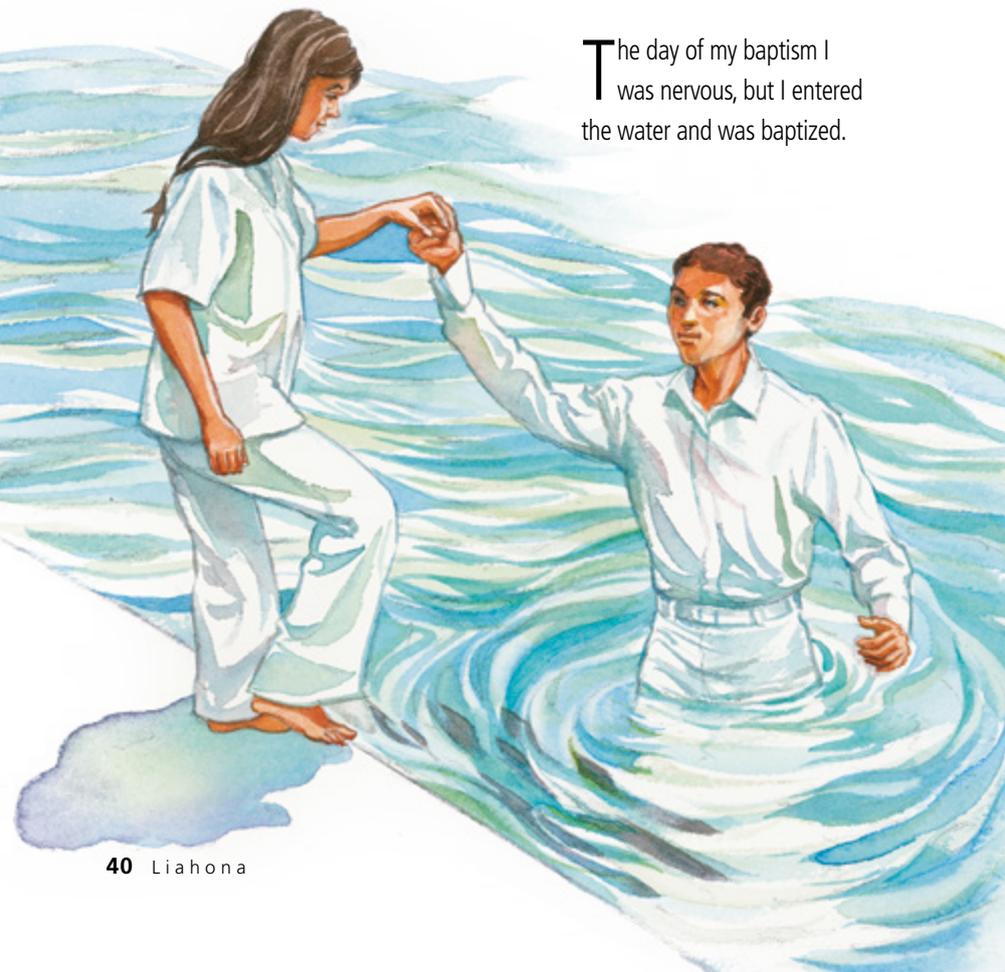
Before the elders left, they asked me to read 3 Nephi 13:31–34. When I read “seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” (verse 33), I knew that Heavenly Father would provide if I put Him first and obeyed His commandments. When the missionaries returned, we scheduled my baptism.

The day of my baptism, my mother’s angry voice flashed into my mind. I was nervous, but I entered the water and was baptized. Afterward I was so happy, and when I was confirmed a member of the Church and given the gift of the Holy Ghost, I felt that my burdens had been lifted.

When my parents heard that I had joined the Church, they disowned me. But we reconciled a year later, after which my two sisters were baptized with our parents’ consent.

Three of my children eventually served full-time missions, and soon I will celebrate 40 years as a member of the Church. What great blessings I have—all thanks to two missionaries who knocked on my door, introduced me to the Book of Mormon, and helped restore my love for God and my faith and trust in Him. ■

Abethemia Trujillo, Albay, Philippines



WHAT WOULD I SING?

During my service as a full-time missionary nearly 40 years ago in the town of Levin, New Zealand, I played the piano each Tuesday for the Primary children. I remember well the wonderful feelings I had for these children as we sang together the gospel-rich Primary songs.

In February 2013, I returned to New Zealand on vacation. Being an avid hiker, I booked a four-day hiking excursion of the famous Milford Track in Fiordland National Park on the South Island.

I was joined by three Americans and 37 other hikers from around the world, including Australia, Brazil, England, Finland, Germany, Israel, and Uruguay. During our adventure, we shared thoughts, experiences, and opinions as best we could given our language barriers. It didn't take long for our cultural differences and preconceived opinions to melt away under our growing bonds.

At the end of our third day of hiking, one of the hikers wanted to build upon

our growing friendships and sprang to his feet, announcing that we should hold a talent show. He said he would begin the show. He chose to share his storytelling talent, which he had been practicing at his business office in Caesarea, Israel. His story went well, so he announced that he would tell another one. But as he shared some off-color remarks, I realized that the evening could easily turn out to be something less than uplifting.

During his story, I felt a strong impression to sing for the group. But what would I sing to my newfound friends from all over the world? The answer came to me forcefully: "I Am a Child of God" (*Hymns*, no. 301).

I was anxious but drew upon my memories of and love for the Primary children of New Zealand. I rose to my feet and explained that I would sing a special song that I had sung nearly 40 years ago with children in New Zealand. I explained that I had been a missionary, had taught these children, and had grown to love them. I then said

a silent prayer, asking for help to sing in a manner that would bless the group.

The song went well, and afterward I could feel the Spirit. My new friends smiled, and the song seemed to open their hearts. It wasn't long before others rose and began sharing their musical talents. A group of four ladies, previously reluctant to participate, sang selections from their church choir. Another hiker taught us a Jewish folk song.

At the end of the talent show, a beautiful young woman from Australia sang three songs in Maori, her native tongue. Truly the Spirit of our Heavenly Father had distilled upon us and helped us realize that we were all children of God, not just "strangers and foreigners" (Ephesians 2:19) from various lands.

I am thankful for those Primary children in the small town of Levin who helped instill in me the truth that we are all children of our Heavenly Father. I am also glad those memories gave me the courage to share that testimony through song. ■

David M. Flitton, Utah, USA

I felt a strong impression to sing for the group. But what would I sing to my newfound friends from all over the world?



Like the currents of the sea, God's divine influence can guide us toward His plan for our life.

ACT UPON THIS LAND as for Years

By Dennis C. Gaunt

Like many children, I dreamed of what I would be when I grew up. In my case, I was *convinced* I would become a firefighter on the moon. In my five-year-old mind, there wasn't any other way my life could possibly turn out. I suspect most of us had childhood dreams about what our life would be like when we grew up. I also suspect that most of us have, at one point, looked back at our lives and exclaimed, "This isn't what I thought would happen!"

Two scriptures help us keep our lives in perspective. First:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8–9).

Second: "[God] doeth not anything save it be for the benefit of the world;



for he loveth the world" (2 Nephi 26:24).

These scriptures teach us that everything Heavenly Father does is ultimately for our benefit, even if we cannot understand why. And since God's thoughts and ways are higher than ours, we need to elevate our lives to be more in harmony with His plan for us.

Wondering while Wandering

We sometimes talk about the children of Israel wandering in the

wilderness for 40 years before being allowed to enter the promised land. A cloud or pillar of fire rested above the tabernacle when they were to stop, and when it moved, the camp followed (see Numbers 9:15–18, 21–23). I suspect that they also spent 40 years "wondering" in the wilderness—wondering when they were going to move, when and where they would stop, and when they would eventually reach the promised land.

This story is richly symbolic. As we each journey through our own mortal wilderness, we want to reach the "promised land" of living with God eternally. He has promised to lead us there. Yet while each person needs to wander along the same route—be obedient, repent, receive priesthood ordinances, and endure faithfully—each person's life is unique.

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: "The Lord has placed currents of



divine influence in your life that will lead you along the individual plan He would have you fulfill here on earth. Seek through the Spirit to identify it and carefully follow that direction that the Lord has put in your life. Align yourself with it. Choose, willingly, to exercise your agency to follow it.”¹

Consider which was harder for the camp of Israel to endure: spending a year in an unpleasant place or leaving a nice place after two days? I think both scenarios tested their faith.

So it is with us. We may not be satisfied with our circumstances and thus spend time wondering when things will change. Or we may experience an unanticipated change to our pleasant routine. How we choose to respond to these experiences determines, in a large part, our happiness. And if we spend our lives wondering while we wander, we may miss out on wonderful opportunities for spiritual growth.

Go and Do Something Today

In the spring of 1831, the Saints began to gather to Kirtland, Ohio. A member named Lemam Copley agreed to allow a group from Colesville, New York, to stay on his farm in Thompson, a short distance from Kirtland. In May 1831 the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“And I consecrate unto them this land for a little season, until I, the Lord,

shall provide for them otherwise, and command them to go hence;

“And the hour and the day is not given unto them, wherefore let them *act upon this land as for years*, and this shall turn unto them for their good” (D&C 51:16–17; emphasis added).

Much like the children of Israel following the cloud in the wilderness, these Saints knew they wouldn’t be permanent residents on the Copley farm. At some point they would move

We may not be satisfied with our circumstances and thus spend time wondering when things will change. If we do this, we miss out on wonderful opportunities for spiritual growth.

on. Yet no matter how long their stay would be, they were to act as if they would be there for years.

So why would the Lord give them this counsel? Some may have become discouraged living in a wagon or tent in a muddy field as they saw others living in better circumstances. The Lord’s counsel likely changed their perspective from discouragement to hope.

Likewise, when we see others who have things we dream of—a nice

family, home, job, and a clear direction in life—we may become discouraged. For instance, if we know we won’t be in a ward or branch for long, we may think, “Why bother accepting a calling? Why get to know anyone?” We may still attend church, but we aren’t getting all we could out of the experience. If we spend our lives focusing on what we *don’t* have, we may fail to be truly grateful for what we *do* have.

As we sing in one of our hymns, there *are* “chances for work all around just now, opportunities right in our way. Do not let them pass by, saying, ‘Sometime I’ll try,’ but go and do something today.”²

When we “act upon this land as for years,” we begin to recognize opportunities we may not have seen before. We may also see that some of these opportunities may never come our way again. Then we think, “As long as I’m here, I’m going to get involved, do the best I can, and choose to be happy. I’ll continue to hope for the future, but in the meantime, let me do some good here.” It’s the difference between treading water and actually swimming.

As it turned out, the Saints in Thompson didn’t stay very long. Lemam Copley broke his promise to let the Saints stay on his land. The Lord eventually sent these Saints to Missouri, but they did their best while they lived in that farmer’s field, and the Lord blessed them for it.

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said: “Often the deep valleys of our present will be understood only by looking back on them from the mountains of our future experience. Often we can’t see the Lord’s hand in our lives until long after trials have passed. Often the most difficult times of our lives are essential building blocks that form the foundation of our character and



pave the way to future opportunity, understanding, and happiness.”³

Let Not Your Minds Turn Back

We sometimes get into trouble when we insist on doing things according to our own timetable, rather than trusting in the Lord’s.

Consider the story of Lehi’s departure from Jerusalem from Laman and Lemuel’s perspective. Their comfortable life was suddenly interrupted when Lehi said the family

had to flee because Jerusalem was going to be destroyed. Off they go into the wilderness—only to have to return soon to get the brass plates from Laban. All that time slogging through the harsh desert only to have Laban steal their precious things and try to kill them? I would be upset too!

On top of that, seeing Jerusalem look the same probably added to Laman and Lemuel’s anger. I don’t know if they expected to see a smoking crater when they returned, but I can imagine their thoughts: “Wasn’t Jerusalem supposed to be destroyed? Why are we wasting our time in the wilderness when things are totally normal here?” In any case, all these things quickly resulted in them beating Nephi and Sam (see 1 Nephi 3:29).

When things don’t happen the way we think they ought to; when we think that pillar of fire is never going to move fast enough; when we look around and see only a farmer’s field, we too might become discouraged to the point that, like Laman and Lemuel, we beat up our faith and take out our frustrations with God.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “When we are unduly impatient with an omniscient God’s timing, we really are suggesting that we know what is best. Strange, isn’t it—we who wear wristwatches seek to counsel

Him who oversees cosmic clocks and calendars.”⁴

Of course life isn’t always easy, and I don’t know of anyone—myself included—who would say that life has turned out exactly the way they imagined. But I also know many people who would say that despite it all, they are happy with their life now—even if they didn’t grow up to be a firefighter on the moon!

That positive perspective comes when we faithfully follow the Lord with optimism through our own wildernesses. As we do, we will one day discover that our wilderness experience wasn’t nearly as bad as we thought. We may even admit that it was totally worth it. To each of us the Lord says:

“Continue in patience until ye are perfected.

“Let not your minds turn back; and when ye are worthy, in mine own due time, ye shall see and know” (D&C 67:13–14). ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

To learn how to be grateful regardless of your circumstances, see President Dieter F. Uchtdorf’s April general conference talk “Grateful in Any Circumstances” in the May issue or at conference.lds.org.

NOTES

1. Richard G. Scott, “He Lives,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 87; *Liahona*, Jan. 2000, 105.
2. “Have I Done Any Good?” *Hymns*, no. 223.
3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Continue in Patience,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 58.
4. Neal A. Maxwell, “Hope through the Atonement of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 63; *Liahona*, Jan. 1999, 72.

Heavenly Father Said No *and* Yes

I thought Heavenly Father said no, but He was really saying yes to a greater plan for my life.



By Angelica Hagman

In Sweden, during my last year of high school, I decided to apply to Brigham Young University in Utah. There was only one problem: no matter how fervently I prayed for God to confirm my decision, it just never felt right. I thought, “The answer couldn’t possibly be no, could it? In so many ways, BYU seems like it should be the right decision, especially because I want a temple marriage and my prospects at BYU are so much better than in Sweden.” Except it wasn’t right. Not for me. Not at that time.

Disappointed, I discarded my plans to attend BYU and applied to a university in Sweden. At about the same time that I would have left for my BYU adventure, I fell in love with Jonas—a recently returned missionary. Although we must have attended several youth activities together before Jonas left on his mission, I had never noticed him. How his charisma and infectious laugh escaped me remains a mystery!

Early in our relationship, Jonas told me that he had applied to BYU and hoped to attend the following semester. After his first semester in Provo, we married in the temple and began attending BYU together, graduating on the same day.

Now I look back and see why Heavenly Father initially said no—or really, “not yet”—to my fervent prayer about attending BYU. Although He said no to my desire at that particular time, He was actually saying yes to a much more important desire. As a young girl, I had often prayed that my future husband and I would find each other when the time was right. We might have met at BYU, but I am convinced that, as part of a greater plan, Jonas and I needed to find each other in Sweden. Perhaps many of Heavenly Father’s “no” answers to our prayers are integral parts of his “yes” answers to greater plans for our lives.

Thy Will Be Done

In Gethsemane, Jesus Christ prayed with great fervor, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” Then He added, “Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39). Jesus Christ chose to drink of the bitter cup because He knew it was part of God’s greater plan to provide a Savior, who would atone for the sins of mankind (see 3 Nephi 11:11).

Likewise, we know that our Heavenly Father has a plan for our life. While we may not know the details of God's plan for us, we can trust Heavenly Father's answers to our prayers and say, "Thy will be done."

Christ aligned His will with God's, and the great plan that included the

Savior's Atonement for all mankind unfolded. Similarly, as we align our will with God's, Heavenly Father can reveal a greater plan for us.

As our life unfolds, we can receive the blessings Jesus Christ pled for in His Intercessory Prayer: "That they all may be one; as thou,

Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (John 17:21).

How grateful I am that our Heavenly Father lovingly whispers no to some prayers so that He can give a resounding yes to others. ■

The author now lives in California, USA.



GOD SEES THE LARGER PICTURE

"What an amazing source of power, of strength, and of comfort is available to each of us. He who knows us better than we know ourselves, He who sees the larger picture and who knows the end from the beginning, has assured us that He will be there for us to provide help if we but ask. We have the promise: 'Pray always, and be believing, and all things shall work together for your good' [D&C 90:24]."

President Thomas S. Monson, "We Never Walk Alone," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 121.

TRUTHS MOST WORTH KNOWING

If you have stumbled or even been lost for a time, you can move forward with faith and not wander to and fro in the world any longer.



**By President
Boyd K. Packer**
President of the
Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

Some youth have questions and are searching for direction. Others are wondering how they got off the gospel path and how they might return. While I speak to all, I speak most earnestly to the one who is seeking.

Your Spiritual Account

We all live on spiritual credit. In one way or another, the account builds and builds. If you pay it off as you go, you have little need to worry. Soon you begin to learn discipline and know that there is a day of reckoning ahead. Learn to keep your spiritual account paid off at regular intervals rather than allowing it to collect interest and penalties.

Because you are being tested, it is expected that you will make some mistakes. I assume that you have done things in your life that you regret, things that you cannot even apologize for, much less correct; therefore, you carry a burden. You, perhaps, may feel inferior in mind and body and are troubled or burdened with the weight of some spiritual account that is marked “past due.” When you come face to face with yourself in those

moments of quiet contemplation (which many of us try to avoid), are there some unsettled things that bother you? Do you have something on your conscience? Are you still, to one degree or another, guilty of anything small or large?

Too frequently we receive letters from those who have made tragic mistakes and are burdened. They beg: “Can I ever be forgiven? Can I ever change?” The answer is yes! (See 1 Corinthians 10:13.)

Repentance Gives Relief

The gospel teaches us that relief from torment and guilt can be earned through repentance. Save for those few—those very few—who defect to perdition after having known a fulness, there is no habit, no addiction, no rebellion, no transgression, no offense small or large which is exempt from the promise of complete forgiveness. No matter what has happened in your life, the Lord has prepared a way for you to come back if you will heed the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Some are filled with a compelling urge,

a temptation that recycles in the mind, perhaps to become a habit, then an addiction. We are prone to some transgression and sin and also a rationalization that we have no guilt because we were born that way. We become trapped, and hence comes the pain and torment that only the Savior can heal. You have the power to stop and to be redeemed.

A Rattlesnake Named Pornography

President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988), First Counselor in the First Presidency, told me once, “Don’t just tell them so that they can understand; tell them so that they cannot misunderstand.”

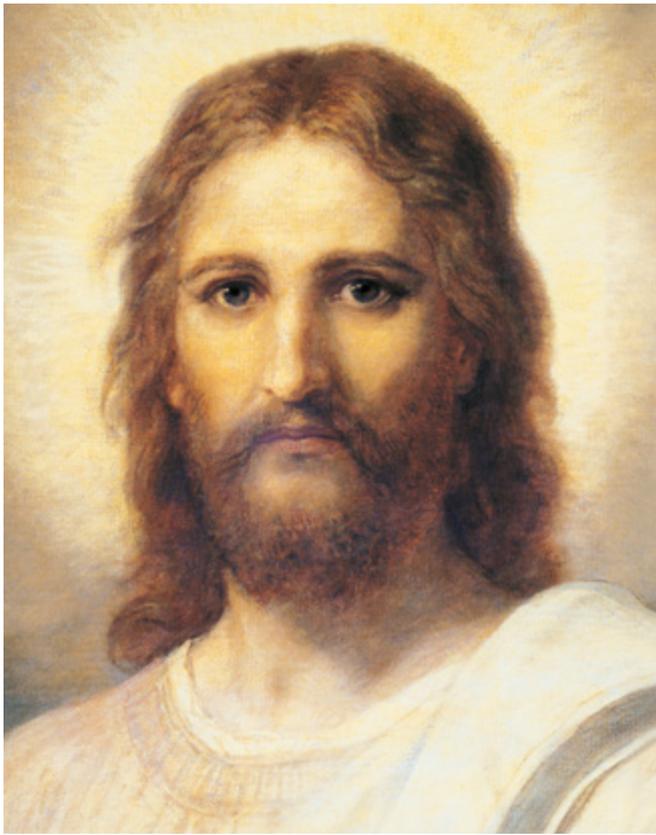
Collecting or viewing pornography is akin to keeping a rattlesnake in your backpack.

So listen up! I will speak plainly as one called and under obligation to do so.

You live in a day when the scourge of pornography is sweeping across the world. It is hard to escape it. Pornography is focused on that part of your nature through which you have the power to beget life.

To indulge in pornography leads to difficulties, divorce, disease, and troubles of a dozen kinds. There is no part of it that is innocent. To collect it, view it, or carry it around in any form is akin to keeping a rattlesnake in your backpack. It exposes you to the inevitable spiritual equivalent of the serpent’s strike with its injection of deadly venom. One can easily understand, with the world being what it is, that you can almost innocently be exposed to it, to read it, or to view it without realizing the terrible consequences. If that





describes you, I warn you to stop it. Stop it now!

The Book of Mormon teaches that all people “are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil” (2 Nephi 2:5). That includes you. You know what is right and what is wrong. Be very careful not to cross that line.

Although most mistakes can be confessed privately to the Lord, there are some transgressions that require more than that to bring about forgiveness. If your mistakes have been grievous, see your bishop. Otherwise, ordinary confession, quietly and personally, will do. But remember, that great morning of forgiveness may not come all at once. If at first you stumble, do not give up. Overcoming discouragement is part of the test. Do not give up. And as I have counseled before, once you have confessed and forsaken your sins, do not look back.

The Lord is always there. He is willing to suffer and pay the penalty if you are willing to accept Him as your Redeemer.

The Savior’s Suffering for Our Sins

As mortals, we may not—indeed cannot—understand fully how Jesus Christ fulfilled His atoning sacrifice. But for

now the *how* is not as important as the *why* of His suffering. Why did He do it for you, for me, for all of humanity? He did it for the love of God the Father and all mankind. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

In Gethsemane, Christ went apart from His Apostles to pray. Whatever transpired is beyond our power to know! But we do know that He completed the Atonement. He was willing to take upon Himself the mistakes, the sins and guilt, the doubts and fears of all the world. He suffered for us so that we would not have to suffer.

Complete Forgiveness Is Possible

If you have stumbled or even been lost for a time, if you feel that the adversary now holds you captive, you can move forward with faith and not wander to and fro in the world any longer. There are those who stand ready to guide you back to peace and security. The grace of God, as promised in the scriptures, comes “after all we can do” (2 Nephi 25:23). The possibility of this, to me, is the truth most worth knowing.

I promise that the brilliant morning of forgiveness can come. Then “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (Philippians 4:7) comes into your life once again, something like a sunrise, and you and He “will remember [your] sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:34). How will you know you have been forgiven? You will know! (See Mosiah 4:1–3.)

This is what I have come to teach you who are in trouble. He will step in and solve the problem you cannot solve, but you have to pay the price. It does not come without doing that. He is a very kind ruler in the sense that He will always pay the price necessary, but He wants you to do what you should, even if it is painful.

I love the Lord, and I love the Father who sent Him. Our burdens of disappointment, sin, and guilt can be laid before Him, and on His generous terms, each item on the account can be marked “paid in full.” (See Isaiah 1:18–19.)

Live Faithfully and Remain Worthy

The scripture “learn wisdom in thy youth; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God” (Alma 37:35) is an invitation attended by the promise of peace and protection from the adversary. (See also 1 Timothy 4:12.)

Do not expect that all will go smoothly throughout your life. Even for those who are living as they should, it sometimes will be just the opposite. Meet each of life’s challenges with optimism and surety, and you will have the peace and faith to sustain you now and in the future.

For those who do not yet have all of the blessings you feel you want and need to have, I firmly believe that no experience or opportunity essential for redemption and salvation will be denied you who live faithfully. Remain

worthy; be hopeful, patient, and prayerful. Things have a way of working out. The gift of the Holy Ghost will guide you and direct your actions.

I know you as the youth of the Church, and I understand that you’re not perfect, but you are moving along that road. Have courage. Know that any person who has a body has power over one who has not.¹ Satan is denied a body; so if ever you are confronted with temptations, know that you outrank all those temptations if you will exercise the agency given to Adam and Eve in the garden and passed on to this very generation. ■

From a devotional given at Brigham Young University on November 6, 2011. For the full text in English, go to speeches.byu.edu.

NOTE

1. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 211.

I promise that the brilliant morning of forgiveness can come.



OUR SPACE

STANDARDS AND FRIENDS

Since I have been in school, I have had friends who have not understood the moral standards of our religion. At first it was difficult, but over time they have become used to the idea of my being morally clean. I made a goal in my life to be clean and pure, and it has worked out well, both for me and for those who used to criticize me. Over time, respect, peace, and joy have become a part of our loving circle of friends.

Vitória M., Brazil

FORGIVING MY FRIENDS

As the only member of the Church in my peer group, I have experienced some instances when my friends offended me. Sometimes they judge and criticize my religion. I feel so alone, yet I am thankful I know the standards of the Church.

If my friends offend me, I try to humble myself and avoid contention, for I know contention is evil. When they start discussing some matters about the Church, I just testify of my belief in the gospel.

I always forgive my friends with or without their apology. Forgiving is not just about saying, "Apology accepted" or "It's OK," because forgiveness has a deep meaning: Jesus Christ atoned for our sins so that Heavenly Father can forgive us.

Even though my friends don't understand my faith now, I know that I can be God's instrument to teach them the gospel. I am helping them, and at the same time I am helping myself to grow spiritually and prepare to serve a mission.

Joshua V., Philippines



ONE OF MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURES

Our Heavenly Father uses "small and simple things" (Alma 37:6) to advance His work. Joseph Smith was

not a great person in the eyes of the world, yet God used him to restore the Church. And it was

a very simple thing that led to the Restoration: a prayer. Do not think you are too small to work in the Lord's vineyard. Being a good example can help your neighbor become a member of the Church. God does not need great personalities, just people who are faithful and obedient.

Ronick R., Haiti

MISSIONARY COMPANIONS

Your family can help unite the family of God.
You can all share the gospel in natural and pleasant ways.

(See M. Russell Ballard, "Put Your Trust in the Lord," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 43.)





BANANA BREAD MISSIONARIES

*For these young men, sharing a slice of bread
has blessed countless lives, including their own.*

By Mindy Raye Friedman

Church Magazines

If someone offered you a piece of delicious banana bread, how would you react? For the young men in a ward in Ecuador, that's one way they start conversations about the gospel.

Every two months they have a missionary day with open houses in a different area of their ward. They split into several teams, each made up of a young man, a full-time or recently returned missionary, and an elder or high priest. Some of the groups work at a tent, some go to contact people in the park, and some go door to door.

When they meet someone, they offer the person a piece of banana

bread. When the person accepts, he or she is told that although the bread is delicious and good for the body, the missionaries have a message that will be nourishing to the person's soul. The young men and their companions then invite the person to meet with the missionaries. In this way, they've been able to get 40 to 50 referrals for the missionaries in a couple of hours.

The young men also fellowship the members of their own quorums. On Saturdays they meet for a Young Men activity and to work on Duty to God. Then they visit the less-active members of their quorum. They encourage

them to attend church and then invite them to come back to play sports or participate in another activity.

In this way and many others, these young men are preparing to be lifelong missionaries. Two of them (at right) share how they feel strengthened and inspired by their experiences.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE WARD COURTESY OF NOLFO ZAMBRANO



CHANGED BY THE GOSPEL

I have been a member of the Church for five years. My parents are not members, but my uncle Jorge is the Young Men president, and he has been a great support. I am also grateful to my bishop for his constant support and encouragement.

I decided to get closer to the Church after one of the missionary days they had in the ward. It was one of my first experiences that motivated me to join the Church. As a deacon, teacher, and now a priest, my leaders have always supported and encouraged me to participate in all of the missionary work activities. I like the open houses, where I have the opportunity to share with others the blessing of being a member of Christ's Church. What inspires me most are the service

activities, where I have the opportunity to serve my neighbor as Jesus taught us to do.

A year ago, my younger brothers, Luis, age 15, and Israel, age 12, joined the Church. Together we have been working on the projects in Duty to God, and since their baptisms we have shared wonderful experiences working together. All of the young men in the ward are very close, and we support each other.

I know that baptism is the gate to enter the kingdom of heaven. When we are in the service of our fellow beings, we are in the service of God (see Mosiah 2:17). Missionary work blesses families, and I know that my life has changed because of the gospel.

Alvaro T., age 17

LEARNING MY RESPONSIBILITIES

As a deacon I learned my responsibilities thanks to the support of my parents and leaders and working with the goals in the Duty to God booklet. As a teacher I learned more by going to do visits as a home teacher, participating in the open houses on the missionary days, sharing banana bread, attending Mutual, and participating in ward and stake activities.

Now as a priest I get to focus more on missionary work. Working with the Young Men president and as an assistant to the bishop, I have learned much more about my responsibilities as a priesthood holder.

Our leaders constantly invite us to come with them and the full-time missionaries so that we can become familiar with missionary work. They also exhort us to read the scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon. All of these experiences motivate and prepare me to receive the higher priesthood and to serve a full-time mission.

Isaac G., age 17

YOUR MISSIONARY EXPERIENCES

How have you shared the gospel through small and simple means? Share your stories by visiting liahona.lds.org and clicking "Submit Your Work" or by emailing liahona@ldschurch.org.





A MIRACLE AT THE AIRPORT

One small prompting can change lives for the better.

By Thomas E. Robinson III

As a new missionary in Japan, I had a hard time understanding anyone, let alone getting to know them. It was difficult to learn to love people I didn't even know, especially when I couldn't understand what they were saying. But I made an effort to show my love for them, and I appreciated their efforts to reach out to me.

Each week, my companion and I received a loaf of homemade bread from a sister in the ward named Sister Senba. She showed her love for the missionaries by baking homemade bread and writing small but heartfelt notes.

I was touched that someone cared about me. I felt impressed to show my gratitude to her in some small way. I wrote her a note expressing how grateful I was for her and the sacrifices she and her family made to help the missionaries. We became friends, and I began to think of her as my "mother away from home."

Months passed. Early one Wednesday morning I received a call from my mission president, who asked me to transfer down to Okinawa. When I hung up the phone, I was filled with the most bittersweet feeling. I dreaded having to say my good-byes. Each phone call to tell members of the ward I would be leaving on the following day made my heart hurt. Saying good-bye to the people I had come to love so much was more difficult than I had imagined it would be.

As I finished these calls, I noticed that the only one who had not answered the phone was Sister Senba. I was sad I would not be able to say good-bye to a member who had become so close to my heart.

The next morning two other missionaries and I left for the airport. When we arrived at the ticket counter and tried to buy tickets, the workers told us that our cards had been declined. We did not have any money to pay for the tickets, and the flight was leaving in 10 minutes! The three of us were in a panic. We were about to miss the flight and be stranded at the airport for the day.

But all of my panic turned to comfort when I turned around and saw Sister Senba walk into the airport. I was shocked that she was there because she hadn't known what time our flight was. As she scrambled over to us, she smiled and gave us all bread to bring onto the plane.

As we explained to her that we were going to miss our flight, she became saddened. None of us knew what to do. Then Sister Senba began rummaging through her purse, looking for something that could help us. She jumped happily into the air when she found a small envelope in her purse in which, weeks ago, she had placed ¥50,000—the exact amount of money we needed. She gave us the

money, and we were able to get our tickets in time. We thanked her with every ounce of gratitude our souls could muster, said good-bye, and rushed onto the plane.

After the plane took off, my fellow missionary turned to me and said, “Isn't she amazing?! *That* was a miracle!”

I then realized how truly miraculous it really was. He then said, “What does your note say?” I saw he was reading a note that was with the bread Sister Senba had given him. As I realized I had one too, I pulled out the note and read a small piece of paper personally addressed to me, which immediately made my eyes swell with tears. It said, “I love you! Please don't forget me! I will never forget you!”

At that moment I felt the Spirit more strongly than I ever have before. Sister Senba's example taught me how important it is to follow the promptings of the Spirit—no matter how small or strange the prompting might seem. Through these promptings we have the power to change lives for the better. I know it was not a coincidence that she came to the airport. It *was* a miracle.

TRULY THE LORD USES SMALL MEANS TO BRING ABOUT HIS WORK.

Truly the Lord uses small means to bring about His work. How blessed we are as members of this Church to have His influence in our lives. Let us all remain worthy to receive these promptings and bless the lives of the children of God. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

Editors' note: Sister Senba was promptly reimbursed by the mission.



“My mom works all day. How can I improve our relationship?”

Since you don't see your mom often, make sure that the time you do have together is used well. You could talk to your mom about how to do this. She wants a good relationship with you too and will help you work on it. Try asking her what she would appreciate: coming home to a clean house? doing an activity together? just talking with you? As you regularly do activities your mom appreciates, your relationship will improve.

Of course, you could plan some fun activities to do together, but any meaningful time together—such as washing the dishes or reading the scriptures—can be a great way to build your relationship.

Also plan time for communication. Understanding one another is a key ingredient in good relationships. One thing to discuss is how your mom's work schedule will affect your relationship with her. You can avoid misunderstandings if you talk about your expectations as well as your mom's.

Prayer will help. Families are important to Heavenly Father, so He can inspire you to know how to improve your relationship with your mom. Don't ignore a prompting to do something that seems small (see Alma 37:6). A hug and a smile, for example, can make a big difference.



Write a Note

Even if you have very little time together, you can still express your love to your mother.

Write her thoughtful, secret notes. As she reads them at work, she will think of you. Do as much as you can for her. Think about her more often and pray for her. Ask the Lord to inspire you and prompt you regarding how you can improve your relationship.

Irinka E., age 20, Odessa, Ukraine

Seek to Understand Her

Try to understand her situation, because she works for your benefit. You can begin by helping with things at home, like cleaning the house, helping your siblings, and cooking. You also can share scriptures with your mom, pray together, and do activities that you like to do together.

Morony M., age 18, Chihuahua, Mexico



Have a Special Sunday

On some Sundays we have a special lunch or dinner with a new dessert, we talk, and at

the end we sing hymns. This brings us together and helps us be better friends!

Rebeca N., age 12, São Paulo, Brazil

Try an Experiment

We arrange time to be together: having family home evening, playing games, going to the beach, having lunch together. All of this helps to

keep the flame of a good relationship alive. When we disagree, we avoid criticizing. I know that sometimes I ask not to do housework, but this contributes to disharmony in the home. Since I began this experiment—complaining less, lowering my voice, helping more with housework, and talking more with my mother—a sweet spirit has developed in our home and we cooperate more.

Glenda C., age 18, Bahia, Brazil



Help at Home

Do some extra chores around the house. Your mom has been working all day. If she has less work to do when she gets home, she'll probably be happier and have more time to talk and do things with you. While you are talking, you can ask about her day at work. It will show her that you care, and it will open doors for other topics of discussion, allowing you to grow closer.

Heather B., age 18, Oregon, USA

Find Something You Both Like to Do

My mum's relationship with me skyrocketed when I said, "I want to spend more time with you, but I don't know what to do or when to do it." Playing board games happens to be our favorite pastime. So we set aside a time together to play, laugh, and make memories. When you are open with your parents, eventually they become your best companions. You

will be able to talk to them about anything, and you will be sure of an honest answer. That is the sign of a mature relationship.

Ephraim S., age 15, New South Wales, Australia

Read Scriptures Together

Both of you could set a goal to read together every day, even just five minutes, from the Book of Mormon or any other Church book. It will strengthen your relationship and nourish you with the word of God so you can be ready to face each day. Remember also to pray to God and ask for His help. I know He hears you and loves you.

Laura M., age 19, Córdoba, Argentina



LEARN FROM YOUR MOTHER

"Please look to your faithful mothers for a pattern to follow. Model yourselves

after *them*, not after celebrities whose standards are not the Lord's standards and whose values may not reflect an eternal perspective. Look to your mother. Learn from her strengths, her courage, and her faithfulness. Listen to her. She may not be a whiz at texting; she may not even have a Facebook page. But when it comes to matters of the heart and the things of the Lord, she has a wealth of knowledge."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Mothers and Daughters," Ensign or Liahona, May 2010, 19.

UPCOMING QUESTION

"My parents just got divorced. I'm angry that they have broken up our family. How do I forgive them?"

Submit your answer and, if desired, a high-resolution photograph by September 10, 2014, at liahona.lds.org, by email to liahona@ldschurch.org, or by mail (see address on page 3).

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

The following information and permission must be included in your email or letter: (1) full name, (2) birth date, (3) ward or branch, (4) stake or district, (5) your written permission, and, if you are under age 18, your parent's written permission (email is acceptable) to publish your response and photograph.





By Bonnie L. Oscarson
Young Women
General President

DEFY GRAVITY

GO FORWARD WITH FAITH

As you keep moving forward, you can stay upright even when outside forces try to pull you down.

I received my first two-wheel bicycle when I was eight years old. With the help of my older brother and father, I began the rather scary process of figuring out how to ride it. The other kids in the neighborhood made it look so easy and natural as they zoomed up and down the street on their bikes. I perched on the bike seat—which seemed to be at least 10 feet (3 m) above the ground—and realized there was absolutely nothing to keep me from falling over and proving that the law of gravity was alive and well.

As I tried riding, I learned quickly that if I wanted to stay balanced, I had to keep pedaling. When I first sat on the seat, speed was the last thing I wanted to add to the already daunting equation. But I very soon understood the wisdom and the physics involved in moving forward. As long as I kept

pedaling, I could stay upright and avoid the rough concrete just waiting to take the skin off my arms and legs. Soon I was zipping around the neighborhood with my friends.

Just as those who keep pedaling a bike can stay upright despite gravity's influence, those who are guided by the Holy Spirit in all they do can withstand the influence of the adversary.

So it is with living the gospel and the standards in *For the Strength of Youth*. It takes faith to believe that if we consistently follow the counsel

of the First Presidency as outlined in that booklet, our lives will be balanced and steady. We will be led where we want to go.

We need to keep moving forward to avoid falling. To do that, we should consistently and faithfully do certain actions:

- Pray morning and night.
- Study the scriptures daily.
- Attend Church meetings and partake of the sacrament worthily.
- Serve those around us.
- Be worthy to attend the temple.

All of these actions keep us moving forward in the right direction.

That's why reading and being familiar with the standards described in *For the Strength of Youth* will help ensure we are making choices consistent with God's standards. Living these principles and keeping the commandments



invite the Holy Ghost to be our constant companion. Just as those who keep pedaling a bike can stay upright despite gravity's influence, those who are guided by the Holy Spirit in all they do can withstand the influence of the adversary.

What are the destinations you have in mind as you pedal forward? For all young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, preparing now for a full-time mission is important in forward growth. For all youth, being prepared to go to the temple and receive the endowment by making and keeping sacred covenants should also be a primary goal.

As the message from the First Presidency at the beginning of *For the Strength of Youth* says: "In all that you do, stay focused on the temple. In the temple you will receive the greatest of all the Lord's blessings, including marriage for time and all eternity."¹

Receiving the covenant of eternal marriage in the house of the Lord and becoming righteous husbands, wives, fathers, and mothers may seem far down the road, but the time to begin preparing is now. All of these things lead to the most glorious and grand destination of all—eternal life with our Heavenly Father.

One of my favorite scriptures sums up what we need to do in order to keep moving toward our goals: "Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life" (2 Nephi 31:20).

Just as I learned as an eight-year-old girl that I needed to keep pedaling

and moving forward in order to defy gravity and keep my balance on my bicycle, it is important for all of us to keep moving forward with faith, trusting in the counsel of living prophets and a loving Heavenly Father to keep us from falling. Some of our destinations are just down the road while others will take a lifetime of faithful living to achieve. The promises of what lies at the end of the road, if we are faithful, are certain and glorious and well worth the ride. ■

NOTE

1. *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), ii.



SUNDAY LESSONS

This Month's Topic:
**Marriage and
Family**



MARRIAGE IS WORTH IT

"It is so rewarding to be married. Marriage is wonderful. In time you begin to think alike and have the same ideas and impressions. You have times when you are extremely happy, times of testing, and times of trial, but the Lord guides you through all of those growth experiences together."

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Eternal Blessings of Marriage," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2011, 96.

WHY MARRIAGE IS AWESOME!

We love being married, and here's why.

By Ben and Rachel Nielsen

After our first date, we both knew we wanted to go on a second date. Ben wanted to go on another date because Rachel was friendly and fun to talk to. Rachel wanted to go on another date because Ben was a gentleman and was still smiling after *all* of his well-laid plans fell through. After the second date, plus many more dates and prayers after that, we fell in love and decided to get married in the Sacramento California Temple.

The wedding day was absolutely perfect, and we have loved being married ever since. The world may see marriage differently, but we know that “no other relationship of any kind can bring as much joy, generate as much good, or produce as much personal refinement.”¹ Marriage is awesome, and here's why.

FROM BEN: A Teammate

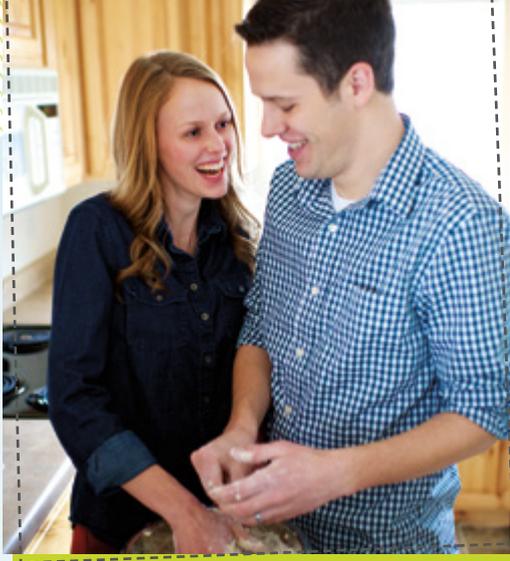
During my mission in Brazil, I grew to love football. One thing that I love most about this sport is having teammates and learning how to work together with my team. Rachel is a fantastic teammate. She helps me achieve my goals, joins me in making important decisions, and is there for me when I have trouble.

When we were sealed in the temple, we promised to “help one another as equal partners.”² Rachel and I strive to support each other in everything we do, and it's great to know that I always have a reliable teammate.

FROM RACHEL: Expressions of Love

Let's face it, girls (and boys), it's nice to know that someone loves you. And when you're married, you have chances to share and receive love every day! When I was talking to my parents about the possibility of marrying Ben, my dad said, “Whomever you choose to marry, I want him to frequently and sincerely express his love for you like Elder Richard G. Scott did for his wife.”³ I listened to Dad.

I decided to marry Ben, and he has always made an effort to express his love to me in small and big ways. During my senior year of college, I worked for months to prepare, apply, and interview for a prestigious internship. And when I finally heard that I got the job, I came home and saw a vase full of flowers from my husband. He knew how hard I had worked and how much the internship meant to me. At other times, he'll hide my favorite drink and a love note in the fridge before he heads out for a weekend Scout camp. And every day, he'll do the dishes and make me laugh. Ben is great at expressing his love for me, and that brings both of us great joy.



FROM BEN: More Enjoyment

Dating Rachel is so much fun. In fact, we make sure that we still frequently go on dates even as a married couple. After we first met, we found that we enjoy many of the same activities: walking through parks, attending plays, watching sporting events, eating new and different food, listening to music, and so much more. I loved doing these things before I met Rachel, but they're even more fun now that we get to share them together. When you're married, you have someone to enjoy life with—and that makes life awesome.

FROM RACHEL: An Eternal Missionary Companion

Before I met Ben, I was nearing the age of missionary service and had seriously considered serving a full-time mission. But then Ben entered my life, and I knew that Heavenly Father had a different plan for me.

When Ben and I got engaged, relatives who knew about my thoughts to serve a mission asked me about my choice, and I would tell them, "I decided that I wanted to pick my own missionary companion—and stay with him for eternity."

When you're married, you and your spouse have the chance to participate in the work of salvation together. Ben and I have found great joy in building a Christ-centered home, studying and living the gospel together, serving

in the Church, and inviting others to come unto Christ. As we work together to build the kingdom of God, we grow closer, our love deepens, and life is more fulfilling.

TAKE IT FROM US

Despite what the world may say, marriage *is* awesome and *is* worth making a priority. When you're married, you have a teammate, you give and receive love, you enjoy life more fully, and you have someone to build the kingdom of God with. All of that brings us great joy, and because we were sealed in the temple, we can have this joy forever! If we keep our covenants, we will be together for eternity and receive the crowning blessings of the priesthood. We "have found in marriage the richest fulfillment of human existence."⁴ ■

The authors live in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. L. Whitney Clayton, "Marriage: Watch and Learn," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 83.
2. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129.
3. See Richard G. Scott, "The Eternal Blessings of Marriage," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 96.
4. James E. Faust, "Enriching Your Marriage," *Ensign*, Apr. 2007, 6; *Liahona*, Apr. 2007, 4.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Things to Ponder for Sunday

- What qualities and attitudes make for the strongest and happiest marriages and families?
- What are you doing now that will help your future marriage and family stay strong and happy?

Things You Might Do

- Share with some friends your goal of marrying and having a family, and tell them why.
- In church, share why you are looking forward to marriage and family and how you are preparing for them.



By Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles are special witnesses of Jesus Christ.

Is it enough for now if I only *believe* the Church is true?



You have more faith than you think you do.

Belief is always the first step toward knowing something.

Hold fast to what you already know and stand strong until more knowledge comes.

Jesus Christ Himself said, "Be not afraid, only believe" (see Mark 5:36).

From "Lord, I Believe," Ensign or Liahona, May 2013, 93–95.

“Increase your faith.
Proclaim your faith!
Let your faith show!”

Elder Russell M. Nelson
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



I Felt the Holy Ghost

By Yichen, age 6, Taiwan

I often asked my parents what it means to “feel the Holy Ghost.” I had heard them talk about it, but I was not sure what the feeling was like. Mom told me it was a very good feeling, but I still wasn’t sure what that meant.

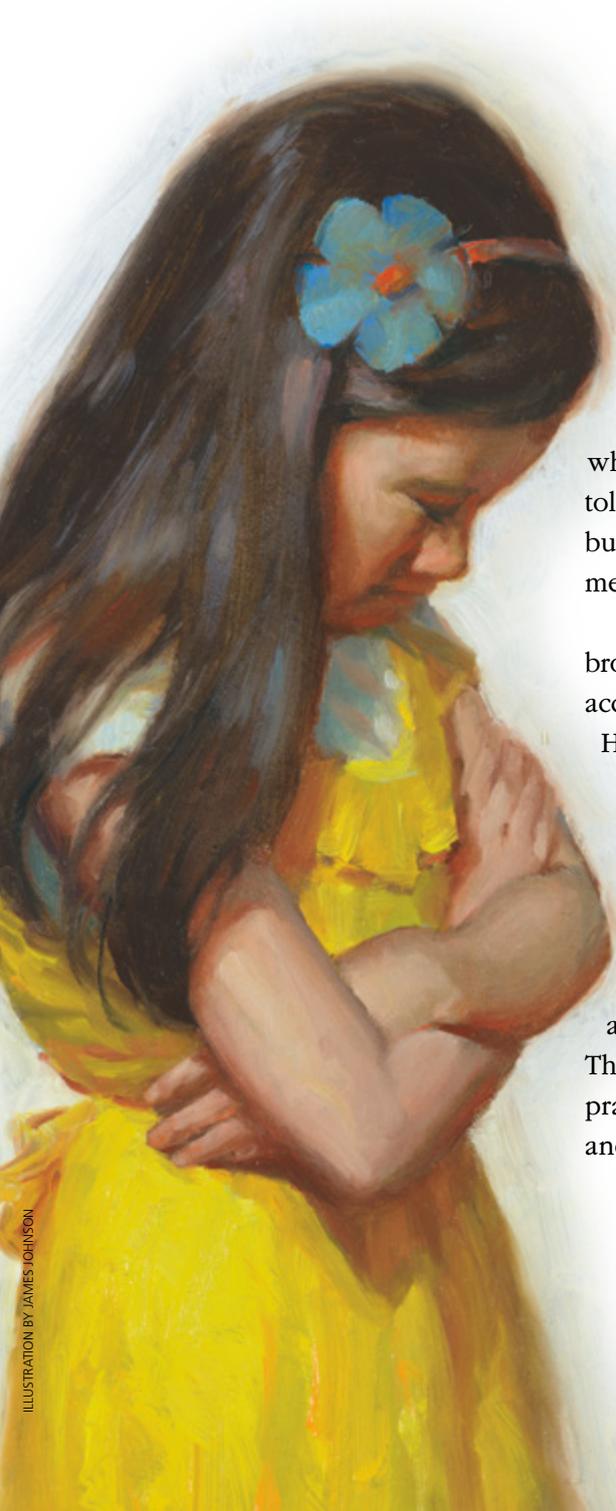
One morning my one-year-old brother was running around and accidentally hit his head on a heater. He had a big cut on his head. He cried, and he was bleeding. I was very scared and worried. My mom took care of the cut and put a bandage on it. Then she took me to school.

At school I was still scared and worried about my brother. Then I remembered that I could pray. I went into the bathroom and sincerely prayed to Heavenly

Father and asked Him to bless my brother. After the prayer I was no longer scared. I felt a very peaceful feeling, and I went back to my classroom.

On the way home that day, I told my mother what had happened. She joyfully told me that the warm, peaceful feeling I had was the Holy Ghost comforting me. She said that usually the Holy Ghost does not talk to us like other people talk to us. Instead He gives us a peaceful feeling.

After that I noticed other times when I felt the Holy Ghost. When my dad gave my mom a blessing, I closed my eyes and tried to be very reverent. Then I felt that warm feeling again. I know that in order to feel the Holy Ghost more easily, we need to be reverent. ■



Isa's Blessing

By Mackenzie Van Engelenhoven

Based on a true story

"Mine is a home where ev'ry hour is blessed by the strength of priesthood power" (Children's Songbook, 190).

"Is something bothering you?" Mom asked Isa as they rode the tram home from church.

Isa stared out at the canals that crisscrossed Amsterdam's streets. "My Primary teacher said that having the priesthood in your home is a blessing," Isa said. "But Dad doesn't have the priesthood, so we can't be blessed."

"We can still have the priesthood in our home, even if your dad isn't a member of the Church," Mom said. "There are lots of worthy priesthood holders in the ward who can help you. What about Brother Van Leeuwen, our home teacher?"

Isa liked Brother Van Leeuwen. He always brought *stroopwafels*, Isa's favorite cookie, and talked with her about science, her best subject. But at church other children told about their dads giving them priesthood blessings when they were sick or upset. Isa couldn't ask her dad for a blessing.

"I love Dad," Isa said. "But I wish he had the priesthood."

When they got home, Dad was in the kitchen cooking dinner. "How

was church?" he called to them.

Isa didn't reply. Instead, she went into her bedroom and flopped down on the bed. She wished things were a little different.

The next week Isa had to take a big test at school. Every child in the Netherlands has to take a test when they are 12 years old to determine where they go to school next year. Even though Isa had been studying hard and was prepared, she was very nervous. The night before, her stomach felt like it was tied in knots. She couldn't sleep. As she tossed and turned in bed, she remembered the lesson from Primary about asking for a priesthood blessing if you were afraid. Even though her dad couldn't give her a blessing, she knew Heavenly Father would help her if she asked.

Isa got out of bed and walked into the living room. Mom was at work, but Dad was on the couch watching TV.

"Is everything OK?" Dad asked.

"I'm really nervous about the test tomorrow," Isa said. "Do you think we could call Brother Van Leeuwen and ask him to give me a blessing?"

"I think that's a good idea," Dad said. "Let me give him a call."

Soon Brother Van Leeuwen and his son Jaan came over and gave Isa a blessing. Brother Van Leeuwen asked Heavenly Father to help Isa not be nervous for the test and to help her do well. While Brother Van Leeuwen gave Isa the blessing, Dad sat on the couch and folded his arms and closed his eyes.

After the blessing Isa felt much better. Her stomach wasn't so tight anymore, and she was even a little sleepy. "Good luck tomorrow," Brother Van Leeuwen said as they left. "You've worked very hard, and I know Heavenly Father will help you do well."

"I'm proud of you for having faith," Dad said to Isa as he tucked





"We can live every hour 'blessed by the strength of priesthood power,' whatever our circumstance."

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Power in the Priesthood," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 92.

her back into bed. "Even if I'm not a member of the Church, I'm glad that you believe in God, and I hope you know that I do too."

"Thank you, Dad," Isa said, and he kissed her on the cheek.

As she snuggled under her covers, Isa felt happy and peaceful. She was grateful to have a dad who loved her. She was glad her dad believed in Heavenly Father and Jesus. And she knew the priesthood could always bless her and her home. ■

The author lives in Massachusetts, USA.





By Elder Kazuhiko
Yamashita
Of the Seventy

A Sheepish Lion

“I am a child of God, and He has sent me here” (Children’s Songbook, 2).

One of my favorite stories is the story of Lambert the Sheepish Lion. It became famous in a cartoon some years ago.

Lambert was a lion cub that had lived with a flock of sheep from the time he was born. Because of that, he thought he was a sheep. One spring night Lambert and the flock were sleeping peacefully. Suddenly Lambert heard the scary howl of a wolf in the distance. Because

Lambert thought he was a sheep, he began to tremble.

The howl grew louder, and the wolf came closer and began dragging one of the sheep away. Suddenly Lambert felt a strong feeling inside that he had never felt before. Like lightning, he ran toward the wolf to save the sheep!

Just then Lambert realized something. “I am not a sheep. I am not the son of a sheep. I am the son of a lion!” Lambert thought. When he chased off the wolf and protected the sheep, he knew his true nature.

You are a child of God, and He loves you. Before we were born on earth, each one of us was a beloved spirit son or daughter in our Heavenly Father’s family. But many of us don’t realize this. If we know who we are, we can be like the lion and fight off bad things so that we can protect others and not lose our way.

I am thankful for the wonderful gifts of the gospel and the plan of salvation. I am thankful that we know who we are so we can be strong—just like Lambert. ■

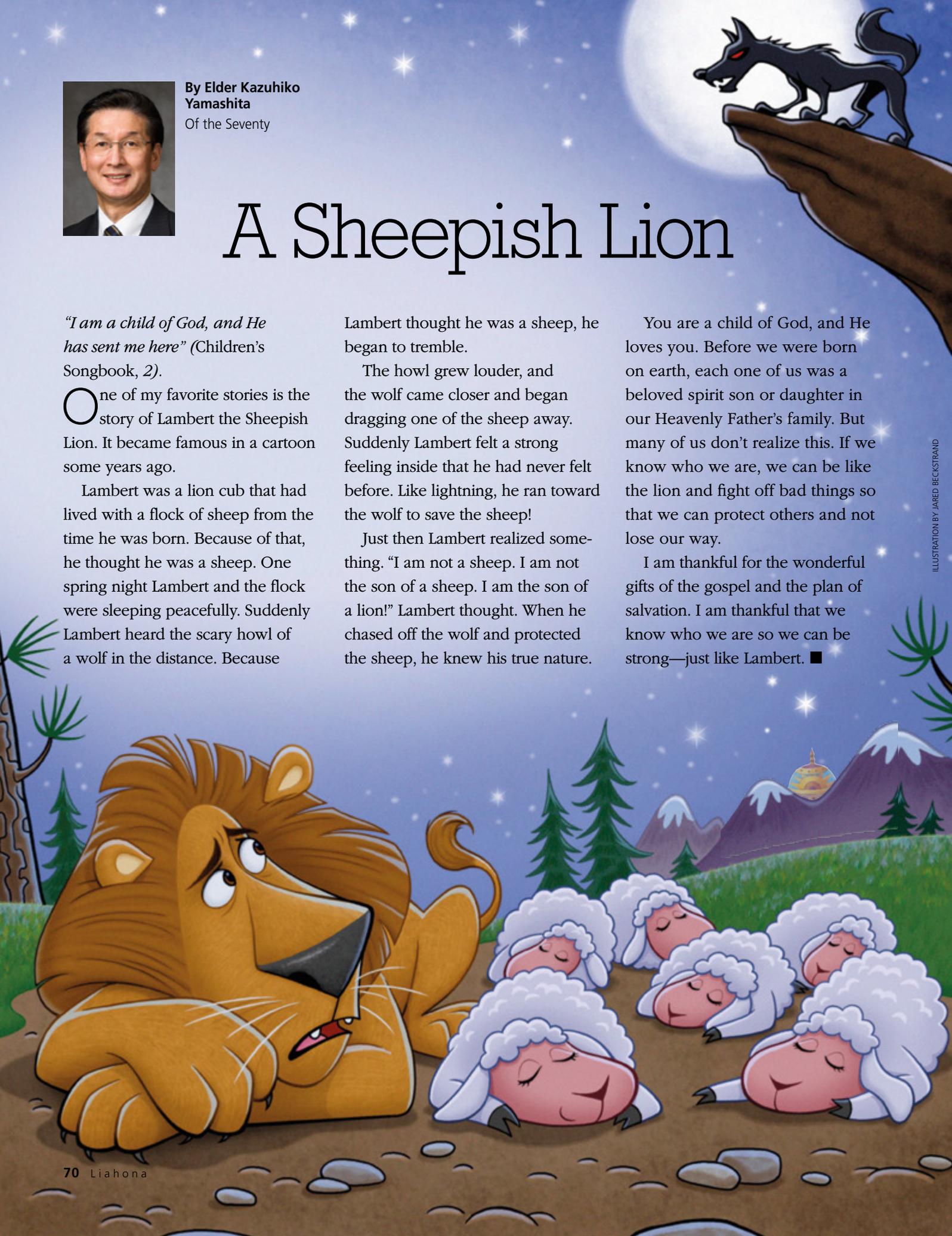
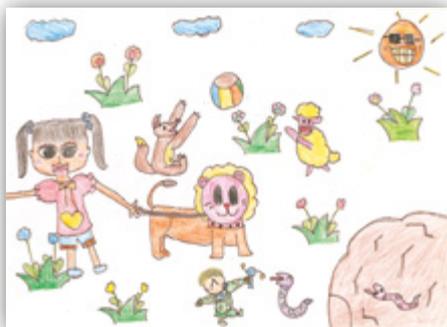


ILLUSTRATION BY JARED BECKSTRAND

OUR PAGE



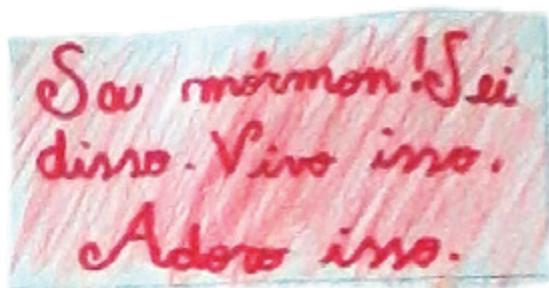
I love all things created by Jesus Christ.
You-en, age 6, Taiwan



2 Nephi 30:12–15 describes the Millennium. I hope I can meet the Savior and play with the animals when the Millennium comes.
You-rou, age 10, Taiwan



My drawing is about the blessings of keeping the Sabbath day holy (see D&C 59:16). I love the animals.
You-ren, age 8, Taiwan



I'm a Mormon! I know it. I live it. I love it,
by Laura N., age 8, Brazil



The Boy and the Sea, by Helaman G., age 11, Mexico; prizewinner in an art contest sponsored by the secretary of the navy



When I went with my father to the Buenos Aires Argentina Temple, I got to see many sacred and beautiful rooms inside.



It was an open house, so many people could see the temple. Soon I will be old enough to enter the temple and do baptisms for the dead. I love Jesus Christ and my family.

Guido R., age 10, Argentina



*Mālō e
lelei!**

I'm Kaloni from Tonga

*I enjoy going to
the beach with my
family and playing
in the sand and in
the sea.*



*I like to dance, play sports, and
paint. I helped make a mural
about the plan of salvation for
the seminary building.*

*On weekdays I get
dressed in my school
uniform. Then my family
walks to school together.
My dad works at the high
school, and my mom is a
seminary teacher. I have
an older sister named
Dorothy and an older
brother named Nelson.*





My mom and auntie decided to start a family project to earn money for all of us cousins to go on our missions someday. We make chicken kabobs and 'otai and sell them at the farmers' market every Saturday.

From an interview by Amie Jane Leavitt

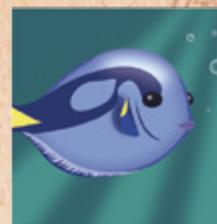
Meet Kaloni from the Kingdom of Tonga. Her islands are known as the Friendly Islands.

Have you ever had a family picnic outside on Christmas Day? Kaloni's family likes to picnic on the beach at Christmastime. Since it's summertime in December in the southern hemisphere, picnics at Christmas are no problem! Ten-year-old Kaloni likes to spend many fun holidays with her aunts, uncles, and cousins. ■

* "Hello, friends!" in Tongan.



I want to go to college and become a seminary teacher like my mom. I also want to go on a mission and marry in the temple. But in the meantime, I'll just enjoy living in a beautiful island paradise.



I LOVE TO SEE THE TEMPLE



On our walk to school, my family passes the temple. I feel peace when I see the temple. I can't wait until I can go inside someday.

The Nuku'alofa Tonga Temple was dedicated in 1983. It was renovated and rededicated in 2007.



READY TO GO!

Kaloni's suitcase is packed with some of her favorite things. Which of these things would you pack in your suitcase?



Wholesome Activities Will Strengthen My Family



By Jennifer Maddy

Lucas was bored. He wandered around the house to find someone to play with him. His brother, Ben, was playing on the computer. His sister, Sophie, was texting her friend. Mom was looking through the mail, and Dad was reading.

"It's boring around here," Lucas said.

Dad looked up from his book. "What do you mean?"

"We don't do anything together," Lucas said. "We're all doing our own thing."

Dad closed his book. "You're right," he said. "I'll gather the family together, and we'll do something fun."

Lucas grinned. "Great!"

A few minutes later Lucas's family sat together, wondering what to do. Sophie wanted to text her friend. Ben wanted to keep playing his computer game.

"My friend Paul likes to go on walks

with his family," Lucas said. "And Alexander's family likes to play sports."

But Sophie didn't want to go outside in the hot weather, and Ben couldn't play sports because he had hurt his ankle.

"Those are fun things for your friends to do, Lucas," Mom said, "but what does *our* family like to do?"

Ben said he liked to play board games. Sophie said she liked to read. Lucas said he liked racing cars.

"Let's pick one of those things to do right now," Dad said. "Why don't we play a board game first?"

Soon they had all gathered around a game and started to play. After a while Sophie put away her phone. Ben stopped looking toward the computer. By the end of the game, everyone was smiling, but Lucas's smile was the biggest. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

SONG

- "The Family" (*Children's Songbook*, 194)

IDEAS FOR FAMILY TALK

The prophet and apostles tell us it's important to spend time together as a family. Doing things with your family will help you learn about each other and have fun together. What does your family like to do? Talk about how those activities help you grow closer together. You could make a goal to do one new activity as a family this month.

A MONTH OF FUN

Plan with your family what activities you would like to do during the month. As you do an activity that's shown here, cut out the picture and tape or glue it on the day you do it. Make blank ones to add your own activities!



AUGUST 2014

					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						



Play a game



Take a walk



Go to the temple



Go on a bike ride



Go swimming



Have family home evening



Have a sing-along



Play a sport



Read a story

Friends for Eli

By Jane Nickerson

Based on a true story



Eli tried to be a good friend. But Will wouldn't play with him.
"If you play with Eli, you can't play with me," Will told Jake and Danny.



Eli asked Will nicely, but Will said, "No. Go away."



Eli tried to join in when the other boys played chase. But no one would chase Eli.



One day Eli brought some toys to school. A new girl named Emma watched him playing.

“Do you want to play with me?” Eli asked.

“Yes,” Emma said. “That looks like fun.”



Jake and Danny asked, "Can we play too?"
"Yes," Eli said.



Will looked lonely.
"Come on, Will," Eli said. "You can play too." ■

Sharing Toys

Find the toys at the playground. Then count how many children are sharing each toy.



REPLACING MY FEAR WITH FAITH

By Katherine Nelson

When she saw me, my best friend knew immediately that something was wrong. “We broke up,” I told her quietly. I was coming home after a long conversation with the young man I had been dating. Although we were sad to part, we both agreed that it was right for us.

But as the weeks went by, I started to feel unsure about my decision. What if I never found anyone else to date and never married? What if I had made too big a deal out of our incompatibility?

I felt so lonely and unsure that I even considered seeing whether he was willing to give our relationship another try. I was, as Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described, “dissatisfied with present circumstances and [had] only dismal views of the future.”¹

One evening a few weeks after our breakup, I was reading about the Savior’s Resurrection. The Gospel of Luke recounts that on the third day after the Savior had been laid to rest, faithful followers went to anoint His body with spices. But they found that the stone covering the tomb had been rolled away and the body was gone. Two angels then appeared to



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them and said, “Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen” (Luke 24:5–6).

The angels’ question struck me suddenly with powerful force. I had never thought about how the visitors to Jesus’s grave might have felt, realizing they were looking in the wrong place for their Savior. I had never thought about what a challenge it must have been for them to believe that Jesus had left behind the decay of the tomb and had risen in glory.

The scripture spoke a gentle rebuke. I realized that, like the Savior’s friends, I was looking in the wrong place for comfort. Wallowing in the past and “yearn[ing] vainly for yesterdays”² was not consoling me or motivating me to fruitful action. I realized I needed to stop looking in the tomb of past experiences. I needed to replace my fear with faith and trust that the Savior could create life from the experiences of my past.

I think of that scripture often when I find myself regretting choices I’ve made or yearning to return to moments left behind. Because of the Savior, we can begin again. Because of the Savior, we can “look back to claim the embers from glowing experiences but not the ashes,” knowing that “the past is to be learned from but not lived in.”³ Rather than wasting time in regret, we can look to the future with faith. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Remember Lot’s Wife” (Brigham Young University devotional, Jan. 13, 2009), 3; speeches.byu.edu.
2. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Remember Lot’s Wife,” 2.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Remember Lot’s Wife,” 2.



What choices lead to happiness in families?

“Heavenly Father has made each of us unique. No two of us have exactly the same experiences. No two families are alike. So it is not surprising that advice about how to choose happiness in family life is hard to give. Yet a loving Heavenly Father has set the same path to happiness for all of His children. Whatever our personal characteristics or whatever will be our experiences, there is but one plan of happiness. That plan is to follow all the commandments of God.”

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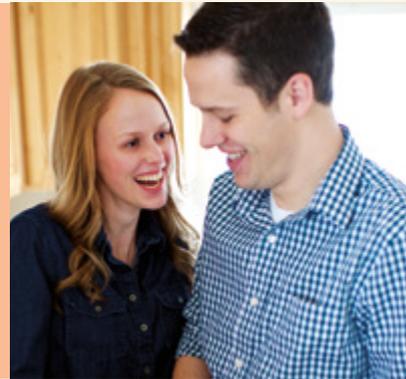
This time of your life is full of rapid change, but you can still make the best of your circumstances regardless of your time frame.

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WHY MARRIAGE IS **AWESOME!**

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FOR CHILDREN



A Sheepish Lion

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Lambert the lion thought he was a sheep. Then a scary wolf showed up.

