

# Liahona



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*"Ye shall know them  
by their fruits. Do men  
gather grapes of thorns,  
or figs of thistles?"*

*"Even so every good  
tree bringeth forth  
good fruit; but a corrupt  
tree bringeth forth evil  
fruit. . . ."*

*"Wherefore by their fruits  
ye shall know them."*

Matthew 7:16-17, 20



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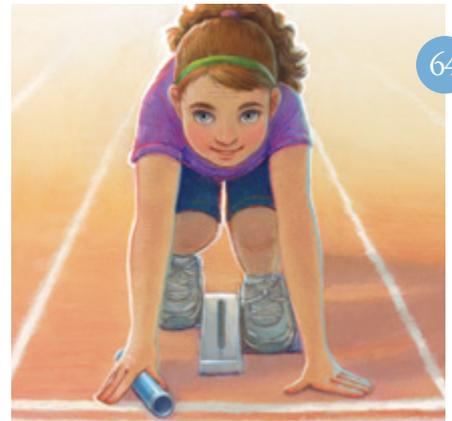
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# Family Home Evening Ideas

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



**"Disciples and the Defense of Marriage,"** page 18: Consider how you can be a "defender of marriage" in your own home. Have you ever had a conversation with your children about their future marriages or about how the Church's view of marriage differs from the world's? Have you ever shared your feelings about marriage with your children? Have you taught them the teachings of the prophets and apostles concerning marriage? During a family home evening, consider discussing these topics, using "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129).

**"Flood the Earth through Social Media,"** page 48: After reading this article, discuss as a family how you will, as Elder Bednar says, "use social media to convey gospel messages," following the guidelines he suggests. You could share quotes from General Authorities on your Facebook page or post pictures of your favorite scriptures to Instagram. Your family could even come up with your own hashtag to use when you post gospel-related pictures or quotes (just like the members who began the #LDSconf hashtag).

## IN YOUR LANGUAGE

The *Liahona* and other Church materials are available in many languages at [languages.lds.org](http://languages.lds.org).

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By President  
Thomas S. Monson

I have had the privilege of attending many cultural celebrations held in conjunction with temple dedications. I have loved all of them, including the most recent one I attended in Phoenix, Arizona, USA, last November.

Latter-day Saint youth who participate in cultural celebrations put on marvelous, memorable programs. Last year in Phoenix, just prior to the celebration, I told the participants, “You are children of light.”

I would like all of the youth of the Church to know that they are children of light. As such, they have a responsibility to be “as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15). They have a duty to share the truths of the gospel. They have a calling to stand as a temple beacon, reflecting gospel light to an increasingly dark world. They have a charge to keep their light aflame and burning brightly.

In order for us to be “an example of the believers” (1 Timothy 4:12), we ourselves must believe. We must develop the faith necessary to survive spiritually and to project a light for others. We must nurture our testimony until it becomes an anchor to our lives.

Among the most effective ways to gain and keep the faith we need today is to read and study the scriptures and to pray frequently and consistently. To the youth of the Church, I say, if you haven’t done so, develop now a habit of daily scripture study and prayer. Without these two essential practices, outside influences and the sometimes-harsh realities of life can dim or even extinguish your light.

The teenage years are not easy. They are prime years when Satan will tempt you and do his utmost to entice you from the path which will lead you back to your heavenly home. But as you read and pray and as you serve and obey,



# STAND AS A LIGHT

you will come to know better “the light which shineth in darkness” (D&C 6:21), our Exemplar and our strength—even the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Light we are to hold up to dispel the gathering darkness (see 3 Nephi 18:24).

With a strong testimony of the Savior and His restored gospel, you have limitless opportunities to shine. They surround you each day, in whatever circumstances you find yourselves. As you follow the example of the Savior, yours will be the opportunity to be a light, as it were, in the lives of those around you—whether they be members of your own family, classmates, co-workers, mere acquaintances, or total strangers.

When you are a light to the world, people around you will feel a special spirit that will make them want to associate with you and follow your example.

I plead with parents and leaders of our youth to help them stand firm for truth and righteousness. Help open wide to their view the gates of learning, of understanding, and of service in the kingdom of God. Build within them strength to resist the temptations of the world. Give



them the will to walk in virtue and faith, to be prayerful, and to look to heaven as their constant anchor.

To our youth, I say, our Heavenly Father loves you. May you feel also the love which Church leaders have for you. May you ever have a desire to serve your Heavenly Father and His Son. And may you always walk in truth and stand as a light among God's children. ■

#### TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

Consider discussing with those you teach what it means to be a “[child] of light.” What responsibilities does it entail? You could discuss times when their light has been particularly bright and what made it bright. Consider asking them to think of a specific person, such as a youth, a co-worker, or a member of their family, who may be in need of light. Then you could pray together about a way to share light with that person.



## YOUTH

### Beacon of Light

President Monson teaches that the youth of the Church “have a calling to stand as a temple beacon, reflecting gospel light to an increasingly dark world.” He gives a few ways you can do this:

- Share the gospel
- Believe
- Develop faith
- Be a light to others
- Nurture your testimony until it becomes an anchor to your life
- Read and study the scriptures



- Pray frequently and consistently
- Serve
- Obey

Consider rating yourself from 1 to 5 in each of these areas. For areas with a lower score, you could study these topics in the scriptures or search them on LDS.org. After you’ve studied these topics, you could think of ways you can strengthen these areas and set goals to do so.

## CHILDREN

### Shine Your Light

As a child of God, you’re a child of light. You can gain more light by following our Savior, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father love you and want you to shine for others and lead them to Christ. You can shine just by being you when you follow the commandments, like praying and reading scriptures. Fill the stars below with ideas of how you can shine for others as an example of Jesus Christ. The first two have been done for you. Color the stars.



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](http://reliefsociety.lds.org).

## Divine Attributes of Jesus Christ: Meek and Humble

This is part of a series of Visiting Teaching Messages featuring divine attributes of the Savior.

Jesus said, “He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth” (Luke 22:26–27).

“The Savior is our supreme example of the power of humility and submissiveness. After all, His submitting His will to the Father brought about the greatest, and even the most powerful, event in all of history. Perhaps some of the most sacred words in all the scriptures are simply, ‘Not my will, but thine, be done’ (Luke 22:42).”<sup>1</sup>

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we always seek to be like Him. “Meekness is vital for us to become more Christlike,” said Elder Ulisses Soares of the Seventy. Without it we won’t be able to develop other important virtues. Being meek does not mean weakness, but it does mean behaving with goodness and kindness, showing strength, serenity, healthy self-worth, and self-control.”<sup>2</sup> As we work to



develop this attribute, we will find that “humbly submitting our will to the Father brings us the empowerment of God—the power of humility. It is the power to meet life’s adversities, the power of peace, the power of hope, the power of a heart throbbing with a love for and testimony of the Savior Jesus Christ, even the power of redemption.”<sup>3</sup>

### Additional Scriptures

Matthew 26:39; John 5:30; Mosiah 3:19; Helaman 3:35

### NOTES

1. Richard C. Edgley, “The Empowerment of Humility,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2003, 99.
2. Ulisses Soares, “Be Meek and Lowly of Heart,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 9.
3. Richard C. Edgley, “The Empowerment of Humility,” 99.

## Faith, Family, Relief



### From the Scriptures

One of the sweetest and most powerful moments of Christ’s ministry was when He washed the feet of His disciples. “He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded” (John 13:4–5).

As the Savior introduced this ordinance, the disciples may have been overwhelmed that their Lord and Master knelt before them and performed so meek a service. Jesus then explained the lessons He wanted them and all of us to learn:

“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.

“For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you” (John 13:14–15).

### Consider This

How can having humility help us love as the Savior did?

# APRIL 2015 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 2015 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 HIGHLIGHT



## A Sacred Sabbath

“How do we *hallow* the Sabbath day? In my much younger years, I studied the work of others who had compiled lists of thing to do and things *not* to do on the Sabbath. It wasn’t until later that I learned from the scriptures that my conduct and my attitude on the Sabbath constituted a *sign* between me and my Heavenly Father. With that understanding, I no longer needed lists of dos and don’ts. When I had to make a decision whether or not

an activity was appropriate for the Sabbath, I simply asked myself, ‘What *sign* do I want to give to God?’ That question made my choices about the Sabbath day crystal clear. . . .

“Faith in God engenders a love for the Sabbath; faith in the Sabbath engenders a love for God. A sacred Sabbath truly is a delight.”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Sabbath Is a Delight,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2015, 130, 132.

## PROPHETIC PROMISE



## Fast Offerings Change Hearts

“In the Church today we are offered the opportunity to fast once a month and give a generous fast offering through our bishop or branch president for the benefit of the poor and the needy. . . .

“. . . Part of your fast offering and mine this month will be used to help someone, somewhere, whose relief the Lord will feel as if it were His own.

“Your fast offering will do more than help feed and clothe bodies. It will heal and change hearts. The fruit of a free-will offering may be the desire in the heart of the recipient to reach out to others in need. That happens across the world.”

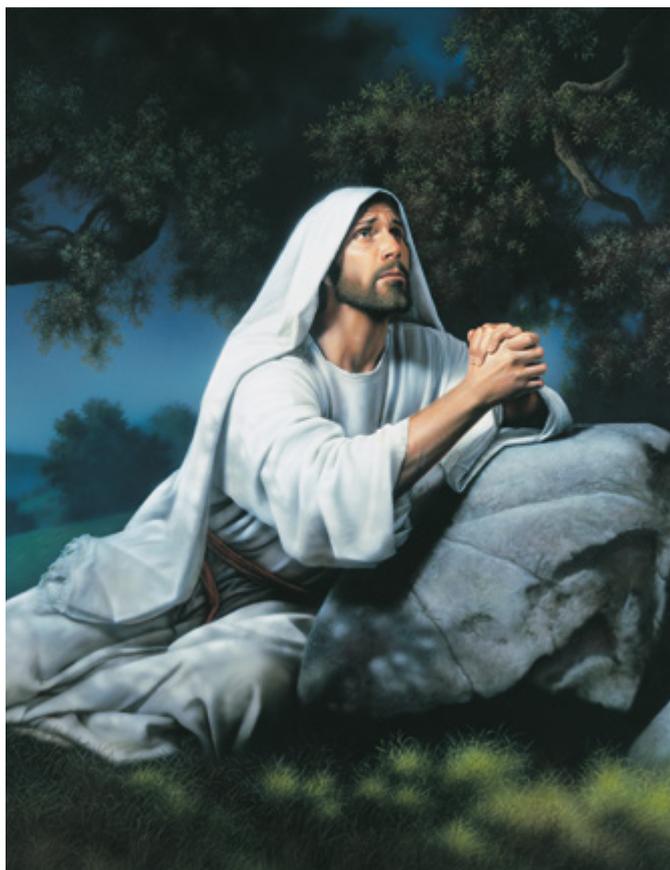
President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Is Not This the Fast That I Have Chosen?” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2015, 23, 24.

## THE PLAN OF SALVATION

"At least four things are needed for the success of this divine plan," said Elder D. Todd Christofferson. Find the answers in his talk, "Why Marriage, Why Family," 50.

1. "The Creation of the \_\_\_\_\_ as our dwelling place."
2. "With the Fall [of Adam and Eve] came an awareness of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and the God-given power to \_\_\_\_\_. Finally, the Fall brought about physical \_\_\_\_\_ needed to make our time in mortality temporary so that we would not live forever in our sins."
3. "We see the role of death in our Heavenly Father's plan, but that plan would become void without some way to overcome death in the end, both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Thus, a Redeemer, the Only Begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, suffered and died to atone for Adam and Eve's transgression, thereby providing \_\_\_\_\_ and immortality for all."
4. "God ordained that men and women should marry and give birth to children, thereby creating, in partnership with God, the physical bodies that are key to the \_\_\_\_\_ of mortality and \_\_\_\_\_ to eternal glory with Him."

Answers: 1. earth; 2. good, evil, choose, death; 3. physical, spiritual, resurrection; 4. test, essential



## ANSWERS FOR YOU

Each conference, prophets and apostles give inspired answers to questions Church members may have. Use your May 2015 issue or visit [conference.lds.org](http://conference.lds.org) to find answers to these questions:

- What is "godly fear," and how can it bless our lives? See David A. Bednar, "Therefore They Hushed Their Fears," 46.
- What are the most important religious traditions in the home that help children know they are loved and safe? See Quentin L. Cook, "The Lord Is My Light," 62.
- How does understanding the relationship of justice, love, and mercy help us understand Easter and the Atonement of Jesus Christ? See Jeffrey R. Holland, "Where Justice, Love, and Mercy Meet," 104.

To read, watch, or listen to general conference addresses, visit [conference.lds.org](http://conference.lds.org).

## WE BELIEVE IN BEING HUMBLE

*“The proud stand more in fear of men’s judgment than of God’s judgment. ‘What will men think of me?’ weighs heavier than ‘What will God think of me?’” —President Ezra Taft Benson*

When we become members of the Church of Jesus Christ, we covenant to always remember Him, take His name upon us, and keep His commandments (see D&C 20:77). Any sin prevents us from keeping this covenant, but there’s one sin, above all others, that we need to avoid because it leads to so many others: pride.

“Most of us think of pride as self-centeredness, conceit, boastfulness, arrogance, or haughtiness,” taught President Ezra Taft Benson

(1899–1994). “All of these are elements of the sin, but the heart, or core, is missing.” He said “the central feature of pride is enmity [hatred or hostility]—enmity toward God and enmity toward our fellowmen.”<sup>1</sup>

Hostility toward God “is in the spirit of ‘my will and not thine be done.’ . . . The proud cannot accept the authority of God giving direction to their lives. . . . The proud wish God would agree with them. They aren’t interested in changing their opinions to agree with God’s.”<sup>2</sup>

Enmity toward our fellowmen is manifested in many ways: “fault-finding, gossiping, back-biting, murmuring, living beyond our means, envying, coveting, withholding gratitude and praise that might lift another, and being unforgiving and jealous.”<sup>3</sup>

Pride hinders our progress, hurts our relationships, and limits the service we give. President Benson suggested this solution: “The antidote for pride is humility—meekness, submissiveness. It is the broken heart and contrite spirit.”<sup>4</sup> He taught that “humility responds to God’s will—to the fear of His judgments and to the needs of those around us. . . . Let us choose to be humble.”<sup>5</sup>

The following illustrations show ways we can choose to be humble. ■

The scriptures offer many warnings about pride, such as in Proverbs 16:18; Ezekiel 16:49–50; Doctrine and Covenants 23:1; 38:39.

### NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* (2014), 232.
2. *Teachings: Ezra Taft Benson*, 232.
3. *Teachings: Ezra Taft Benson*, 235.
4. *Teachings: Ezra Taft Benson*, 238.
5. *Teachings: Ezra Taft Benson*, 229, 238.



### THE MOST HUMBLE MAN

“The greatest, most capable, most accomplished man who ever walked this earth was also the most humble. He performed some of His most impressive service in private moments, with only a few observers, whom He asked to ‘tell no man’ what He had done [see Luke 8:56]. When

someone called Him ‘good,’ He quickly deflected the compliment, insisting that only God is truly good [see Mark 10:17–18]. Clearly the praise of the world meant nothing to Him. . . . We would do well to follow the example of our Master.”

**President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “On Being Genuine,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 83.**

We can show humility by:



Receiving counsel and correction.



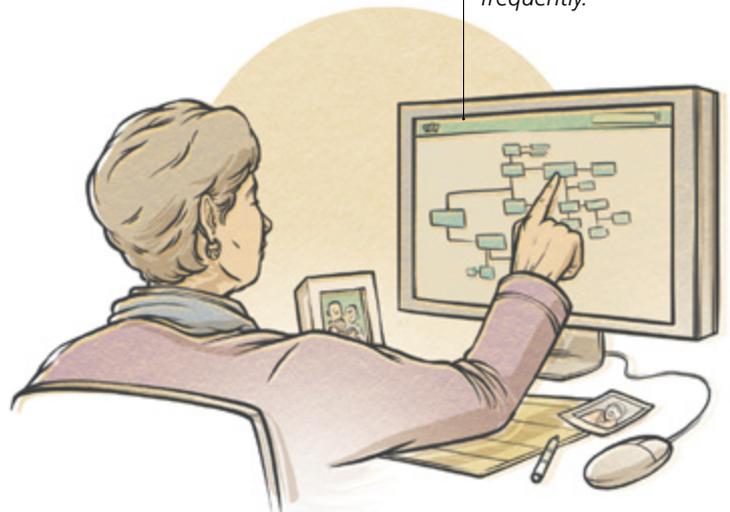
Giving selfless service.



Praying with real intent.



Serving a mission.



Doing family history work and attending the temple more frequently.

# NEWS OF THE CHURCH

Visit [news.lds.org](http://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, 2015. 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, President of

the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> ■

### 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



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Shayne M. Bowen  
**First Counselor**



Ian S. Ardern  
**President**



Allen D. Haynie  
**Second Counselor**

## South America Northwest



W. Christopher Waddell  
**First Counselor**



Juan A. Uceda  
**President**



Carlos A. Godoy  
**Second Counselor**

## South America South



Francisco J. Viñas  
**First Counselor**



Walter F. González  
**President**



José A. Teixeira  
**Second Counselor**

## A GLORIOUS REUNION

By Susan L. and C. Terry Warner

*Decades of separation and heartache ended when the Lord brought a father and a son together in the temple.*

It was a beautiful morning in April 2012 when John Ekow-Mensah entered the Accra Ghana Temple. The elderly brother, now in his 80s, had made the trip with a group of Saints from Nkawkaw, where he lived alone. The group planned to stay the night in nearby rooms for temple patrons and spend two days serving in the temple.

Seated inside the temple, Brother Ekow-Mensah was waiting to participate in initiatory ordinances when a younger man sat down beside him. The younger man, age 54, had planned to go through an endowment session that morning with his wife but, arriving too late for that session, he decided to do initiatory ordinances.

“Where are you from?” Brother Ekow-Mensah asked.

“Sekondi,” the man replied.

“What part of Sekondi?” Brother Ekow-Mensah asked.

“Ketan,” the younger one answered, “in the area where the schools are located.” As the conversation continued, the men both sensed where



these questions might be leading.

Moved by a growing sense of recognition, the younger man looked at Brother Ekow-Mensah. “You are my father,” he announced. “What is your name?”

“John Ekow-Mensah.”

“That is my name too,” the son replied.

After serving in the temple, the two men sat for a long time in the celestial room, reconnecting their lives and rekindling their love. Though everything Brother Ekow-Mensah Jr.



said and did was respectful and proper, he seemed not quite ready to embrace his father wholeheartedly—until he learned why his father had to leave and why he could not contact his family.

Nearly 50 years ago Brother Ekow-Mensah Sr. had married a woman whose grandmother—the oldest matriarch at that time—held sovereign power in their tribe. Sadly, the matriarch had been opposed to John’s marriage to her granddaughter. At her insistence the couple ultimately separated when their oldest son, John Jr., was just four or five years old. John Jr. had known

his great-grandmother as a strong, hard-working woman, not as the power that had deprived him of all association with his natural father for nearly 50 years.

Expulsion from the family essentially severed all ties.

Because of the lack of telephones or mail service, John Sr. had no way to keep contact with his family. His search for work took him many hours away. He lived in Mankessim from about 1963 to 1989, where he operated a small paint shop. From there he moved to Ada, where a woman whose building he was painting introduced him to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Brother Ekow-Mensah Sr. joined the Church in 1991.

Because Brother Ekow-Mensah Jr. was so young when his parents’ marriage dissolved, he didn’t know much about his heritage. Occasionally his mother remarked that he was a “carbon copy” of his father, but that was the extent of his knowledge.

After he grew up and married, John and his wife, Deborah, decided to find a church they could join. John was at the University of Ghana in Accra when he saw a *Liahona* magazine on a shelf. He picked it up and found himself interested in what it had to say. John noted the publisher: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

When John returned from school to his home in Sekondi, his wife was anxious to tell him of a church she

had learned about from a friend. She told him the name was The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. John told her this was the church he had read about in a magazine at the university.

John and Deborah were taught the gospel and baptized in 1999. A decade later they were sealed in the Accra Ghana Temple, and the three youngest of their five children were sealed to them.

Then in the temple in April 2012, tears came as the father and son recognized each other. Their joy was compounded by their understanding that they had separately joined the Church and found their way into the temple that beautiful morning. ■

*The authors live in Utah, USA, and served in the Ghana Accra Mission.*

**Father and son, reunited at the temple after nearly 50 years of separation.**



# THE POWER OF HOME TEACHING

By Jeff B. Marler

*How could we home teach a family who wouldn't even let us in the door?*

I was assigned to home teach with Brother Erickson, an older member of my ward who was a dedicated home teacher. He had me do the scheduling, which I didn't mind.

One of our families, the Wrights (name has been changed), was not actively involved with the Church. When I called the home, Brother Wright said, "Don't ever call my home again."

I told Brother Erickson what had happened. The following month, when he asked me to call the Wrights again, I reminded him that Brother Wright didn't want us to call. Brother Erickson insisted that I call anyway, so I did. When Brother Wright answered the phone, I asked him not to hang up on me and told him that my home teaching companion had insisted I call. I asked if we could home teach him just by calling each month. He agreed.

From that point on, I called the Wrights each month. Every time I called, Brother Wright would say, "You've made your call." Then he would hang up. I didn't have a problem with that, and Brother Erickson didn't ask for more.

But after several months had passed, Brother Erickson suggested that we

fast for the Wrights. I agreed, so one Sunday we prayed and fasted to find a way to reach Brother Wright. The next morning as I passed the Wright home on my way to work, Brother Wright was coming out of the house. I could see a toy truck under one of the rear tires of his car, so I stopped and pointed it out. He thanked me.

"By the way," I said, "I'm your home teacher."

He thanked me again as I headed off to work.

I called Brother Erickson to tell him what had happened. He asked me to call Brother Wright to set up a home teaching appointment for the next

evening, which I did. Brother Wright was both congenial and accepting. We had a great visit with the family and set up another appointment. I left their home with a greater testimony of fasting and prayer and of the importance of being a home teacher.

Later that week we learned that Brother Wright had allowed the full-time missionaries to start teaching his 15-year-old daughter. She had been praying for months that her father would soften his heart and let her be baptized. Over time the family began attending church, and Brother Wright eventually consented to his daughter's baptism. In fact, he was the one who baptized her.

I'm grateful that Brother Erickson was in tune with the Spirit. His insights during this experience helped me gain a greater testimony of the power and potential of dedicated home teaching. ■

*The author lives in Arizona, USA.*



# THE WINDOW AT THE POOL

By Becky Heiner

*Our family relationships can help us learn, understand, and live the gospel.*

Our vacation was ending. Over waffles that morning, we planned how to make the most of our time at the hotel before enduring the five-hour drive home. My husband decided to take our three young daughters for a final escapade in the pool. I would take advantage of a treadmill in the workout room.

The treadmill I chose faced a wall-sized window overlooking the swimming pool. Shortly I saw a family, my family, make their way to the pool. Towels, shoes, and T-shirts flew everywhere as the girls excitedly prepared to jump into the water. Normally I would be following behind them, gathering up clothes and shoes and, quite honestly, being a bit annoyed by it all. Instead, I saw this family from the outside looking in, as though the

giant window before me was a movie screen. As my feet pounded a rhythm on the rotating belt beneath, I watched.

I saw how happy everyone was, laughing and playing together, and I thought about the times I had become discouraged by the petty arguments that inevitably arise in a family, by the uneasy feeling that, despite my best effort, I was failing to teach my children to love each other. But as I watched, I saw people who were happy together. I discovered that I wasn't failing to teach them to love one another; I was just failing to notice that they could.

I watched one of the girls jumping from the pool's edge over and over again into her daddy's arms. I thought about all the big jumps she would make throughout her life and hoped she would trust Heavenly Father to

catch her each time. I knew that with each jump she was learning to trust and that being part of our family was a safe way to learn that trust.

Another daughter sought to perfect a swimming skill. I saw how her family's encouragement kept her trying. There would be times in her life when she would need that same support in the face of more difficult challenges.

And then I watched as our third daughter was accidentally bumped into the pool. Upset and angry, she sputtered her way out of the water and into a chair. Immediately her family noticed she was missing. I watched each one lovingly encourage her to rejoin them. She eventually did, and I thought of her future, of all the times she would be hurt and feel like giving up. I hoped she would always find in the love of her family the strength to endure.

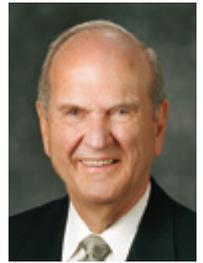
Suddenly, the realization hit me: our families can be a key to our ability to learn, understand, and live the gospel. Nephi noted that "by small means the Lord can bring about great things" (1 Nephi 16:29). And so it is with families. Yes, parents struggle. But every effort to teach and train and love, no matter how small, matters.

My little movie drew to a close. As I turned off the treadmill and watched my family gather their clothes, I felt renewed determination to keep going, to keep doing all the little things that I sometimes worry don't make a difference. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*







**By Elder  
Russell M. Nelson**

Of the Quorum  
of the Twelve  
Apostles

# Disciples and the Defense of Marriage

*Disciples of the Lord are defenders of traditional marriage.*

*We cannot yield. History is not our judge.*

*A secular society is not our judge. God is our judge!*

**T**here is great power in a strong partnership. True partners can achieve more than the sum of each acting alone. With true partners, one plus one is much more than two. For example, Dr. William J. Mayo and his brother, Dr. Charles H. Mayo, formed the Mayo Clinic. Lawyers and others form important partnerships. And in marriage, a husband and a wife can form *the* most significant partnership of all—an eternal family.

Sustainable improvements in any endeavor depend on collaboration and agreement. Great leaders and partners develop the skill of sharing insights and efforts and the pattern of building consensus. Great partners are completely loyal. They suppress personal ego in exchange for being part of creating something larger than themselves. Great partnerships depend upon each partner developing his or her own personal attributes of character.

## Guardians of Virtue

Now seems to be my time for attending funerals. I have witnessed many families saying good-bye for a season to those they love and to whom they are sealed. I often leave funerals wondering, “What would I like to have said about me at my funeral?”

It is not too early in your life to ask the same question. What would you like to have said about you at your funeral?

I hope it is said that you were a good husband and father or a good wife and mother, that you were a person of integrity, that you were kind and patient, that you were humble and hardworking, and that you were a person of virtue.

The greatest guardians of all virtues are marriage and family. This is particularly the case with the virtues of chastity and fidelity, both of which are required to create enduring and fully rewarding marriage partnerships and family relationships.

Male and female are created for what they can do and become—together. It takes a man and a woman to bring a child into the world. Mothers and fathers are not interchangeable. Men and women are distinct and complementary. Children deserve a chance to grow up with both a mom and a dad.<sup>1</sup>

You will likely encounter increasing debate about the definition of marriage. Many of your neighbors, colleagues, and friends will have never heard logical and inspired truths about the importance of marriage as God Himself defined it. You will have many opportunities to strengthen understanding of the Lord’s side of that argument by the eloquence of your examples, both as individuals and as families.

The Apostle Paul foresaw our circumstances when he said:



“In the last days perilous times shall come.

“For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

“Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, . . . despisers of those that are good,

“ . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.”

Then he concluded: “From such turn away” (2 Timothy 3:1–5).

After his remarkable prophecy of our time, Paul added this word of warning: “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12).

Ponder that! It means that during these perilous times, life will not be comfortable for true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. But we will have His approval. He gave us this assurance: “Blessed are all they who are persecuted for my name’s sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (3 Nephi 12:10).

In short, as disciples, each of us will be put to the test. At any hour of any day, we have the privilege of choosing between right and wrong. This is an age-old battle that started in a premortal realm. And that battle is becoming more intense every day. Your individual strength of character is needed now more than ever before.

## No Part-Time Disciples

The day is gone when you can be a quiet and comfortable Christian. Your religion is not just about showing up for church on Sunday. It is about showing up as a true disciple from Sunday morning through Saturday night—24/7! There is no such thing as a part-time disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.



Jesus invites anyone who wants to be His disciple to take up his cross and follow Him (see Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; D&C 56:2; 112:14). Are you ready to join the ranks? Or will you be ashamed of the gospel? Will you be ashamed of your Lord and His plan? (see Mormon 8:38). Will you yield to voices of those who would have you join them on the popular side of contemporary history?

No! The youth of Zion will not falter! I believe you will be courageous and proclaim God's truth with clarity and kindness, even when His truth is politically unpopular! Paul set that pattern when he declared, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16; see also 2 Timothy 1:8).

Disciples of the Lord are defenders of traditional marriage. We cannot yield. History is not our judge. A secular society is not our judge. God is our judge! For each of us,

Judgment Day will be held in God's own way and time (see Romans 2:5; Alma 33:22; Ether 11:20; D&C 88:104; 133:38).

The future of marriage and of countless human lives will be determined by your willingness to bear solemn witness of the Lord and live according to His gospel. Great protection is available to us as we enter the waters of baptism and take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ. King Benjamin so explained: "And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters" (Mosiah 5:7; see also verse 8).

I appreciate a statement by Sister Sheri Dew, a former member of the general Relief Society presidency, at a recent Brigham Young University Women's Conference. She

*One of the more demanding opportunities of our time is to stand up for the truth regarding the sacred nature of marriage.*



*The burden of discipleship is heavy. As disciples of the Lord, you will stand as defenders of marriage.*

said: “At the heart of becoming disciples is *doing* what we promise to do every time we partake of the sacrament—which is to ‘always remember’ the Lord. This means remembering Him when we choose what media we’re willing to expose our spirits to. It means remembering Him in how we spend our time and when choosing between a steady diet of pop culture or the Word of God. It means remembering Him in the middle of conflict or when temptation looms. It means remembering Him when critics attack His Church and mock truth. It means remembering that we have taken His name upon us.”<sup>2</sup>

Sister Dew’s message is consonant with a message from President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95), who said: “If our lives and our faith are centered upon Jesus Christ and His restored gospel, nothing can ever go permanently wrong. . . . If our lives are not centered on the Savior and His teachings, no other success can ever be permanently right.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Proclaim the Will of God**

Wherever we go, you and I as disciples of the Lord bear a solemn responsibility to proclaim the will of God to all people. And one of the more demanding opportunities of our time is to stand up for the truth regarding the sacred nature of marriage.

Our message is shaped by divine doctrine, canonized in the Bible:

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

“God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Genesis 1:27).

“God blessed them, and . . . said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth” (Genesis 1:28).

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).

“And Adam called his wife’s name Eve; because she was the mother of all living”

(Genesis 3:20; see also Moses 4:26).

God is the Father of all men and women. They are His children. It was He who ordained marriage as the union of a man and a woman. Marriage was not created by human judges or legislators. It was not created by think tanks or by popular vote or by oft-quoted bloggers or pundits. It was not created by lobbyists. Marriage was created by God!

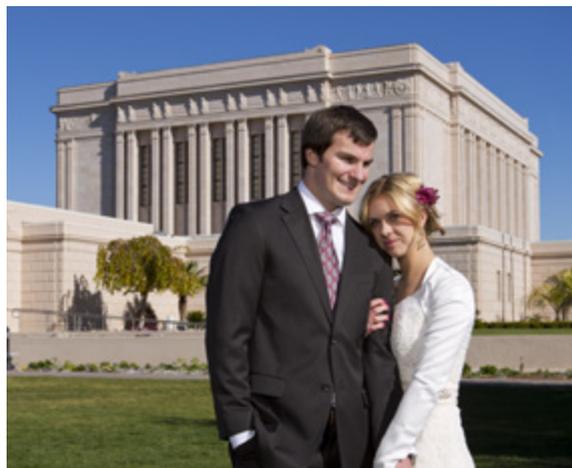
The Ten Commandments forbade adultery and covetousness (see Exodus 20:14, 17; Deuteronomy 5:18, 21).

Those ancient commandments were given later to people of New Testament times (see Matthew 5:27–28; 19:18; Romans 13:9) and Book of Mormon times (see Mosiah 13:22, 24; 3 Nephi 12:27). In modern revelation the Lord has reaffirmed, “Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else” (D&C 42:22).

True intimacy, as planned by our Creator, is experienced only within the sacred union of a husband and wife because it is enriched by truth and ennobled by the honoring of covenants a husband and a wife make with each other and with God. It is crucial to note that full fidelity to those covenants forbids pornography, lust, or abuse in any form.

Social and political pressures to change marriage laws have resulted in practices contrary to God’s will regarding the eternal nature and purposes of marriage. Man simply cannot make moral what God has declared to be immoral. Sin, even if legalized by man, is still sin in the eyes of God.

Brothers and sisters, undergirded by incontrovertible truth, proclaim your love for God! Proclaim your love for all human beings, “with malice toward none, with charity for all.”<sup>4</sup> They as children of God are our brothers and sisters. We value their rights and feelings. But we cannot condone efforts to change divine doctrine. It is not for man to change.



## Love Means Obedience

God loves His children. And if they love Him, they will show that love by keeping His commandments (see John 14:15, 21; 1 John 5:2; D&C 46:9; 124:87), including chastity before marriage and total fidelity within marriage. Scriptures warn that behavior contrary to the commandments of the Lord will not only deprive couples of divinely approved intimacy but will also bring about the stern judgments of God (see Leviticus 26:15–20; Psalm 89:31–32; Matthew 5:19).

The noblest yearning of the human heart is for a marriage that will endure beyond death. Complete fidelity to covenants made in holy temples will allow husband and wife to be sealed together throughout all eternity (see D&C 132:7, 19).

The burden of discipleship is heavy. As disciples of the Lord, you will stand as defenders of marriage. And as you are true and faithful, not only will He help you and protect

you (see D&C 84:88), but also He will bless your families (see Isaiah 49:25; D&C 98:37).

You are beneficiaries of the infinite Atonement of the Lord. Because of Him, you will eventually be rewarded with immortality. And because of Him, you may enjoy the blessing of eternal life with Him and your families. ■

*From a BYU commencement address, “Disciples of Christ—Defenders of Marriage,” delivered on August 24, 2014. For the full text in English, visit [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).*

## NOTES

1. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129.
2. Sheri L. Dew, “Sweet above All That Is Sweet” (Brigham Young University Women’s Conference address, May 1, 2014), 7, [ce.byu.edu/cw/womensconference/transcripts.php](http://ce.byu.edu/cw/womensconference/transcripts.php).
3. Howard W. Hunter, “Fear Not, Little Flock” (Brigham Young University devotional, Mar. 14, 1989), 2, [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).
4. Abraham Lincoln, “Second Inaugural Address,” Mar. 4, 1865.





By Elder  
Allan F. Packer  
Of the Seventy

# HEAVENLY FATHER'S FIXED Standards

*God's standards are fixed, and no one can change them. Individuals who think they can will be greatly surprised in the Final Judgment.*

**M**y first job out of college was working for a major airplane manufacturer. While there, I learned that to make airplanes that were safe, the company had specifications for every part. The parts had to be certified as meeting all standards, including shape, size, material, and tolerances.

If a part met the standards, it would be placed in inventory for building an airplane. If it didn't meet the standards, the part would be rejected and returned to the supplier. Suppliers of parts were careful to understand and meet all of the requirements, including the tolerances.

Would you willingly ride in an airplane made with substandard parts? Of course not! You would want the parts to exceed the standard. Some people, however, appear to be willing to embrace substandard behavior in their lives. But only by knowing, understanding, and living the doctrine of Christ can you adopt the behavior needed to qualify for exaltation.

*Tolerance* is a word that is heard frequently in society today, usually in the context of tolerating or accepting other people's cultures or behavior. Sometimes it is used by people wanting acceptance to do something without consideration of its impact on society or others. My purpose is not to talk about that definition but to focus on the *engineering* definition of the word and its application for us.

*Tolerance* is used to define acceptable variations from a defined standard. In a manufactured part, the tolerance might be specified to be five inches long (13 cm), plus or minus a thousandth of an inch (0.0025 cm). Another part might be defined to be made of a certain material that is 99.9 percent pure, like gold bars. The Lord has set tolerances to help us qualify for exaltation.

## Standards and Judgment

Standards for salvation are called commandments, which are given by our Father in Heaven. These standards apply to all parts of our lives and at all times. They are not selectively applied at a certain time or in a certain situation. The commandments define the tolerances required to qualify for exaltation.

There is a judgment that, in a sense, is like the certification process for a plane part. Just as there are qualifying tests for aircraft parts, our Father in Heaven has a judgment to determine if we will be certified. It is to our advantage to know and meet the standards within the tolerance the Lord has set.

You will remember that the ten virgins in the Savior's parable were invited to the wedding feast. When the bridegroom arrived, five had oil and were able to enter. The other five came late and could not enter. (See Matthew 25:1–13.)

Regarding this parable, Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “The arithmetic of this parable is chilling. The ten virgins obviously represent members of Christ’s Church, for all were invited to the wedding feast and all knew what was required to be admitted when the bridegroom came. But only half were ready when he came.”<sup>1</sup>

The first five virgins met the standards, and so must we.

God created us in His own image. The plan for us on this earth is to obtain a body, have experience, receive ordinances, and endure to the end. Standards have been established and tolerances set that we need to live to qualify for exaltation. God has promised that we can be exalted, but He has also said, “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise” (D&C 82:10).

### **Standards and Agency**

In God’s plan of salvation, we are being molded, shaped, and polished to become like Him. It is something each of us has to experience individually.

“For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

God has established what we must do and the standards we must meet. Something quite remarkable is that He gives us the moral agency to decide whether to accept and meet those standards. However, there are consequences to our decisions. He gave us agency, but He does not give us the authority to change the standards or the consequences of our decisions.

Because there are standards and because we have agency to choose, there is a Final Judgment, at which time each of us will be reviewed to see if we meet the standards—in other words, to see if we have lived within the standards and tolerances God has defined. His judgment will be final.

The doctrine of repentance allows us to correct or fix defects, but it is better to focus on meeting God’s standards than to plan on invoking the principle of repentance before the Judgment. I learned this lesson when I was young.

As a teenager I spent my summers working on my grandfather’s ranch in Wyoming, USA. It was a sheep and cattle ranch of more than 2,000 acres (810 ha), plus additional rangeland. The ranch operation required a lot of equipment. Because the closest repair center was far away, my grandfather taught us to carefully maintain the equipment and to inspect everything before we left the ranch house. If we had a breakdown, it was usually miles from the ranch house, and that meant a long walk.

It didn’t take long for me to learn the law of consequences. It was always better to avoid problems than to take a long walk. The same is true with the commandments of our Heavenly Father. He can tell the difference between someone who truly is striving to become like Him and an individual who is pushing the edges but trying to stay just inside the acceptable limits.

### **Standards and Opposition**

There are those in the world today who are striving to dismiss or change the standards established by God. This is not a new phenomenon.

“Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil, that put darkness for light, and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (2 Nephi 15:20).

We must not be deceived or give heed to those who would attempt to convince us that God’s standards have changed. They have no authority to change the standards. Only the designer, Heavenly Father, can change the specifications.

All of us easily recognize how ridiculous it would be for a supplier of airplane parts to listen to some uninformed individual who promotes making changes to the specifications or tolerances of a part. None of us would want to fly in an airplane manufactured with such a part.

Likewise, no one would accuse an airplane manufacturer of being unthoughtful or intolerant when it rejects such parts. The manufacturer would not allow itself to be intimidated or bullied into accepting parts that could not be certified. To do so would jeopardize its business and the lives of the passengers who might fly in its airplanes.



*We wouldn't willingly fly in an airplane made with substandard parts. Nor should we accept or practice substandard behavior. Only by knowing, understanding, and living the doctrine of Christ can we qualify for exaltation.*

The same is true with God's laws and commandments. His standards are fixed, and no one can change them. Individuals who think they can will be greatly surprised in the Final Judgment.

### **Meeting the Standards**

Our Heavenly Father is the designer of the plan of salvation. He has put in place all that is needed for us to qualify to return to His presence. The standards are set, known, and easily available to each of us.

The Savior has said that all of us are capable of meeting the standards. The Word of Wisdom is evidence of this, indicating that it is "given for a principle with promise, adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of *all* saints, who are or can be called saints" (D&C 89:3; emphasis added).

The Savior also teaches that we will "not be tempted above that which [we are] able to bear" (D&C 64:20), but we must "watch and pray continually" (Alma 13:28).

You have the power, "for the power is in [you], wherein [you] are agents unto [yourselves]. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward" (D&C 58:28).

You can meet the standards and tolerances. You have the capacity to qualify for exaltation.

### **Guidance from the Holy Ghost**

We learn the standards by attending church and by studying and acting on the doctrines found in the scriptures and in the words of modern prophets.

The greatest source of guidance is the promptings that come from the Holy Ghost, who will teach us all things we must do (see 2 Nephi 32:2–3). With the aid of the Holy Ghost and the Light of Christ (see Moroni 7:16–18), we can know right and wrong. We can be guided throughout our lives. We can feel in our hearts and have thoughts come into our minds that can give comfort and guidance. This is true even for children.

God has promised that He will help us as we strive to meet His standards. Just as we wouldn't willingly fly in an airplane made with substandard parts, we shouldn't accept or practice substandard behavior. Only by knowing, understanding, and living the doctrine of Christ can we qualify for exaltation. ■

*From a devotional address, "Standards and Tolerance," delivered at Brigham Young University–Idaho on November 13, 2012. For the full text in English, go to [byui.edu](http://byui.edu).*

#### **NOTE**

1. Dallin H. Oaks, "Preparation for the Second Coming," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2004, 8.



**By Elder  
Bruce C. Hafen**

Served as a member  
of the Seventy from  
1996 to 2010

# THE Proclamation ON THE Family: TRANSCENDING THE CULTURAL CONFUSION



This is the first of two articles by Elder Hafen that help commemorate the 20th anniversary of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.” The second article will be published in the September 2015 issue of the Liahona.

“**W**hat are your greatest concerns?” a newspaper reporter asked President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) in June 1995, as he turned 85. He replied: “I am concerned about family life in the Church. We have wonderful people, but we have too many whose families are falling apart. . . . *I think [this] is my most serious concern.*”<sup>1</sup>

Three months later President Hinckley publicly read “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.”<sup>2</sup>

It was no coincidence that this solemn declaration was issued precisely when the Lord’s prophet felt that, of all the subjects on his mind, unstable family life *in the Church* was his greatest concern. Later he added that the greatest challenge facing both America and the rest of world “is the problem of the family, brought on by misguided parents and resulting in misguided children.”<sup>3</sup>

The proclamation was not merely a collection of pro-family platitudes. It was a serious prophetic warning about a major international problem. And now, 20 years later, the problem is getting worse, which shows just how prophetic the 1995 warning was.

Before we explore what that means for each of us, let us consider how modern culture ended up where it is today.

### Universal Love Story

Humankind’s oldest, most hoped-for story line has a familiar plot: boy meets girl, they fall in love, marry, have children, and—they hope—live happily ever after. That universal love story is so central to the great plan of happiness that it began with Adam and Eve, and for most Church members, it still guides our lives like the North Star.

The joys of human love and family belonging give us hope, purpose, and a desire to live better. They make us long for the day when we will take

***Permanent commitments to marriage and parenthood are like two anchor threads running through the design of our social tapestry.***



the hands that have held ours and together enter the Lord’s presence. There we will embrace our loved ones and stay with them always, to “go no more out” (Revelation 3:12).

For many years society generally supported this inborn longing to belong. Of course, families had problems, but most people still believed that “tying the knot” of marriage created a relatively permanent family unit. And those knots held the fabric of society together, with “hearts knit together in unity and in love” (Mosiah 18:21).

In recent generations, however, the fabric has increasingly frayed as we have experienced what some writers call “the collapse of marriage.”<sup>4</sup> Many people outside the Church no longer see marriage as a source of long-term commitments. Rather, they now see marriage and even childbearing as temporary personal options. Yet permanent commitments to marriage and parenthood are like two anchor threads running through the design of our social tapestry. When those threads fray, the tapestry can unravel and we can lose the plot of the universal love story.

I have watched this unraveling from my own perspectives as a father, a Church member, and a teacher of family



law. Beginning in the 1960s, the civil rights movement spawned new legal theories about equality, individual rights, and liberation. These ideas helped the United States begin to overcome its embarrassing history of racial discrimination. They also helped the country reduce discrimination against women. These protections from discrimination are part of each citizen's *individual interests*.

Some forms of legal classification, however, are actually beneficial. For example, the law “discriminates” *in favor* of children on the basis of their age—they can't vote, drive a car, or sign a binding contract. And they receive years of free education. These laws protect children and society from the consequences of children's lack of capacity while also preparing them to become responsible adults.

Laws have also given a privileged status to relationships based on marriage and kinship—not to discriminate against single and unrelated people but to encourage biological parents to marry each other and to raise their own stable children, who are the key to a stable continuing society. Such laws thus express society's *social interests* in its children and in its own future strength and continuity.

Historically, laws maintained a workable balance between social interests and individual interests because each element plays an important role in a healthy society. However, in the 1960s and 1970s, U.S. courts began to interpret family laws in ways that gave individual interests a much higher priority than social interests, which knocked the legal and social system off balance. This change was but one part of the transformation of American family law—the biggest cultural shift in attitudes about marriage and family life in 500 years. I will illustrate this transformation with some examples from U.S. law, although the laws of most developed countries have followed similar trends.

### A Culture Shift

In a nutshell, advocates began using potent individual-liberation ideas to challenge laws that had long supported the interests of children and society in stable family structures. Courts and legislatures accepted many of these individualistic ideas, even when the ideas damaged larger



social interests. For example, no-fault divorce was first adopted in California in 1968 and then spread across the United States. No-fault significantly changed the way people thought about marriage. Under the old divorce laws, married people couldn't just choose to end their marriage; rather, they had to prove spousal misconduct, like adultery or abuse. In those days only a judge representing society's interests could determine when a divorce was justified enough to outweigh the social interest in marital continuity.

As originally conceived, no-fault divorce had worthy goals. It added irretrievable marriage breakdown, regardless of personal fault, as a basis for divorce—which simplified the divorce process. In theory, only a judge, who still represented society's interests, could decide whether a marriage was beyond repair. But in practice, family court judges deferred to the personal preference of the couple and eventually *liberated* whichever partner wanted to end the marriage.

These legal changes accelerated a larger cultural drift that no longer saw marriage as a relatively permanent social institution but rather as a temporary, private relationship, terminable at will—without seriously considering how divorce damaged children, let alone how it damaged society. Before long, judges' doubts about society's right to enforce wedding vows gave married couples the false impression that their personal promises held no great social or moral value. So now, when marriage commitments intrude on personal preferences, people are more likely to walk away. They see marriage as a “nonbinding commitment,” whatever that contradiction means.

Reflecting these new attitudes, courts expanded the parental rights of unwed fathers and began to give child custody and adoption rights to unmarried individuals. This uprooted the long-established preference

that family law had given, whenever possible, to the married, two-parent biological family. Both experience and the social science research had clearly shown—and still show—that a family headed by married, biological parents almost always provides the best child-rearing environment. But over time, the unwed-parent cases contributed to, and were influenced by, skyrocketing rates of unmarried cohabitation and births outside marriage.

Further, in 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court granted individual women the right to choose abortion, thereby rejecting long-held cultural beliefs about the social interests represented by unborn children and by elected legislators who until then had collectively decided the value-laden question of when life begins.

Talking about no-fault divorce leads logically to a brief comment about same-sex marriage. This has become a difficult and poignant topic, even though only 17 years ago, no country in the world had legally recognized same-sex marriage. So how could this very idea burst upon the international scene precisely when the historic concept of marriage had lost so much public value during the previous four decades?

One likely answer is that the “personal autonomy” theory of the first U.S. pro-same-sex marriage case in 2001



simply extended the same individualistic legal concept that had created no-fault divorce. When a court upholds an individual’s right to *end* a marriage, regardless of social consequences (as can happen with no-fault divorce), that principle may also seem to support an individual’s right to *start* a marriage, regardless of social consequences (as can happen with same-sex marriage).

In other words, when people see man-woman marriage as just a matter of personal preference rather than as society’s key social institution, it’s little wonder that many would now say of same-sex marriage that individuals should be free to marry as they choose. That’s what can happen when we lose track of society’s interest in marriage and children. Clearly God loves all of His children and expects us to treat one another with *compassion* and *tolerance*—regardless of private conduct we may or may not understand. But it is a very different matter to *endorse* or *promote* that conduct by altering a legal concept—marriage—whose historic purpose was to promote society’s interest in having biological parents rear their own children in stable homes.

The U.S. Supreme Court relied on the personal autonomy theory, among other legal theories, when it ruled on June 26, 2015, that state laws may not “bar same-sex couples from marriage.” Thus same-sex marriage is now legal in every U.S. state.



***“Tying the knot” of marriage creates a relatively permanent family unit that holds the fabric of society together, with “hearts knit together in unity and in love.”***



Significantly, however, the court's majority opinion also "emphasized that religions, and those who adhere to religious doctrines, may continue to advocate with utmost, sincere conviction that, by divine precepts, same-sex marriage should not be condoned. The First Amendment ensures that religious organizations and persons are given proper protection as they seek to teach the principles that are so fulfilling and so central to their lives and faiths, and to their own deep aspirations to continue the family structure they have long revered. The same is true of those who oppose same-sex marriage for other reasons."<sup>5</sup>

### Effects on Marriage and Children

Now consider the effect of these changes on marriage and children. Since about 1965 the U.S. divorce rate has more than doubled, although it has dipped slightly in recent years—partly because the number of unmarried couples has increased by about 15 times, and their frequent breakups aren't included in the divorce rate. Today about half of all first marriages end in divorce; about 60 percent of second marriages do. The United States is the world's most divorce-prone country.<sup>6</sup>

Today 40 percent of U.S. births are to unmarried parents. In 1960 that number was 5 percent.<sup>7</sup> About 50 percent of today's teens now consider out-of-wedlock childbearing a "worthwhile lifestyle."<sup>8</sup> The percentage of children in single-parent families since 1960 has increased fourfold, from 8 percent to 31 percent.<sup>9</sup> Over half of today's U.S. marriages are preceded by unmarried cohabitation.<sup>10</sup> What was highly abnormal in the 1960s is the new normal.

In Europe, 80 percent of the population now approves of unmarried cohabitation. In parts of Scandinavia, 82 percent of firstborn children are born outside marriage.<sup>11</sup> When we lived in Germany recently, we sensed among Europeans that, in many ways, marriage is no more. As a French writer put it, marriage has "lost its magic for young people," who increasingly feel that "love is essentially a private matter which leaves no room" for society to say anything about their marriage or their children.<sup>12</sup>

Nonetheless, the children of divorced or unwed parents have about *three times* as many serious behavioral, emotional, and developmental problems as children in two-parent families. By every measure of child well-being, these children are far worse off. And when children are dysfunctional, society becomes dysfunctional. Here are some examples of that dysfunction, acknowledging that some elements in such general trends may have multiple causes. In the past five decades:

- Juvenile crime has increased sixfold.
- Child neglect and all forms of child abuse have quintupled.
- Psychological disorders among children have all worsened, from drug abuse to eating disorders; depression among children has increased 1,000 percent.
- Domestic violence against women has increased, and poverty has shifted increasingly to children.<sup>13</sup>

How serious are these problems? As President Hinckley said in 1995, these issues were his "most serious concern." And the trends that troubled him then are now measurably worse. As a *Time* magazine writer put it:

*"There is no other single force causing as much measurable hardship and human misery in this country as the collapse of marriage. It hurts children, it reduces mothers' financial security, and it has landed with particular devastation on those who can bear it least: the nation's underclass. . . ."*

*"The poor [have uncoupled] parenthood from marriage, and the financially secure [blast] apart their [own] unions if [they] aren't having fun anymore."<sup>14</sup>*

## Turning Our Hearts

One tattered golden thread in the unraveling social tapestry reflects the heart of the problem: the children—bone of our bones, flesh of our flesh. Something true, even holy, about posterity—children and procreation and eternal bonds of affection—resonates deeply within the mystic chords of our collective memory.

The child-parent tie matters so much that God sent Elijah in 1836 to “turn the hearts” of the fathers and the children toward each other. If those hearts do not so turn, He said, “the whole earth [will] be smitten with a curse” and “utterly wasted” before Christ returns (D&C 110:15; Joseph Smith—History 1:39; see also Malachi 4:6). In today’s world, those hearts do appear to be turning—but away from, rather than toward, each other.

Are we already living in the time of the curse? Perhaps. Today’s children (and therefore society—the earth) are indeed being “wasted” (devalued, made useless, rendered desolate) by each issue discussed here.

The doctrine is clear—and is substantiated by years of research. We don’t need to return to the family laws of yesteryear, *but* if we could just care more about our children and their future, people would marry before becoming parents. They would sacrifice more, much more, to stay married. Children would be raised, whenever possible, by their biological parents. Ideally, there would be no elective abortions or unwed births. Of course, some exceptions are needed—some divorces

are justified, and adoption is often heaven-sent. Yet in principle, the 1995 proclamation on the family says it perfectly: “Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity.”<sup>15</sup>

But we are suffering from collective amnesia. We are not hearing the mystic chords of eternal, or even recent, memory. The enemy of our happiness wants to convince us that the sacred, long-term bonds of family affection are confining, when in fact no relationships are more liberating and fulfilling.

Building a good marriage is not easy. It is not supposed to be easy. But when a confused culture confuses us about what marriage means, we may give up on each other and ourselves much too soon. Yet the gospel’s eternal perspective, as taught in the scriptures and the temple, can help us transcend the modern marital chaos until our marriages are the most satisfying, sanctifying—even if also the most demanding—experiences of our lives. ■

*Adapted from an address, “Marriage, Family Law, and the Temple,” delivered at the J. Reuben Clark Law Society Annual Fireside in Salt Lake City on January 31, 2014.*

## NOTES

1. In Dell Van Orden, “Pres. Hinckley Notes His 85th Birthday, Reminisces about Life,” *Church News*, June 24, 1995, 6; emphasis added.
2. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129.
3. Gordon B. Hinckley, in Sarah Jane Weaver, “President Hinckley Warns against Family Breakups,” *Deseret News*, Apr. 23, 2003, [deseretnews.com](http://deseretnews.com).
4. See Caitlin Flanagan, “Why Marriage Matters,” *Time*, July 13, 2009, 47.
5. Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 576 U.S. (2015).
6. See [census.gov/compendia/statab/2011/tables/11s1335.pdf](http://census.gov/compendia/statab/2011/tables/11s1335.pdf); see also Alan J. Hawkins, *The Forever Initiative: A Feasible Public Policy Agenda to Help Couples Form and Sustain Healthy Marriages and Relationships* (2013), 19.
7. See “Disastrous’ Illegitimacy Trends,” *Washington Times*, Dec. 1, 2006, [washingtontimes.com](http://washingtontimes.com).
8. See *The State of Our Unions: Marriage in America 2012* (2012), 101, 102.
9. See “One-Parent and Two-Parent Families 1960–2012,” Office of Financial Management, [ofm.wa.gov/trends/social/fig204.asp](http://ofm.wa.gov/trends/social/fig204.asp).
10. See Bruce C. Hafen, *Covenant Hearts: Why Marriage Matters and How to Make It Last* (2013), 227.
11. See Noelle Knox, “Nordic Family Ties Don’t Mean Tying the Knot,” *USA Today*, Dec. 16, 2004, 15, [usatoday.com](http://usatoday.com).
12. *Report of the Mission of Inquiry on the Family and the Rights of Children*, a study commission appointed by the National Assembly of France, Jan. 25, 2006, 32.
13. See Hafen, *Covenant Hearts*, 226–27.
14. Flanagan, “Why Marriage Matters,” 47; emphasis added.
15. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 129.

***The gospel’s eternal perspective, as taught in the scriptures and the temple, can help us transcend the modern marital chaos until our marriages are the most satisfying, sanctifying experiences of our lives.***



*Those who have been divorced have experienced great pain. They need the healing power and hope that come from the Atonement of Jesus Christ.*

# Latter-day Saint Men and Divorce

By Brent Scharman

Retired counselor, LDS Family Services

**T**he ultimate purpose of all we teach is to unite parents and children in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they are happy at home, sealed in an eternal marriage.”<sup>1</sup> In spite of this inspired teaching from President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, divorces take place. Divorce is traumatic: those involved can experience feelings of shock, denial, confusion, depression, and anger, as well as physical symptoms such as disrupted sleep and eating patterns.

In my experience as a counselor, I found that, although much of what men and women experience in divorce is the same, there are some differences:

- While still married, men are more likely to minimize the seriousness of marital problems. Their surprise at divorce can lead to a feeling of instability.
- Men are less inclined to share their feelings, so they can be less likely to learn from their experience.
- Men tend to be action oriented, so they may be less inclined to seek counseling and instead bury their feelings by working long hours or immersing themselves in a hobby.
- Because of financial concerns and the blow to their ego, some men experience challenges like depression, weight gain, experimenting with alcohol, and becoming less active in the Church.

The only safe path through a divorce is to remain true to the gospel. Healthy adjustment requires an ability to be kind when you may not feel like it, to maintain confidence

*Although a strong marriage is the ideal, some marriages unfortunately end in divorce. If you are divorced, here are some ways to stay close to your children and strong in the gospel.*

and self-worth, to be able to tolerate painful feelings while continuing to function, to be patient with others involved, to be fair and non-vindictive, and to maintain a solid spiritual foundation, which can draw you closer to the Lord, who has “descended below” all things and whose Atonement is sufficient to heal and lift you (D&C 122:8).

Regardless of who was at greater fault in your divorce, healing won’t come until there is repentance and forgiveness. As President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, taught: “We must let go of our grievances. . . . Remember, heaven is filled with those who have this in common: They are forgiven. And they forgive.”<sup>2</sup>

## **Maintaining a Relationship with Your Children**

Perhaps no single issue provokes power struggles more than child custody. When children spend most of their time with their mother, it is easy for the father to feel like he has become a visitor to his own children. This may make him feel powerless and controlled by the system. However, unless there is potential for abuse or other harmful interaction, children do best when they maintain relationships with both parents. Fortunately, most former spouses learn to cooperate for the benefit of their children.



## HOPE FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN

“We know that some look back on their divorces with regret at their own partial or predominant fault in the breakup. All who have been through divorce know the pain and need the healing power and hope that come from the Atonement. That healing power and that hope are there for them and also for their children.”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Divorce,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2007, 71.

Regular interaction with your children should remain a high priority, regardless of distance or remarriage. Even if the allotted time is not all you desire, make the visits positive and never say negative things to the children about their mother. Children are most likely to adjust successfully to parental divorce when their mother and father are willing to put the happiness and stability of children ahead of their own hurt feelings.

### Staying Active in the Church

Some men have said that nothing shook their testimonies like divorce. This is particularly true if they have been faithful in Church activity and have prayed fervently for a resolution to marital problems. This shaken feeling can leave a divorced man uncomfortable with Church attendance, especially if he believes that others are assuming he has been unfaithful to his wife.

Yet continuing Church activity exposes us to correct principles and surrounds us with caring

people. If Church members don’t seem to reach out to you, don’t be resentful. They likely don’t know what to do or say. Be patient and reach out yourself. Find a support network. Counsel with your quorum president, bishop, or stake president and consider professional counseling, such as with LDS Family Services, if available. This will help you examine your own behavior and see things more accurately.

Divorced men are welcome in the Church in the same manner as married men. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “There are many good Church members who have been divorced” and reiterated that “unless a divorced member has committed serious transgressions, he or she can become eligible for a temple recommend under the same worthiness standards that apply to other members.”<sup>3</sup>

### Growing through Difficulties

Some men say that although they would never want to go through such an experience again, they have learned from it. They recover and move forward with their lives. Such an approach was expressed by this man I counseled: “I still have a hard time grasping the concept that I’m a divorced man, but I am. I never expected it, but it happened, and I accept it. My goal now is to do all I can to remain faithful to Christ, build a strong new marriage, and be as good a model to my children and stepchildren as I can.” ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

#### NOTES

1. Boyd K. Packer, “The Shield of Faith,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 8.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Merciful Obtain Mercy,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 77.
3. Dallin H. Oaks, “Divorce,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2007, 70.



# The Wounds of Divorce

By David Paul

Divorced father with three children

**A**s a member of the Royal Canadian Navy, I have been trained to do an “after-action review” after an encounter with the enemy or other calamity. It is a hard look at how those involved can make improvements to reduce or avoid further injuries or mishaps. Throughout life and especially during trials such as divorce, an after-action review can bring many avenues to learn and grow.

It starts by taking the correct amount of responsibility for what occurred. As we take an accurate accounting of our actions, perhaps with the help of a counselor, recognizing where our agency was involved and where the ex-spouse’s agency was involved, we can observe things we can change in ourselves. We can also assess the status of our mental, spiritual, and emotional health.

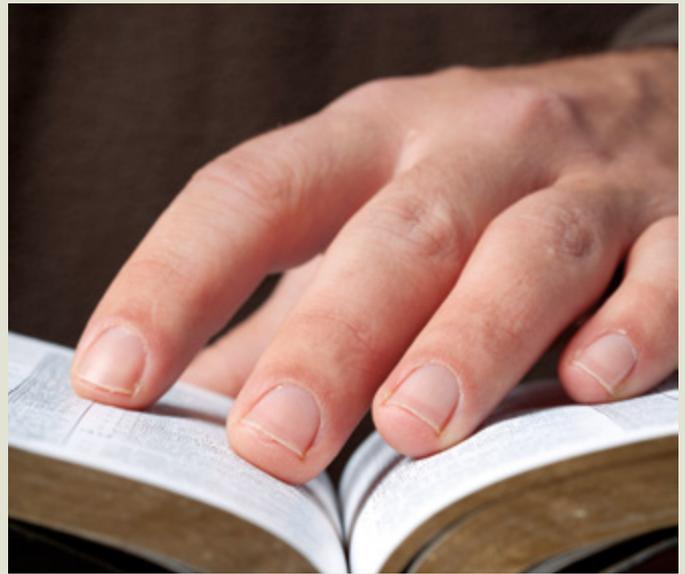
Making constructive efforts to change as we apply the lessons learned encourages the healing process while paving the way to a brighter future.

## Accessing the Savior’s Atonement

In war there are always horrific wounds. These can be deep and painful, and those who have not experienced them cannot truly understand what it’s like. Wounds to our hearts and souls caused by divorce are equally painful and can also be difficult to understand for those who have not experienced something similar.

But we are not alone. The Savior is ready to help us. His Atonement’s healing power can help us recover. Do not turn your back on the Church. Ask for priesthood blessings and get to the temple as often as you are able. The healing process is often a long one, but having the Spirit in your life will help speed the process.

The first year after divorce is tough. There is a grieving process at the loss of a relationship that was once the center of our hopes. It is like a roller-coaster ride of emotions and challenges. We play our part in the healing



process by remembering that we are precious children of our Heavenly Father with divine potential, by attending our Church meetings, reading our scriptures, praying, serving, and attending the temple. Though the road may seem long, the promise is sure. Follow the Lord, and you can have eternal life and all the blessings you are promised, including peace and joy in your soul.

## Moving toward Remarriage

Be careful when you decide to start dating. Make sure that you know who you are and what you want. Be OK being alone with yourself (and the Savior). When you are happy with who you are and where you are going, it is harder for the adversary to derail you or for you to end up in an unhealthy dependence on someone else. The relationship you developed with your former spouse took some time to reach certain emotional and romantic milestones. Even unhealthy relationships have areas of comfort, so it can be tempting to slip into those too quickly with someone. Watch your pace.

## Supporting Divorced Men

Those who have suffered through a divorce are like veterans on the battlefield of this war for our souls. They need our respect, love, understanding, support, and acceptance. Give loving guidance and encouragement if and when they are open to this. Exercise faith in them and remember that the Savior has His timetable to heal the pieces of a broken heart and spirit. Healing and miracles will happen, in time.

*The author lives in British Columbia, Canada.*

## WHERE IS YOUR CHURCH?

During my years in the military, it was sometimes a challenge to find a Latter-day Saint chapel. With little notice, I could find myself in a new city or even a new country.

One Sunday I found myself in Amsterdam, Holland. At 8:30 a.m. our colonel unexpectedly announced that we had the day off. Already in uniform, I convinced a friend to drop me off at church. In his rental car, we had the following conversation:

Friend: "So where is your church?"

Me: "I don't know because I've never been to this city before. But if you can get us to the city center by

quarter to nine, we can find it."

Friend: "Why? What happens at quarter to nine?"

Me: "That's when we'll see the Mormon missionaries heading to the chapel."

Friend: "I thought you said you've never been here before?"

Me: "I haven't."

Friend: "So how do you know there's a chapel here?"

Me: "There's a chapel here all right *and* Mormon missionaries."

Friend: "OK, here we are in the city center. It's quarter to nine, and I don't see any missionaries."

Me: "There they are."

Friend: "Where? You mean those small figures way up there crossing the street? We can't even see who they are from here."

When we caught up to the missionaries, I jumped out of the car and had an animated conversation with them, shaking hands, cracking jokes, laughing, and smiling.

Me: "Thanks for dropping me off."

Friend: "I thought you said you didn't know those guys?"

Me: "I don't. We just met."

Friend: "People don't talk like that unless they already know each other."



Me: "I'll explain later."

Friend: "I'm not sure I can find this place again, and you haven't told me what time to pick you up."

Me: "The meetings will last three hours. Then a family will invite me to dinner. After we eat and talk a while, they'll drive me back to headquarters."

Friend: "You don't know that someone is going to invite you to dinner and drive you back."

I reassured him that I would be well taken care of and thanked him again.

The meetings were inspiring. I accepted the first of three invitations to dinner. During dinner we had an enlightening conversation about the growth of the Church in Holland.

I have been blessed to find Church members many times during my life. Sometimes we have met in royal palaces and sometimes in humble huts. Sometimes we have met in abandoned, dusty barracks. Sometimes we have met in hospital chapels. Sometimes we have met in large tents or outside under the open sky.

Wherever we have met, I am always glad I made the effort to find the Church. For as the Lord has said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). ■

Dee Jepson, Idaho, USA

"If you can get us to the city center by quarter to nine," I told my friend, "we can find a chapel."

## A PRAYER IN THE FAMILY HISTORY CENTER

After I was called as the family history consultant for our branch in Ushuaia, Argentina, I came to feel a deep need to search for my ancestors. The task was difficult, and scarcely a day went by that I did not try a new strategy to discover who they were and where they had come from in Italy.

In 2006 I was called to oversee the family history center. I continued to feel frustrated, however, by my failure to find information about my family. My frustration grew after my husband's search for his ancestors paid off. That year, Ruben identified the names of more than 5,000 of his ancestors who had lived in San Ginesio, Macerata, Italy.

One afternoon in the family history center as Ruben found ancestor after ancestor on microfilm, he joyfully and repeatedly cried out, "Another one!" Feeling discouraged, and with tears in my eyes, I expressed my sadness, adding that I didn't know what to do to find my family members. Seeing my pain, he suggested that we pray. We did so, pleading for the Holy Ghost to enlighten us so that we could accelerate the work on behalf of my family.

During our prayer, Ruben suddenly remembered a certain website that featured Italian surnames. Immediately after our prayer, we checked it out. Within minutes we had found four people with my maiden name, Gos, in the telephone directory of the small Italian

town of Iutizzo, in northern Italy.

Immediately I sent letters to each of them. One wrote back, saying that her husband had the same surname, but he didn't belong to the family. However, she had known one of my grandfather's deceased sisters, and she offered to put me in touch with another relative, still living.

A few months later, in December 2006, we received a long-distance telephone call.

"Is this Susana Gos?" a distant male voice asked.

"Yes," I replied.

"This is your cousin from Italy," he said.

The caller, Giovanni Battista Tubaro, was the son of my grandfather's sister Maria!

In March 2008, Giovanni and his wife, Miriam, came to visit us in Argentina. We introduced them to the gospel and family history work, and for several days we talked of those who had preceded us. Now each of their names going back to six generations had a face and a history.

Family history has allowed me to contribute to an important part of the Lord's work. It has also brought me closer to my ancestors—children of our Heavenly Father whom I never would have known of had it not been for a prayer of faith in the family history center. ■

Susana Magdalena Gos de Morresi,  
Tierra del Fuego, Argentina

## GET HER TO THE HOSPITAL!

I was single and self-employed when I was new in the Church, so I had days when I had extra time. On one of those days I called the Relief Society president and asked if anyone needed help that afternoon. She mentioned an elderly sister named Anita (name has been changed) who had recently come home from the hospital and was lonely. I had met Anita before and was happy to visit her.

I called and then went to her apartment. She asked me to make lunch for her, and afterward we had a great visit. She had a good sense of humor and

loved to laugh and tell stories about her life.

After lunch she said she was tired and asked me to help her from her wheelchair to bed. Soon I had her tucked in. Suddenly, the still, small voice I had heard so much about spoke to me: “Get her to the hospital now!”

Anita hated hospitals and had just returned home. I asked her if she felt OK. She said she was fine but felt tired.

I moved away from her bedside and knelt. As soon as I started to pray, the voice repeated, “Get her to the

hospital, and get her there now!”

I hesitated, asking myself, “What am I going to tell the doctor at the hospital?”

I called a friend, who also prayed and then told me to follow my prompting.

Anita was angry that I would even mention taking her to the hospital, but I called an ambulance anyway. When it arrived, two paramedics entered and took her vital signs. Without asking questions, they put her on a gurney and sped off in the ambulance.

I followed in my van. After arriving at the hospital, I sat and waited. Soon a doctor came out. He asked me, “She didn’t tell you that she had fallen before you came to her apartment, did she?”

“No,” I responded.

He told me that Anita had injured her spleen and was bleeding internally. Without immediate medical attention, he said, she might have died.

I felt a mixture of remorse and exultation—remorse that I had hesitated and exultation that ultimately I had listened to the Holy Ghost. Most of all, I felt grateful to know that the Lord had trusted me to help this injured sister and had inspired my Relief Society president to send me to her.

My own health has deteriorated since this experience, but the Lord still prompts me. I pray always for the strength to follow those promptings. ■

Gayle Y. Brandvold, California, USA

Anita said she felt fine, but I moved away from her bedside, knelt, and prayed.





I unloaded my purse, and there on the bottom with my boarding pass, was an issue of the *Ensign*.

## CAN I GET A BOOK OF MORMON?

As I entered the airport on my way home from a visit with old friends, I felt discouraged that I hadn't shared the gospel on this trip. I always carry a Book of Mormon in my purse to remind me to pray for someone I can give it to, but too often it stays in my purse. This trip was yet another miss.

I took a deep breath and prayed a silent apology. I felt like a terrible member missionary.

As I shuffled through the security line, I felt prompted to speak to the woman ahead of me. We chatted about our destinations and then separated to different lines. As I headed toward my gate, however, I saw the same woman. "Oh, hi again," she said. "Good to see you!"

I asked her when her flight was leaving. "Oh, not for hours—I'm early."

"Well, come and sit with me!" I said.

I still had 45 minutes before my flight boarded, so we sat at my gate and talked about our work. I mentioned some of the writing I do for Latter-day Saints, and suddenly she lit up.

"You're a Mormon?" she asked. "I've been wanting to know more about Mormons. How can I get a copy of the Book of Mormon?"

"Well," I said, opening my purse, "I have one right here."

"Oh, my," she said. "I think maybe we were supposed to meet today."

Gratitude flooded my heart. When she asked what makes Latter-day Saints different from other religions, I felt guided in what to say.

I told her I'd have the missionaries contact her, and then boarding was announced. I opened my purse to get my boarding pass but couldn't find it.

I unloaded my purse. There, on the bottom with the pass, was a general conference issue of the *Ensign*! I gave it to her and thanked the Lord that I had to search for my boarding pass. She mentioned that she usually brings reading material with her but felt she shouldn't this time.

"Maybe it's so I can read this," she said. With my boarding pass in hand, I gave her a hug and said good-bye.

Now we talk each week, and she tells me about her visits with the sister missionaries. It has been a year, and I hope to someday see her baptized. I don't know if that will happen, but I still marvel at the workings of Heavenly Father to help our paths cross. I thank Him for hearing my prayer and granting me the simple opportunity to share a Book of Mormon. ■

Joni Hilton, California, USA

Patience is not an easy lesson to learn, but it's worth it.

# PATIENCE:

## More Than Waiting

By Hillary Olsen

Sister Olsen, we bless you with patience.” Those weren’t the words I wanted to hear. I had been praying all day to have enough faith to be healed. In the blessing, I was promised that I’d eventually get better, but I was assured that it would take time.

I sighed as the elders finished giving me a blessing. I had only three months left on my mission, and I wanted to be out with the people—not sick in bed. I wanted to accept the Lord’s will, but I honestly didn’t understand why He would make me wait.

It took me several days to come to terms with my situation. I had resigned myself to the fact that I wasn’t going to get better right away,



but in the meantime I was miserable—until one day I turned to the scriptures. Eventually, I found the peace I needed in James 1. Joseph Smith found his answer in verse 5—mine was in verses 2–4:

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations [the Joseph Smith Translation changes “divers temptations” to “many afflictions”];

“Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

“But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

As I read those verses, I can’t say that I was suddenly able to “count it all joy” that I was sick, but I did learn some things that helped me feel less miserable about my situation.

The fact that I hadn’t been immediately healed didn’t mean that I didn’t have faith, and it didn’t mean the Lord didn’t care about my situation—quite the opposite, actually. The Lord cared enough to test my faith by not healing me right away so that I could develop patience.

I realized that the Lord wanted me to develop patience because it’s a vital characteristic. Patience refines us. Patience helps us become more like the Savior. I did have important

responsibilities as a full-time missionary, but I realized that when it comes to serving the Lord, He cares just as much about the instrument as He does the task at hand. The Lord was teaching me patience so that I could be a better and more effective missionary in those final months of my mission.

My promised blessing of healing did eventually come, but my lesson in patience didn’t end there. Many blessings in our lives—marriage, employment, children, physical or emotional health, answers to prayers—don’t come right when we expect them to. When you experience delayed answers to prayers, and you likely have or will, commit to patience by trusting in the Lord and His timing. It will bless your life.

### **Perspective on Patience**

I came home from my mission mistakenly feeling that I could check patience off my list of lessons to learn. The thing about patience, though, is that it’s not a lesson we learn only once. Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gave a talk on patience, and I read it for the first time after a rather discouraging breakup with someone I had been dating. I was feeling heartbroken and a little hopeless, and at

that point, the last thing I thought I needed was a reminder to be patient. Surprisingly, though, Elder Maxwell’s insights on patience taught me some powerful concepts that totally changed my perspective (once again) and helped me recommit to patience.

### ***Patience Isn’t Resignation***

For example, I learned that committing to patience doesn’t mean we shrug our shoulders and give up hope. Elder Maxwell taught: “Patience is not indifference. Actually, it means caring very much but being willing, nevertheless, to submit to the Lord and to what the scriptures call the ‘process of time.’”<sup>1</sup> I had always thought of patience as a somewhat passive response to life’s experiences, a sort of relenting. But patience is not relenting. Patience is a manifestation of inner strength and devotion to the Lord.

### ***Patience Is Confident, Not Anxious***

Elder Maxwell also taught: “Patience is a willingness, in a sense, to watch the unfolding purposes of God with a sense of wonder and awe, rather than pacing up and down within the cell of our circumstance. Put another way, too much anxious opening of the oven door and the cake falls instead of rising. So it is with us. If we are always

selfishly taking our temperature to see if we are happy, we will not be.”<sup>2</sup> This idea really resonated with me (and not just because I am an impatient baker). It’s discouraging when plans fall through or don’t pan out as expected. To our mortal minds, divine timing can be hard to understand. But what I *can* understand is that God is a loving Father who has a plan that guarantees eventual happiness if we are faithful, and I am learning to accept His timing with confidence—not with anxiousness.

### ***It’s Not Always about Us***

Because patience tests us at a very personal level, our focus is often inward. But Elder Maxwell taught that “patience also helps us to realize that while we may be ready to move on, having had enough of a particular learning experience, our continued presence is often needed as a part of the learning environment of others.”<sup>3</sup>

Not only do we need patience, but others also need our patience or the example of our patience. This idea had never dawned on me, and it helped me to view patience as a noble quality, very closely tied to charity, the pure love of Christ, which “never faileth” (Moroni 7:46).

### **More Than Waiting**

Even when we have the right perspective, waiting can be hard. But I have learned that patience is more than just waiting. I have learned this from my brother Andrew and his wife, Brianna, as they have dealt with being unable to have children. Although their hopes were crushed when they learned they wouldn’t be able to have children, they found new hope through the prospect of adoption—but that still meant more waiting.

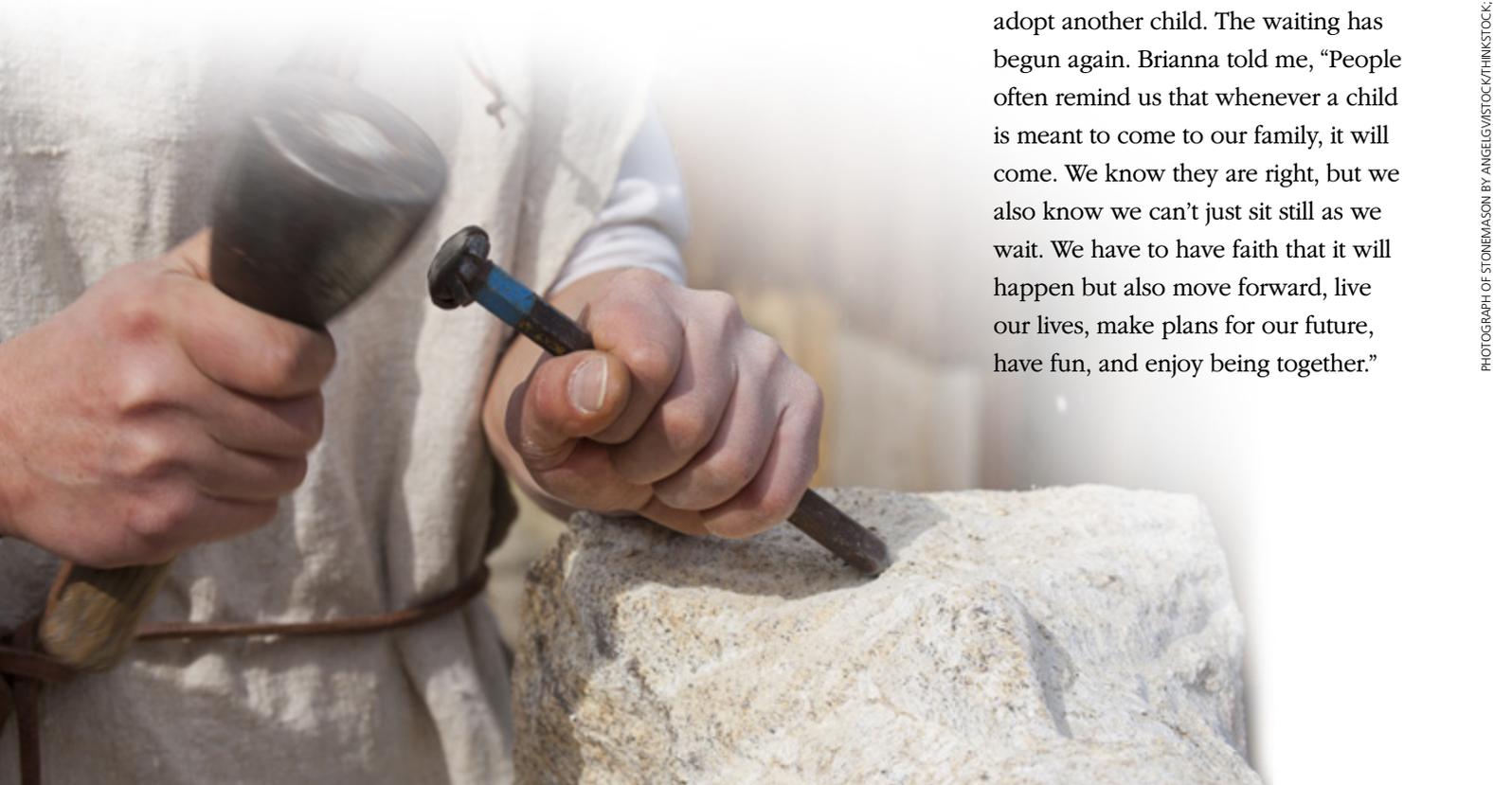
I hesitate to use the word *wait* when referring to them because that word often has very passive

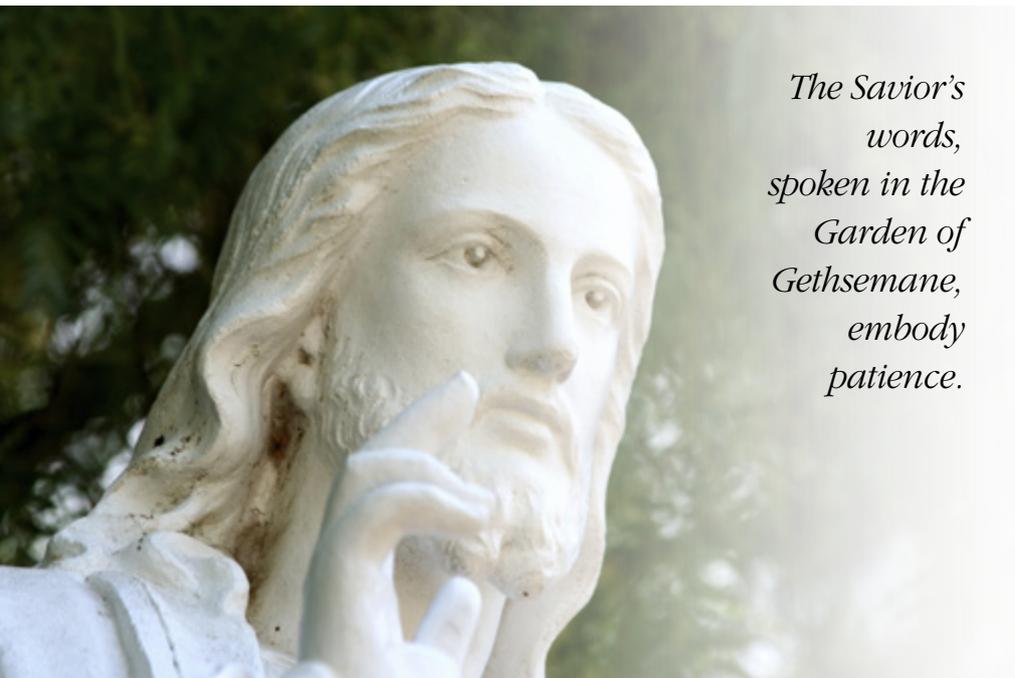
connotations. For them, waiting doesn’t mean biding their time until a child comes—patience is so much more than that.

Andrew said, “So much of adoption is in the Lord’s hands, not ours. But it makes us feel good to have something we can do to work toward our goal of having children in our family.” Whether it’s through blogging, sharing their contact information with friends and family, or getting involved with local groups of adoptive parents, they try to “do all things that lie in [their] power” (D&C 123:17), and then they put their trust in the Lord.

After years of waiting and praying, they were able to adopt a beautiful baby girl named Jessica. As they held her in their arms, years’ worth of disappointment and discouragement faded away. For them, she was and is a miracle.

Five years have now passed since they adopted Jessica, and for the last four years, they have been trying to adopt another child. The waiting has begun again. Brianna told me, “People often remind us that whenever a child is meant to come to our family, it will come. We know they are right, but we also know we can’t just sit still as we wait. We have to have faith that it will happen but also move forward, live our lives, make plans for our future, have fun, and enjoy being together.”





*The Savior's words, spoken in the Garden of Gethsemane, embody patience.*

Father, “Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

My perspective on patience has definitely changed as I have entered adulthood. Patience is a process, and I’ll always be learning. Even though waiting *is* hard, I am learning to “count it all joy” when my patience is tried—not because I find joy in the hardness of it, but because I know that it has glorious purpose. I know that letting “patience have her perfect work” is part of fulfilling my purpose here on earth of one day becoming “perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (James 1:4). ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

#### NOTES

1. Neal A. Maxwell, “Patience” (Brigham Young University devotional, Nov. 27, 1979), 1, [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).
2. Neal A. Maxwell, “Patience,” 2.
3. Neal A. Maxwell, “Patience,” 3.
4. “Be Still, My Soul,” *Hymns*, no. 124.



#### THANK HIM FOR PATIENCE

“If you pray, if you talk to God, and if you plead for the help you need, and if you thank him

not only for help but for the patience and gentleness that come from not receiving all you desire right away or perhaps ever, then I promise you that you will draw closer to him.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Waiting upon the Lord,” (Brigham Young University devotional, Sept. 30, 1990), 4, [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).

Waiting is hard, but Andrew and Brianna have taught me to choose to be happy today. It’s so easy to think, “I will be happy when \_\_\_\_\_,” but we miss out on so much of what life has to offer by postponing our happiness. Even though we sometimes have to put our desires aside to submit to the will of our Father, that doesn’t mean we have to also put our happiness aside. His love can provide strength, fill voids, and instill hope.

#### The Savior’s Example of Patience

The Savior is our ultimate example of patience. To me, His words spoken in the Garden of Gethsemane embody His patience. In the midst of unimaginable suffering and sacrifice,

He asked that, if possible, the cup of His suffering be taken from Him. “Nevertheless,” He said, “not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39). The word *nevertheless* carries a powerful message. In spite of what the Savior really wanted in that moment, He expressed His willingness to accept His Father’s will and to endure.

We’ll all be required to wait for things in our lives—even at times the most righteous desires of our hearts. But Jesus Christ, our “best, [our] heav’nly Friend,”<sup>4</sup> can comfort and reassure us of good things to come. And He is lovingly patient with us as we learn to be like Him, as we learn to face the expected and unexpected plot twists of mortality and say to our



# Mission or Money?

Gelzcke Felix Nogueira

A year after becoming a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I sent in my papers to serve as a full-time missionary. My family was totally against me serving a mission and thought that I should get my master's degree instead. I had recently finished my bachelor's degree, and it was always my dream to get a master's degree when I finished. My professors were willing to help me as well because I was a good student.

As I prepared to leave for my mission, life became very difficult financially for my family. My oldest brother lost his job. A short time later the company where my father had worked for many years began to fail economically, and he was laid off. My father ended up using all of

**No amount of money is equal to the blessing of seeing families prepare to go to the temple and be sealed.**

his government benefits to help my grandmother, and one night I saw him crying because he didn't know how to support the family.

At the time, I was receiving a university scholarship that was about equal to half of a minimum wage salary. When I received my payments, I would always pay my tithing first. But when I received my

most recent payment after my father lost his job, my mother asked me not to give money to the Church because we needed it at home. I told her about tithing and its importance and showed her the promise the Lord gave in Malachi 3:10. Although she wasn't happy, I paid my tithing and I knew that it was right.

While I continued my mission preparation, I entered a competition at a local university just to see how I would do. I passed and was offered a position where I could earn almost the same amount of money that my father had earned in his job. It would be enough to take care of my family until my father could retire. My family hoped that I would take the job.

I prayed a lot, and the Lord responded that I needed to go out to the mission field. I trusted Him and



accepted my call to the Brazil Santa Maria Mission. The Lord blessed my family while I was gone on my mission. I know the windows of heaven were opened (see Malachi 3:10). My father and brother found work again, and the family was able to raise dairy cows for more income.

My testimony of Jesus Christ and His work has grown, and seeing the joy on the faces and the change in the hearts of those I served is something very valuable to me. No amount of money is equal to the blessing of seeing families prepare to go to the temple and be sealed. ■

*The author lives in Ceará, Brazil.*



**TITHING: A TEST OF OUR FAITH**

“My beloved brothers and sisters, the eternal blessings of tithing are real. I have experienced them in my life and in the life of my family.

The test of our faith is whether we will live the law of tithing by our obedience and sacrifice. For, in the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, ‘a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation’ (Joseph Smith, *Lectures on Faith* [1985], 69).”

**Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Tithing: A Test of Faith with Eternal Blessings,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2002, 29.**

*Sweep the earth with messages filled with righteousness and truth.*





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

# FLOOD THE EARTH

## *through Social Media*

**W**e live in a truly distinctive dispensation. A gospel dispensation is a period of time in which the necessary priesthood authority, ordinances, and doctrinal knowledge are found on the earth to implement the Father’s plan of salvation for His children. Essential to the establishment of a dispensation is an authorized servant of God, a dispensation head, who holds and exercises the authority and keys of the holy priesthood. Gospel dispensations were established through Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ, Joseph Smith, and others. In every dispensation gospel truths are revealed anew—or dispensed—so the people of that period are not entirely dependent upon past dispensations for knowledge of Heavenly Father’s plan.

Apostasy from the truth occurred in each previous dispensation. However, the work of salvation that was commenced but not completed in those earlier eras continues into the final dispensation. The Prophet Joseph Smith explained that for this reason, the rolling forward of the latter-day glory, even the dispensation of the fulness of times, “is a cause that has interested the people of God in every age; it is a theme upon which prophets, priests and kings have dwelt with peculiar delight; they have looked forward with joyful anticipation to the day in which we live; and fired with heavenly and joyful anticipations they have sung and written and prophesied of this our day.”<sup>1</sup>

In this greatest and last of all gospel dispensations, “a whole and complete and perfect union, and welding

together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories should take place, and be revealed from the days of Adam even to the present time. And not only this, but those things which never have been revealed from the foundation of the world, but have been kept hid from the wise and the prudent, shall be revealed . . . in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times” (D&C 128:18).

### **The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times and Technology**

We are blessed to live, learn, and serve in this most remarkable dispensation. An important aspect of the fulness that is available to us in this special season is a miraculous progression of innovations and inventions that have enabled and accelerated the work of salvation: from trains to telegraphs to radios to automobiles to airplanes to telephones to transistors to televisions to computers to satellite transmissions to the Internet—and to an almost endless list of technologies and tools that bless our lives. All of these advancements are part of the Lord hastening His work in the latter days.

In 1862 President Brigham Young (1801–77) said: “Every discovery in science and art, that is really true and useful to mankind has been given by direct revelation from God, though but few acknowledge it. It has been given with a view to prepare the way for the ultimate triumph of truth, and the redemption of the earth from the power of sin and Satan.”<sup>2</sup>

Please now consider the words of President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), spoken in 1974, as he described the future of missionary work:

“I believe that the Lord is anxious to put into our hands inventions of which we laymen have hardly had a glimpse. . . .

“With the Lord providing these miracles of communication, and with the increased efforts and devotion of our missionaries and all of us, and all others who are ‘sent,’ surely the divine injunction will come to pass: ‘For, verily, the sound must go forth from this place into all the world, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth—the gospel must be preached unto every creature’ (D&C 58:64).”<sup>3</sup>

And in 1981 President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) taught: “We are confident that as the work of the Lord expands, he will inspire men to develop the means whereby the membership of the Church, wherever they may be, can be counseled in an intimate and personal way by his chosen prophet.”<sup>4</sup>

Messages and pictures that used to require days, weeks, and months to send and receive now can be communicated around the world in seconds. We thank Thee, O God, for the prophets who have taught and prepared us for the time in which we live—and who have urged us to use technological advancements to support the ongoing mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.<sup>5</sup>

The Lord is hastening His work, and it is no coincidence that these powerful communication innovations and inventions are occurring in the dispensation of the fulness of times. Social media channels are global tools that can personally and positively impact large numbers of individuals and families. And I believe the time has come for us as disciples of Christ to use these inspired tools appropriately and more effectively to testify of God the Eternal Father, His plan of happiness for His children, and His Son, Jesus Christ, as the Savior of the world; to proclaim the reality of the Restoration of the gospel in the latter days; and to accomplish the Lord’s work.

Several basic guidelines should be followed as we use social media to convey gospel messages:

## 1. Be Authentic and Consistent

First, we are disciples and our messages should be authentic. A person or product that is not authentic is false, fake, and fraudulent. Our messages should be truthful, honest, and accurate. We should not exaggerate, embellish, or pretend to be someone or something we are not. Our content should be trustworthy and constructive. And anonymity on the Internet is not a license to be inauthentic.

Authenticity is strengthened through consistency. The gospel messages you share will be accepted more readily if your Christlike example is evident in the ongoing pattern of your posts.

Sister Bonnie L. Oscarson is a strong example of the power of consistency in social media. When called to serve as the Young Women general president in April of 2013, her Pinterest followers doubled overnight. Sister Oscarson’s previous pins provided ample evidence of her integrity, prompting one blogger to ask, “Would your Pinterest page pass the Bonnie Oscarson test? . . . Who will people decide you are if all they know is what is on your social media page?”<sup>6</sup>

## 2. Edify and Uplift

Second, we and our messages should seek to edify and uplift rather than to argue, debate, condemn, or belittle.

Share the gospel with genuine love and concern for others. Be courageous and bold but not overbearing in sustaining and defending our beliefs, and avoid contention. As disciples our purpose should be to use social media channels as a means of projecting the light and truth of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ into a world that increasingly is dark and confused.

## 3. Respect Intellectual Property

Third, we and our messages should respect the property of other people and organizations. This simply means that

## SIX EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL MEDIA EFFORTS

Here are several examples of gospel messages and images that have been created by the Church and by its members and communicated to the world through social media.



1. **Because of Him.** A brief Church-produced video honoring the true meaning of Easter. It was viewed more than five million times during Easter week last year in 191 countries and territories. Using the accompanying #BecauseofHim hashtag (something used to identify related social media messages), members and others communicated many of their own thoughts and images about the Savior and His Resurrection in many social channels and places, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. See it at [lds.org/media-library/video/topics/easter](http://lds.org/media-library/video/topics/easter).



2. **Did You Think to Pray?** Church members and others published more than 300 photos of themselves on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and other social channels with signs that completed the phrase “I pray when . . .” In addition, thousands of people used the #DidYouThinktoPray hashtag to share thoughts about when and why they communicate with their Heavenly Father. These simple actions led to more than 40,000 conversations about the need for prayer. See [mormonchannel.org/watch/collection/mormon-channel-videos/i-pray-when-didyouthinktopray](http://mormonchannel.org/watch/collection/mormon-channel-videos/i-pray-when-didyouthinktopray).



3. **Book of Mormon 365.** An Instagram account created by a couple from Arizona, USA, who post a reading assignment from the Book of Mormon every day. The assignments are divided into 365 pieces—the perfect size to allow followers to read the full Book of Mormon in one year. More than 45,000 people now follow this account, with many of them actively sharing their thoughts and impressions as they read the Book of Mormon together.

The Lord is hastening His work, and it is no coincidence that these powerful communication innovations and inventions are occurring in the dispensation of the fulness of times.

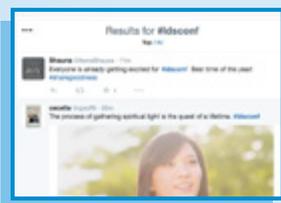


#### 4. **General Authority Social Media**

**Accounts.** Last summer the Church established an official Instagram account.

The members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles now specifically

choose photos of themselves to be posted. Some of the Brethren now have their own Twitter accounts. All of the Brethren also have their own Facebook pages on which they communicate important gospel messages. Find their pages at [lds.org/media-library/social](http://lds.org/media-library/social).



5. **#LDSconf.** The #LDSconf hashtag, now displayed on the lower left corner of the screen during general conference broadcasts, was created in October 2008 by a faithful member looking for an opportunity

to follow and share conference-related tweets—long before the Church started using it. Thousands of members participate in the #LDSconf hashtag conversation about counsel from living prophets and apostles, and through it millions of people around the world are edified by general conference messages.



6. **Meet the Mormons.** A Church-produced feature-length film to help those not of our faith better understand us as a people. This film addresses common misperceptions about our beliefs

and highlights the blessings that come from living the gospel of Jesus Christ. The film can be viewed on DVD, in visitors' centers, on Internet movie channels, and on social media channels. For more information, visit [meetthemormons.com](http://meetthemormons.com). This movie is one additional way members can share their beliefs with family and friends in a simple and effective way.



I exhort you to sweep the earth with messages filled with righteousness and truth—messages that are authentic, edifying, and praiseworthy.

you should not create your own content using someone else's art, name, photos, music, video, or other content without permission. The content in the Media Library on LDS.org, unless otherwise indicated, has been cleared for use by members without seeking permission from the Church. Additional information about the use of Church media can be found at [social.lds.org](http://social.lds.org).

When you share messages online, make sure others understand that you are expressing your personal thoughts and feelings. Please do not use the Church logo or otherwise suggest that you are speaking for or on behalf of the Church.

#### 4. Be Wise and Vigilant

Fourth, be wise and vigilant in protecting yourself and those you love. We should remember that the Internet never forgets. Anything you communicate through a social media channel indeed will live forever—even if the app or program may promise otherwise. Only say it or post it if you want the entire world to have access to your message or picture for all time.

Following these simple guidelines will enable members of the Church around the world to create and share gospel messages that will cause the light to “shine forth out of darkness” (Mormon 8:16).

#### An Apostolic Invitation

What has been accomplished thus far in this dispensation communicating gospel messages through social media channels is a good beginning—but only a small trickle. I now extend to you the invitation to help transform the trickle into a flood. Beginning this day, I exhort you to sweep the earth with messages filled with righteousness and truth—messages that are authentic, edifying, and praiseworthy—and literally to sweep the earth as with a flood (see Moses 7:59–62).

I pray we will not simply participate in a flash flood that rises swiftly and then recedes just as rapidly. I am not suggesting a one-time glitzy initiative from which

we quickly move on to the next task on our lengthy list of gospel things to do. We need not become social media experts or fanatics. And we do not need to spend inordinate amounts of time creating and disseminating elaborate messages.

Imagine the impact we can have as hundreds of thousands and millions of members of the Lord's restored Church contribute in seemingly small ways to the rising floodwaters. May our many small, individual efforts produce a steady rainfall of righteousness and truth that gradually swells a multitude of streams and rivers—and ultimately becomes a flood that sweeps the earth. “Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great” (D&C 64:33).

We have been and are blessed in so many ways; and where much is given, much is required. I pray that you may come to understand more fully the spiritual significance and blessing of living in the dispensation of the fulness of times, that you may have eyes to see clearly both the possibilities and the pitfalls of the remarkable technologies that are available to us today, that you may increase in your capacity to use these inspired tools appropriately, and that you may receive inspiration and guidance about the role you should play in helping to sweep the earth as with a flood of truth and righteousness. As you press forward in this holy work, I promise you will be blessed in mortality in the individual, specific, and necessary ways that will prepare you for eternity. ■

*From an address given on August 19, 2014, during Campus Education Week at Brigham Young University.*

#### NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 186.
2. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 18–19.
3. Spencer W. Kimball, “When the World Will Be Converted,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1974, 10–11.
4. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Faith: The Essence of True Religion,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 5.
5. See “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet,” *Hymns*, no. 19.
6. “Would Your Pinterest Page Pass the Bonnie Oscarson Test?” [latterdaysaintwoman.com](http://latterdaysaintwoman.com).

“My parents were married in the temple, but now they’re divorced. I’m angry that they have broken up our family. How do I forgive them?”

**D**ivorce is sad and difficult for all members of the family. Feelings of anger, loss, and hurt are normal. However, dwelling on negative feelings keeps you from peace and healing. Pray to Heavenly Father to help you get rid of harmful feelings and to understand your parents. Realize that they are also hurting.

Remember that Jesus Christ—who suffered for all of our sorrows and sins—is willing to forgive each of us. We too should forgive others. (See the parable of the debtors in Matthew 18:23–35.) Your parents will be grateful for your selfless gift of forgiveness. As you and your family members let go of anger and blame, your whole family will be strengthened and better able to adjust. Those who forgive “rise to a higher level of self-esteem and well-being” (James E. Faust, “The Healing Power of Forgiveness,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2007, 68).

In this difficult time, it’s important to continue to build your family relationships, especially with your parents. In the years to come, you can rely on and cherish those relationships. Don’t let angry feelings prevent these important relationships from growing.

Have faith in Heavenly Father’s plan for you and your family. Believe that “all these things . . . shall be for thy good” (D&C 122:7). Believe that He will continue to guide and bless your life. Believe that you can have a wonderful marriage one day and that God will provide for your family in this life and in the eternities.

Forgiveness is a process and takes time. Be patient with your efforts to love, forgive, and understand your parents. Look forward to the peace and happiness that come from forgiving.

#### Pray to Understand

When my parents divorced, it was hard on my siblings and me. It took several years for me to forgive my father. I had to study the scriptures and pray with all my heart. I even talked to a counselor. Then I prayed to understand my dad. My eyes were opened, and I understood him, and it helped me heal. I was able to forgive, and I was freed from the chains that had held me down for so long. I know that the Savior’s Atonement is real. The Lord loves us and will never leave us comfortless.

*Name withheld*



#### Trust Heavenly Father and Forgive

I’ve gone through this same situation, and I know it’s a tough one.

It’s important to realize that although your parents may not love each other anymore, they still love you because you are their child. Also, trust in Heavenly Father. He has commanded us to forgive everyone. He knows you and has a plan for you. If we continue to live worthily, I know that we can receive the promise of having an eternal family, even though our families here on earth may be a little broken.

*Ashley W., age 17, Texas, USA*



### Show Your Love

Think about how much you love your parents. Remember all the fun you had with them before it happened. Talk with them about those times and plan activities with your mom and dad individually. Play games with them and show your love toward them.

*Sierra J., age 15, Idaho, USA*



### Try to Understand

Try to put yourself in their shoes. It won't be easy to forgive them if you don't try

to understand their situation. Trust that God has a plan for you and your family and that we have trials in this life so that we can learn and progress. Sometimes we can't control our circumstances, but we can control our attitude. Although it might be difficult, try to always look for the good in your parents and think about how you can help.

*Elder Caten, age 20, Argentina Córdoba Mission*



### Get Support from Others

I was able to get through my parents' divorce and forgive

them with help from the people around me. My friends, leaders, siblings, and family members helped me through everything. I was able to go on with my life with support from everyone.

*Geena C., age 18, New Mexico, USA*



### Let Go of the Bitterness

Feeling bitter is harmful and goes against the teachings of the

Church. Pray to Heavenly Father, fast, and read the scriptures to look for answers. If you hold on to bitterness, you will be allowing Satan to enter and destroy your family because he knows how important families are in our Heavenly Father's plan.

*Carol M., age 14, Honduras*

### Seek for the Holy Ghost

First, none of us is perfect, except for our Lord Jesus Christ. I would try to see the situation through your parents' eyes. Choose a good time and go talk to them. Don't criticize your parents for what they did. Second, many people turn bitter during trials like these, so try to have the Holy



### FORGIVENESS HEALS

"In many families, there are hurt feelings and a reluctance to

forgive. It doesn't really matter what the issue was. It cannot and should not be left to injure. Blame keeps wounds open. Only forgiveness heals."

*President Thomas S. Monson, "Hidden Wedges," Ensign, May 2002, 19; Liahona, July 2002, 20-21.*

Spirit with you. Do your personal scripture study and say your daily prayers.

*Ashley P., age 15, Utah, USA*

## UPCOMING QUESTION

"I have a friend who feels like she doesn't have any friends at church except me. What can I do to help her?"

Submit your answer and, if desired, a high-resolution photograph by September 1, 2015, at [liahona.lds.org](http://liahona.lds.org), by email to [liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org), or by mail (see address on page 3).

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.

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



  
**SUNDAY LESSONS**  
 .....  
 This Month's Topic:  
**Marriage and Family**

# RECIPE

## for a Happy Family

*Here are nine ways you can strengthen your family.*

**By Mindy Anne Leavitt**  
 Church Magazines

**A**s far as important doctrines within the gospel of Jesus Christ go, the family is definitely high on the list. You young women regularly recite your commitment “to strengthen home and family,”<sup>1</sup> you young men are invited to “make a list of ways you can help build a happy home,”<sup>2</sup> and both young men and young women are reminded: “Your family will be blessed as you do your part to strengthen it.”<sup>3</sup>

So what’s the best way to strengthen your family and help create a happy home? “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” has the answer! This important document describes why families are so important in Heavenly Father’s plan and what exactly we can do to strengthen our family relationships. It also explains exactly how we

can be happier in our families. There’s no secret recipe—just the basic principles of the gospel we’ve been taught all along: “Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities.”<sup>4</sup>

There you have it—the simple formula for creating a happy family and improving your eternal family relationships. That’s not to say it doesn’t require work and effort on your part, however. But all the effort you put into strengthening your family will ultimately make you—and them—happier.

Here are some ideas on what these principles could look like when put into practice.

## FAITH

- Participate in family and personal scripture study and family home evening.
- Make a goal with your family to better keep a commandment, such as the law of the fast or the law of tithing.
- Make plans to listen to the upcoming general conference or to study the previous general conference together as a family.

## PRAYER

- Participate in family prayer.
- In your personal prayers, pray for each family member specifically, by name. Think about their needs as you pray for them.

## REPENTANCE

- Say you're sorry; say it often. And mean it.
- Learn about the importance of Christ's Atonement and the sacrament together and the role they both play in the repentance process.

## FORGIVENESS

- Be humble and recognize that everyone, even parents, makes mistakes.
- Remember what you love about those who've hurt or offended you.
- Pray for help in forgiving others.

## YOUTH EXPERIENCES

We asked some youth how they practice these principles in their own families. Here's what they said about their experiences:

### FAITH

I chose to arrange the next two family home evenings, focusing on faith. I started off by preparing the lessons and trying to learn the chords on the guitar for the songs we would sing.

The first lesson was on faith. I asked what we as a family could change to grow our faith. They replied, "Praying, studying scriptures, fasting, going to church," and so on. We agreed that there are many things you can do to grow your faith, but the most important thing is to actually do them. It's important that you act in order to strengthen your faith.

The second lesson was on spiritual gifts. We talked about what faith and spiritual gifts had to do with each other.

Our faith-themed family home evenings went really well. We improved some things in our family; we had fun and tried not to just get it over with. We felt the Spirit together as a family.

*Riza S., age 16, Roskilde, Denmark*

### PRAYER

I decided to practice my faith by praying and asking God for help and guidance. At first I didn't realize the impact of my prayers, but after a few days I found that we had more peace at home.

But then my faith was challenged. My youngest brother was hurt and had to have immediate surgery, one of my friends was also hurt badly, and my mother got a sore throat with a high fever. All these horrible circumstances expelled the feelings of peace around me. I was very sad but continued to pray. My grandmother's favorite poem came to mind, which says that God knows all things better than we do and that we should trust Him. So I started to

practice my faith even more and do everything I could. Not much later my brother was able to leave the hospital. My friend was not hurt as badly as it had first appeared. My mother recovered.

Now when I pray for others, I pray with more focus and more faith than before. We should have faith in God, especially when believing in Him and His plans is hard, and never complain because He knows best.

*Jarom K., age 18, Graz, Austria*

## REPENTANCE

I have realized how much repentance affects everything. For example, for some months I was committing sins and not repenting of them, and I was finding it difficult to break this cycle. But after speaking with the bishop and other close friends, I was able to use the repentance process and feel so much closer to God and feel happier again. In praying hard and spending lots of time reading my scriptures, I realized that I had to change how I was living some parts of my life. I realize now how much I have grown because of this. Through this experience I was able to get much closer to my mum and dad especially.

Although I still have temptations and still commit sins, I am able to use the Savior's Atonement to repent and

review how I have done every day and try to always want to improve. I will be forever grateful for the Atonement in my life.

*Billy P., age 17, Ipswich, England*

## WORK

Since I consider family history a type of work, I decided to make my own family history book. So I made a compilation of all the pictures of the members of my family. I did that so that my kids and my great-grandchildren will be able to see how their ancestors looked. And while I was doing it, I felt so peaceful because I knew I wasn't doing it for myself, but I was also doing it for generations to come.

*Glory S., age 18, Johannesburg, South Africa*

*Youth in South Africa created a video about how they applied the principle of work in their families. To watch their video, see this article at [liahona.lds.org](http://liahona.lds.org).*

## WHOLESUME RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

My first attempt at doing recreational activities with my siblings was rough, to say the least. But a turning point for me was a trip to the Blue Ridge Mountains. The leaves were every color, and the amusement park was fun, but moments of curt words, selfish actions, and



## RESPECT

- Obey your parents.
- Don't speak badly or unkindly of anyone in your family.
- Look for the positive qualities you see in each family member. Share with them what you admire about them.

## LOVE

- Pray for charity—the Savior's love—for the members of your family.
- Find ways to serve your family.
- Write notes of encouragement and love. Hide them in lunch boxes, purses, or wallets for your family members to find later.

## COMPASSION

- Encourage family members to share their feelings and try to understand each other.
- Comfort each other through hard times and try to bear one another's burdens (see Mosiah 18:8-9).

## WORK

- Offer to prepare a meal for the family.
- Help out with things around the house, such as mowing the lawn, weeding the garden, or cleaning windows.
- Help your younger siblings with their schoolwork.

## WHOLESOME RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Help plan family outings, vacations, or activities your family might enjoy doing together.
- Go digital-less. Turn off the TV and other electronics while you're with your family.

teasing gone wrong often dampened the mood. Before we left, my sister and I hiked up a small hill and sat quietly as we listened to the nature around us. It was the first time in a while that we had sat without quarreling, quietly discussing the days ahead and our current struggles. The Spirit was present, bringing peace I had forgotten.

I started to try to go out of my way to talk to my siblings, ask them about their day, give them a hug—just be involved in their life. I helped my youngest, autistic brother with his homework. I helped my youngest sister make grammar flash cards and create silly rhymes to memorize the different parts of speech. On her next test she had improved by more than 20 points and received her highest test grade. The joy I felt from those moments was different and more profound than I had expected.

Being in a family can be hard, but in times like those it is all worth it. Those little moments lead to ones of fun, games, and laughter; and I have felt a new unity in my family. ■

*Emily C., age 17, North Carolina, USA*

### NOTES

1. "Young Women Theme," *Young Women Personal Progress* (booklet, 2009), 3.
2. *Duty to God* (booklet, 2010), 80.
3. *For the Strength of Youth* (booklet, 2011), 14.
4. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129.



# THE SABBATH IS A DELIGHT

Five ways to make your Sundays more meaningful.



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**W**ith the challenges going on around us, honoring the Sabbath takes on added significance as it helps us to stay spiritually strong. These youth from Eastern Europe share their thoughts about how the Sabbath strengthens them—and how it can strengthen you too.

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## BECOME CLOSER TO THE LORD

**T**he Sabbath is a day when I can fully give myself to the Lord. I try not to waste time but instead use it to become better and to come closer to Heavenly Father. On Sundays I am really happy to serve the Church members by sitting near them to show that they are not forgotten. Serving others brings me happiness.

For me, the Sabbath is a day of learning, happiness, and joy as I learn to serve the Lord. I keep the Sabbath day as holy as I can. Trusting in Heavenly Father in all things will bring us joy and happiness on the earth and in heaven with Him and His Son, Jesus Christ.

*Arvis B., age 18, Latvia*

## TAKE THE SACRAMENT

**E**very day I look forward to the day when I can go to church and partake of the sacrament. I cannot wait until I can put on my Sunday clothes, prepare myself, go to church, and once again renew covenants with God.

Sometimes when I get up in the morning, I am grumpy. But when I go to church and partake of the sacrament, attend my meetings, and study the scriptures, I feel the Holy Ghost, and this lifts my spirits. It is important to partake of the sacrament each week, since our Savior Himself showed us what we need to do.

*Diana D., age 14, Latvia*

## STUDY THE SCRIPTURES WITH OTHERS

**A**tending our Sunday services and partaking of the sacrament fill us with the Spirit for the whole week. We get more information from the scriptures, and the experiences of our teachers help us understand the scriptures better. When we study the scriptures together, we can gain new insights into them and learn from each other.

*Antonina B., age 18, Central Federal District, Russia*

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### KEEP UNSPOTTED

“And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day;

“For verily this is a day appointed unto you to rest from your labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High.”

**Doctrine and Covenants 59:9-10**



### A DAY OF REST

“God gave us this special day, not for amusement or daily labor but for a rest from duty, with physical and spiritual relief.”

Elder Russel M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Sabbath Is a Delight,” *Liahona*, May 2015, 129.

### CHOOSE ACTIVITIES TO KEEP THE SPIRIT

Jesus’s request to tarry and watch with Him (see Matthew 26:38) touched my heart and led me to the realization that the Sabbath day is a day when we can partake of the sacrament as a token of remembrance for His service to us.

The more I think about this, the more I want to know Him. This kind of striving helps me choose the right things on a day that is free from all worldly cares: Sunday. These things include reading and studying the scriptures, serving my family, watching uplifting movies, sharing spiritual insights with friends, and constant prayer. The more I turn my heart to Jesus, the more I come to know and draw nearer to Him. I cannot name a single blessing more wonderful than this.

*Sister Aleksandrovna C., age 25, Russia Novosibirsk Mission*

### BE UPLIFTED BY THE SPIRIT

For me the Sabbath day is an opportunity to study the gospel of Jesus Christ in greater depth. Without a doubt, a person who comes to church prepared and desiring to participate in the sacrament and who is trying to learn will receive blessings and be uplifted by the Spirit, not just on Sunday but throughout the following week.

There are many opportunities outside the walls of the church where we can keep the Sabbath holy: spending time with family, helping the missionaries, serving in the ward, and reading Church literature. The Sabbath day is a time to understand God’s laws. When we recognize this and thank God for this opportunity, we will have no difficulty keeping the Sabbath day holy.

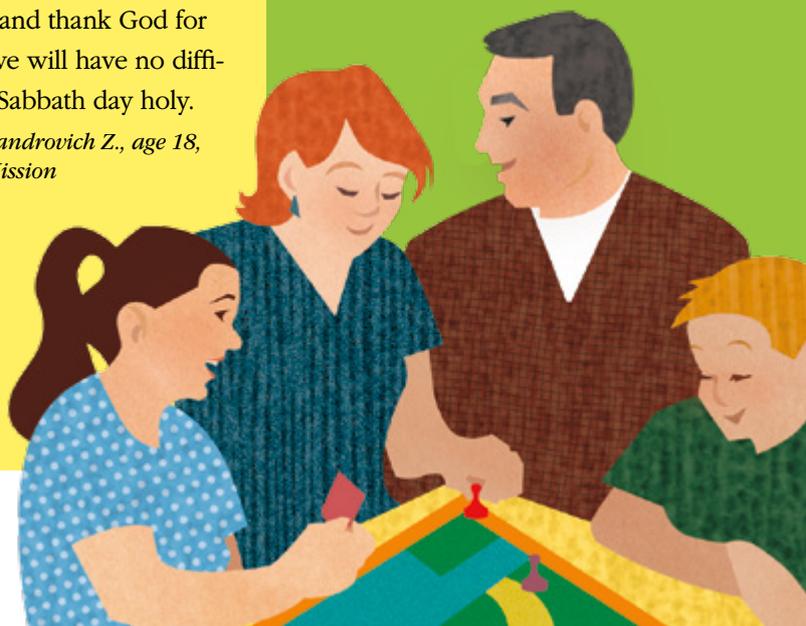
*Elder Vladimir Aleksandrovich Z., age 18, Russia Novosibirsk Mission*

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“If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

“Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord.”

**Isaiah 58:13-14**



# WAITING WITH FAITH

*I waited for years but never gave up hope that my parents would join the Church.*



By Mikaeli Duarte da Silva

I was introduced to the Church by my aunt and uncle, who live near my home. I was only seven years old at the time, and I loved going to church to be with the other children. My parents were not members, but they did not mind that I went to church every Sunday with my aunt and uncle. My parents said that it was much better for me to be involved with a church that taught of Jesus Christ than to be out in the streets getting into trouble.

The missionaries came often to our home to teach us. My parents loved the discussions, but they did not want to embrace the gospel. They said that they were not ready because entering the waters of baptism is a serious commitment. The missionaries continued to come to our home, but they always left disappointed with the answers my parents gave. I knew, however, that one day they would be baptized.

When I turned eight, I was ready to make the baptismal covenant. My mom asked me if that was what I really wanted. She told me that once I was baptized, I could not change my mind and that baptism would change my entire life. I said that being baptized was something I had dreamed about since I first started going to Primary.

After I was baptized and confirmed, I continued to go to church, but my parents rarely came to our Primary

activities. It was painful for me to see all the other children with their parents. But I hoped that one day they would be baptized and we would be sealed in the temple, and my greatest dream would become a reality.

When I was a teenager, the missionaries continued to teach my parents, but they still did not want to be baptized. However, they would occasionally come to church, which gave me a little hope. I still dreamed that my parents would join the Church, but I began to think that it would never come to pass in this life.

Then one beautiful Sunday morning when I was 17, my mother again went to church with me. On our way home she told me something that I can still hear in my thoughts and in my heart. She said that she had decided to be baptized. I was shocked! After waiting for so long, I wondered if this was real. In May 2010, my mother entered the waters of baptism. It was such a happy day.

After the baptism I looked at my father and said, “You’re the only one left now.” He responded that it would not be soon because he didn’t feel the desire to be baptized. I was again sad—part of my dream had come true, but the rest seemed far away. Although it was hard, I was certain that things would change. To my great happiness, my prayers were again answered two months later

when my father entered the waters of baptism. It was the greatest joy of my life. I felt as though the heavens were singing.

After my parents joined the Church, I realized that another part of my dream had come true but that we needed to be sealed for eternity in the house of the Lord. My parents told me they didn’t feel ready, that they didn’t have enough money for the long trip to the Recife Brazil Temple, and that they didn’t have anyone to watch our home while we were gone. I was sad, but I kept praying for that blessing, knowing that the Lord would answer my prayers.

In time my mother began to feel a strong desire to go to the temple, even though my father continued to put it off. After many conversations with the bishop, they both decided to go. I felt so much joy I could barely contain it!

In September 2011, my mother, my father, and I went to the temple for the first time in our lives. I was sealed to my parents the next day, and I can truly say that, after 11 years of waiting, it was the best day of my life.

I am very grateful to Heavenly Father for everything He has given to me, especially for answering my prayers and fulfilling my greatest dream: the dream of seeing my whole family in the house of the Lord. ■

*The author lives in Ceará, Brazil.*

# Shelly's Race

By Jan Pinborough  
Church Magazines  
Based on a true story

*"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee" (Isaiah 41:10).*

"Hey, Shelly!" Shelly looked up from tying her old running shoes to see Rosa waving from the starting line. "Come on," Rosa called out. "Today we're going to beat our best time!"

Shelly grinned. Rosa said that every practice.

Shelly liked two things about her new middle school. The first thing was being on the track team. When she ran, she felt light inside, like she didn't need to worry about anything.

The second thing she liked was that nobody here knew that her parents had just gotten divorced.

*Lately it seemed like no one could give Shelly the help she needed.*

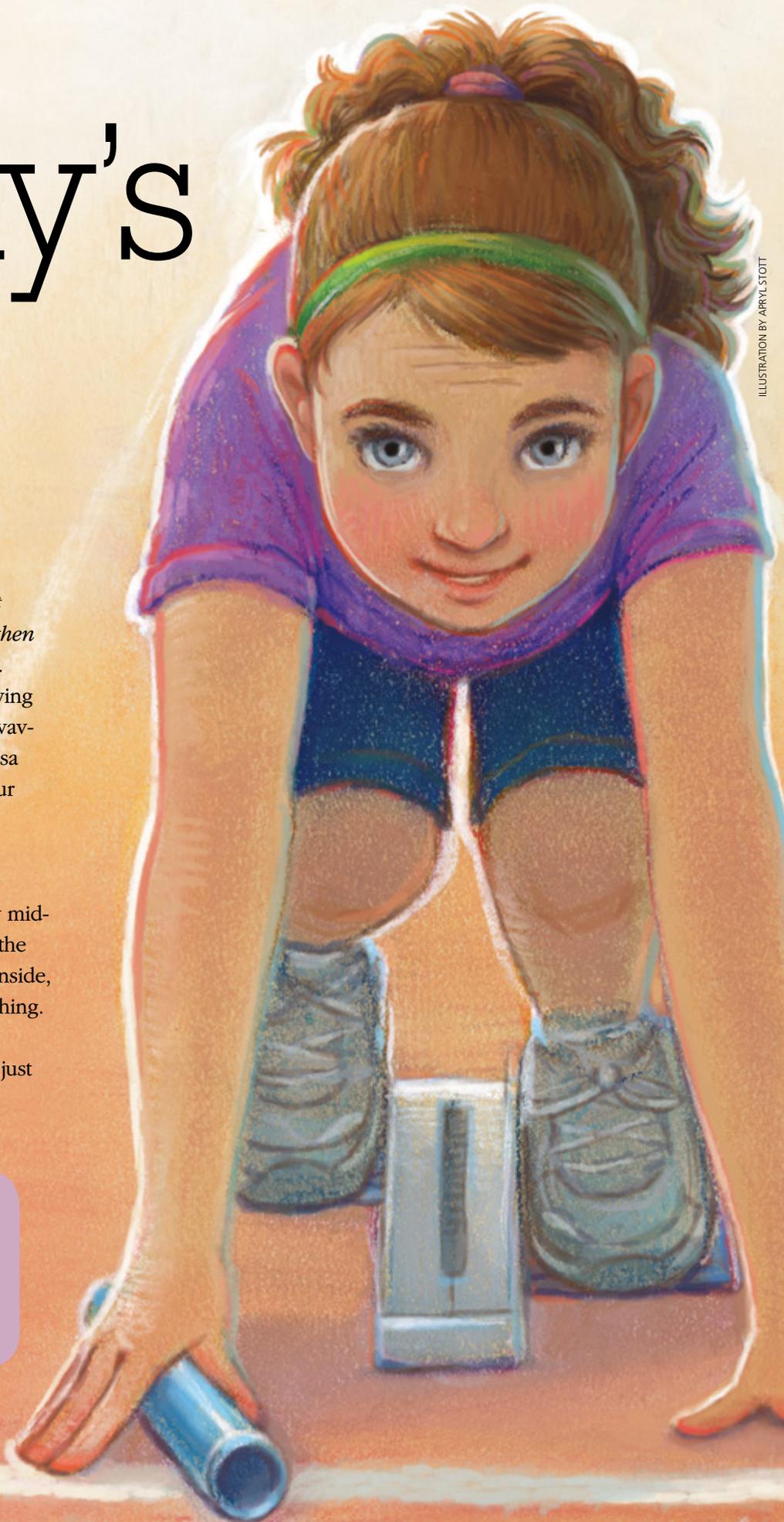


ILLUSTRATION BY APRYL STOTT

Shelly gave her shoelace one last tug and took off to join the other girls on the relay team. *Ouch!* She winced as her toes jammed into the end of her running shoes. How was she going to tell Dad she needed new shoes again?

After the race, Shelly, Rosa, Becca, and Tiana were celebrating their new best relay time. “I told you we were going to do it today!” Rosa said.

Shelly laughed. She handed the baton to their track teacher and bent to loosen her laces.

“Good work, girls,” Ms. Goldmann said. “You work really well together. Don’t forget to pay your track fee tomorrow.”

Shelley’s smile faded. She had totally forgotten about that!

On the bus ride home, all Shelly could think about was the shoes and the track fee. She didn’t want to give Mom one more thing to worry about. And the last time she had called to ask Dad for extra money, he had sounded annoyed. Lately it seemed like there was no one who could give her the help she needed.

When she got home, Shelly went straight to her room. At dinner her brothers and sisters talked and joked, but she just pushed her food around her plate.

After dinner Mom helped Shelly clear the table. “I’m meeting with Bishop Parker tonight,” Mom said. “Would you like to come and get a priesthood blessing?”

Shelly nodded. She really missed the blessings Dad used to give her when she was worried or sick.

A little later, as Bishop Parker gave her a blessing, Shelly felt something deep inside her relax. “Shelly, your dad isn’t in your home to help you now,” he said in the blessing. “But your Heavenly Father is always there. I bless you that you will be able to talk to Him just as you would to your dad, and Heavenly Father will always help you.”

Shelly felt lighter than she had for a long time. She had a warm feeling



“As you keep the commandments and pray in faith to see the Lord’s hand in your life, I promise you that He will open your spiritual eyes even wider, and you will see more clearly that you are not alone.”

**Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Thy Kingdom Come,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2015, 121–22.**

inside that told her the bishop’s words were true. Heavenly Father loved her and would listen to her. With His help, maybe she could even have the courage to talk to her parents.

On the way home, she told Mom about the shoes and the track fee. That night she knelt and asked Heavenly Father to help her have the courage to talk to her dad. She prayed about it again on the bus to school the next morning. By the time she got home from school, she felt brave enough to call her dad. This time he didn’t seem impatient or annoyed when she told him what she needed. Her prayers had been answered.

A few weeks later, Shelly laced up her new running shoes and ran to join Rosa and the other girls. It felt good to know she had a great team supporting her. She didn’t need to run her race alone. ■



# Help!

## Someone's Getting a Divorce

By Katherine Nelson

When parents get divorced, kids often feel scared, worried, guilty, mad, confused, relieved, or sad—sometimes all at the same time. If this has happened to you or one of your friends, here are some thoughts that might help.

**I feel left out. It seems like everyone but me has perfect families.**

No family is perfect, even if they seem that way.

Remember that your parents, bishop, Primary teachers, neighbors, and friends in the ward all love you.

Sometimes people might say things that hurt your feelings without meaning to. When that happens, don't be afraid to tell them

how you feel and help them see a better way to talk to you about the divorce.

**I'm mad at my mom and dad.**

It's easy to feel angry when there's nothing you can do about a situation. You might even want to take your mad feelings out on others. Even though it can be hard, keep trying to show love for your family. Pray for help to see your parents as Jesus sees them. He loves them, you, and everyone else in your family.

If you can't stop feeling angry, talk to your mom or dad or someone else you trust. They can help you find healthy ways to feel better, like exercising or making art.

But the truth is that it's not your fault at all. They made the decision to get divorced. The children in the family are not responsible for the divorce.

**I'm scared about what will happen next.**

When big changes happen, it's natural to worry about the future. Talk to your mom and dad. They want to know when you're upset, and they can help with concerns and questions you have. Be sure to pray for comfort.

**Will I be with my parents in heaven?**

Because of Jesus's Atonement, everything will work out after we die. You don't have to worry. No matter what, you'll always be part of your heavenly parents' family. If you keep trying to choose the right, you'll have all the blessings Heavenly Father has planned for you.

**I feel really sad all the time.**

It's OK to feel sad. Being sad about such a big change is an important step to feeling better later. Even though you might feel sad sometimes, keep doing things you love to do. Spend time outside. Read a good book. Listen to happy music. Try hard in school. Have fun with your friends. Pray to Heavenly Father.

**Is it my fault my parents got divorced?**

You may think you could have helped your parents stay together.

If your sad feelings last a really long time and make it hard for you to sleep, eat, focus on school, or do things you normally like doing, talk to a grown-up you trust so he or she can help you feel better again.



"We believe that we were, and still are, members of [Heavenly Father's] family."

Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Why Marriage and Family Matter—Everywhere in the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 41.

### Things will get better.

No matter what you're feeling now, you'll start to feel better with time. In the meantime, keep praying to Heavenly Father for comfort. Remember that Heavenly Father and Jesus are always watching over you and will never leave you alone. They love you and your parents and will help all of you. They will give you the strength to feel peaceful and happy. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

What has helped you get through a tough time like divorce? How can you help others through tough times?

By Amie Jane Leavitt

Based on a true story

*"I want to be kind to ev'ryone,  
for that is right, you see"*

(Children's Songbook, 145).

I'm so excited for recess!" Ally told Lauren as they put their lunch boxes back on the shelf in their classroom. "Tami just said we're all going to play tag together on the playground today."

"Fun!" Lauren said. "I love tag."

Lauren was happy and surprised that Tami had invited Ally to play. Tami had always been mean to Ally. Lauren was glad she was finally trying to be nice.

"I need to take a book to the library first, so make sure they don't start without me." Ally smiled as she ran down the hall to the library.

Lauren raced out to the playground. When she got there, Tami was already gathering the other kids into a circle. Lauren ran over to join them.

"Hurry up, everyone!" Tami called as she motioned everyone into a tight huddle. "I have a fun idea I want to tell everyone before Ally gets out here."

# Tag, You're It!





## NO PLACE FOR BULLYING

"In the gospel of Jesus Christ, there is no place for ridicule [or] bullying."

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Spiritual Whirlwinds," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 20.

Lauren smiled. That awful feeling in her stomach was gone.

"Good idea!" Lauren said. "There's Ally coming over right now."

She turned and tapped Damon on the shoulder. "Tag, you're it!" she yelled, then raced toward Ally. And all the kids came racing after. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

*Lauren and Ally live in Canada. They are in high school now and are still great friends.*

Lauren didn't feel very good about this.

All the kids squeezed into the huddle to hear. "Instead of tagging everyone like we usually do," Tami said, "let's just tag Ally. But no one better tell her, or else!" Tami giggled. She seemed so proud of herself.

Lauren looked at the other kids in the circle. A lot of these kids hadn't

been nice to Ally since kindergarten. That's when the kids really started being mean to Ally. They would make fun of her and tease her. Most times Tami started it and the other kids would follow.

Lauren had never liked how they treated Ally. She decided right then that she wouldn't follow along with them. She knew everyone was a child of God and should be treated with kindness.

She took a deep breath and looked Tami in the eyes. "That doesn't sound like a fun idea to me. I don't think we should treat Ally like that. So I don't want to play."

Lauren walked out of the circle and started back toward the school alone to find Ally.

At least she thought she was alone.

Then she heard, "Hey, wait up!" Lauren turned around and there were most of the kids from Tami's circle. She couldn't believe it!

"Let's go find Ally and start our own game of tag," Damon said.

"I want to play too!" Lea said. The others nodded.



*It didn't seem like such a fun idea—at least, not for Ally.*



# STAND

for the

# RIGHT

*Our prophet has some words for you,  
And these are the words: "Be true, be true."  
At work or at play, in darkness or light,  
Be true, be true, and stand for the right.  
(Children's Songbook, 159)*

Here's how I  
can stand for the right!

Follow Jesus Christ

Good books

Good friends

Good music

Good videos and  
other media

Good words

Honesty

Kindness

Modesty

Respect



ILLUSTRATION BY HOLLIE HOBERT

# Dare to Do Right

(Simplified)

Words by George L. Taylor  
Music arr. by A. C. Smyth

*Boldly* ♩. = 44-54 (Conduct two beats to a measure.)

C F C D<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup>

Dare to do right! Dare to be true! You have a work that no oth-er can do;

C F C G

Do it so brave - ly, so kind - ly, so well, An - gels will has - ten the

C G<sup>7</sup> C G C F C

sto - ry to tell. Dare, dare, dare to do right; Dare, dare,

G C F A<sup>7</sup> Dm G<sup>7</sup> C

dare to be true, Dare to be true, dare to be true.

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# Fast Friends



*Could a bad video game cost him his new friend?*

**By Amanda Michaelis**

Based on a true story

*“Choose the right when a choice is placed before you” (Hymns, no. 239).*

Diego trudged up the hill on his way home from school. Recess was usually the best part of the day. But all week it had been terrible! No one wanted to play football with him, so he just walked around the playground by himself until the bell rang.

“Mom, I’m home!” Diego yelled as he slid through the door and sat down in the kitchen.

“How was school?” Mom asked.

“Not so good.” Diego grabbed an apple. “No one wanted to play with me at recess.” He could feel tears coming, so he squeezed his eyes shut.

“It’s hard feeling lonely or left out,” Mom said. She put her hand on Diego’s shoulder. “Maybe you could say a prayer for help.”

Diego rubbed his eyes. “Thanks, Mom,” he said and ran to his room. Did Heavenly Father really care whether he had friends to play with at recess? Diego knelt down and prayed that he could find a friend. When he finished, he felt a little better, but he still had no idea what to do.

After school the next day, the doorbell rang. Diego ran to answer the door. There was a new boy in the neighborhood standing there. Diego had seen him on the playground today.

“Hi, I’m Ruben,” he said. “Do you want to play at my house?”

Diego grinned. A friend to play with? It was an answer to his prayer!

They walked over to Ruben’s house and sat down on the couch. Ruben’s older brother was playing a video game. Diego didn’t know what to think at first. The game was really violent and had gross pictures, but Ruben and his brother seemed to like it. “Get him!” Ruben shouted as they watched.

Diego felt his stomach squirm, and he stared down at his feet. He knew he wasn’t supposed to be watching video games like this one.

But what could he do?

He didn’t want his new friend to think he was too boring to play exciting video games. Would Ruben think he was weird if he spoke up?

He looked around the room and tried to think of other things they could do.

Diego took a deep breath. “Hey, umm . . . can you show me the rest of your house? Or maybe we can play upstairs?” he said.

Ruben looked at Diego for a second. Diego bit his lip. Would Ruben say he didn’t want to play anymore?

Then Ruben’s eyes lit up. “Wait, do you like cars? I have the *fastest* cars. Want to race them?”

Diego smiled and nodded. He followed Ruben upstairs. The heavy feeling lifted—he felt like he was floating up the stairs! He was glad he had a new friend, and he was glad he hadn’t watched something bad.

“The red car is mine,” Ruben said, “but you can use the blue one or the green one. Which one do you want?”

Diego reached for the green car—his favorite color. This was an easy choice to make. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*



### COURAGEOUS CHOICES

“It requires courage to make good choices, even when others around us choose differently.”

Elder W. Craig Zwick of the Seventy, “We Will Not Yield, We Cannot Yield,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May, 2008, 97.





**By Elder  
Quentin L. Cook**

Of the Quorum  
of the Twelve  
Apostles

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

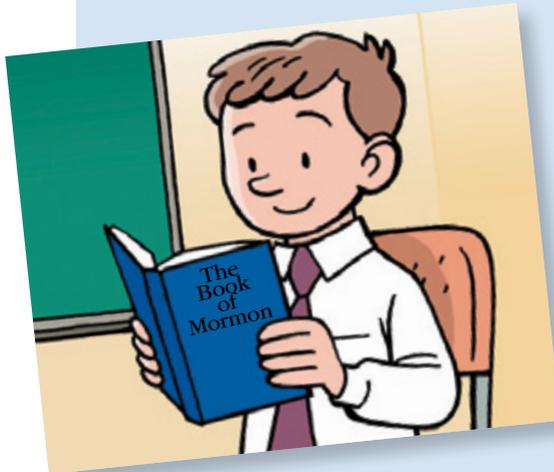
# How can I stay free?



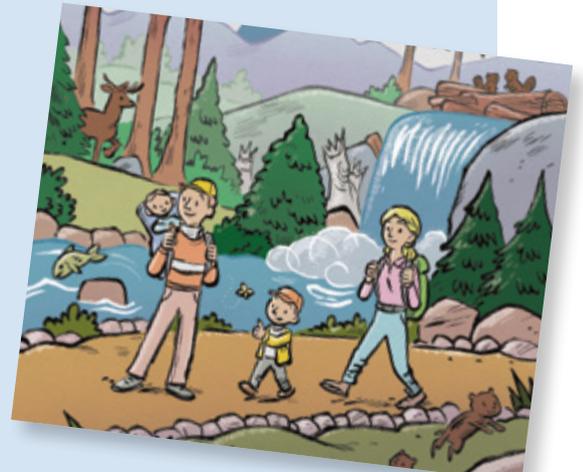
God wants us to be free to make choices between good and evil.



Addictions to things like drugs and alcohol destroy good health and limit our freedom.



Too much time playing video games, playing sports, or watching TV can take up all of our free time.



It is important that we protect some of our free time for our family.

*From "Lamentations of Jeremiah: Beware of Bondage," Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2013, 88–91.*

# You Can Repent and Forgive

After you are baptized and confirmed, you are responsible to choose the right. If you do something wrong, here's how to repent so you can do better!



- Think about what you did.
- Apologize and do something to help make it better. If you need help, talk to a parent about it.
- Pray to Heavenly Father. Ask Him to forgive you and help you do better next time.
- You are forgiven! Try your best to do what Heavenly Father would want you to do.



If someone does something that upsets you, here's how to forgive so you can feel better!



- Try to think about why the other person might have done what he or she did.
- Think of something good about the other person.
- Pray for help to forgive when it's hard.
- Don't keep being angry at the person.



# Clara and the PRIMARY PROGRAM

By Jane McBride Choate

Based on a true story

Clara and her family had just been baptized. Clara liked getting up on Sunday and going to church together.

One Sunday the Primary president said there would be a Primary program soon. Clara wasn't sure what a Primary program was. But she knew she wanted to be in it.



“Can you read a scripture and bear your testimony in the Primary program?” her teacher asked.

Clara nodded. She was excited! She wanted to learn as much as she could about the gospel. But she was nervous too. What if she made a mistake?



Clara practiced her part every night. She didn't know all the words in the scripture yet.

"You'll do great," Mama said.

Clara wasn't so sure. This was her first Primary program. All the other kids had done this before.



"Remember, if you do your best, Heavenly Father will do the rest," Papa told her.

The night before the program, Clara prayed for help to do her best. She stayed on her knees and thought about her part. She felt good about it.

On Sunday morning Clara prayed that she wouldn't be scared.



When it was her turn, Clara walked to the front. She messed up one of the words in the scripture. But then she remembered how good she'd felt after her prayer. She smiled and bore her testimony. She talked about how much she loved the Savior.



Clara smiled as she sat back down. She knew Heavenly Father didn't care that she didn't say everything perfectly. He cared what was in her heart. ■

*The author lives in Colorado, USA.*

# Jesus Brings Lazarus Back to Life



By Jean Bingham

Have you ever worried when someone in your family was sick? Jesus’s friends Mary and Martha worried because their brother, Lazarus, was very sick. They sent someone to tell Jesus so He could come heal Lazarus. But Lazarus died before Jesus got there.

When Jesus saw how sad Mary and Martha were, He cried for them. Then He asked someone to move the stone from the door of the

tomb, and He commanded Lazarus to come out. Lazarus’s spirit came back into his body, and he walked out of the tomb, still wearing burial clothes. People were amazed. Jesus had power over death! He truly was the Son of God!

Each of Jesus’s miracles showed His great love and His great power. If we believe in Him and follow His example, we will live with Him again! ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

## FAMILY TALK

Talk about how you would have felt if you had seen Lazarus come out of the tomb. Then read John 11:1–46 together and finish these sentences:

1. When Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick . . .
2. When Jesus got to Bethany, Lazarus . . .
3. Martha believed that . . .
4. Jesus wept because . . .
5. Jesus prayed aloud to the Father because . . .
6. After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, many people . . . , but some people . . .

Death is part of Heavenly Father’s plan and sometimes our loved ones are sick or die. Even when our prayers aren’t answered the way we would like, we can have faith that Heavenly Father loves us and knows what is best.

**Song:** “He Sent His Son”  
(*Children’s Songbook*, 34)

**Scriptures:** Matthew 11:2–5;  
2 Nephi 27:23

**Video:** Go to [Biblevideos.org](http://Biblevideos.org) to watch “Lazarus Is Raised from the Dead”

## MANY MIGHTY MIRACLES

Match the pictures of each miracle with the scripture verses below.

Mark 8:22–25

John 5:1–9

Mark 9:17, 23–27

Mark 5:21–24, 35–43

Mark 4:36–39

Matthew 14:16–21

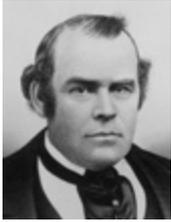


### SCRIPTURE TIP

Use the Bible map in your scriptures to learn more about scripture stories. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived in Bethany, a town near Jerusalem. Some of the leaders in Jerusalem wanted to harm Jesus, so His disciples were worried about going to a town so close to Jerusalem. Jesus was not afraid and encouraged His disciples to follow Him.

### LEARN MORE

The Hebrew name *Lazarus* means “God is my help.” Jesus helped Lazarus by bringing him back to life. How have Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ helped you and your family?



**By Elder  
Parley P. Pratt  
(1807–57)**

Of the Quorum  
of the Twelve  
Apostles

## HE TAUGHT ME THE HEAVENLY ORDER OF ETERNITY

*I could now love with the spirit and with the understanding also.*

In Philadelphia I had the happiness of once more meeting with President [Joseph] Smith, and of spending several days with him and others, and with the Saints in that city and vicinity.

During these interviews he taught me many great and glorious principles concerning God and the heavenly order of eternity. It was at this time that I received from him the first idea of eternal family organization, and the eternal union of the sexes in those inexpressibly endearing relationships which none but the highly intellectual, the refined and pure in heart, know how to prize, and which are at the very foundation of everything worthy to be called happiness.

Till then I had learned to esteem kindred affections and sympathies as appertaining solely to this transitory state, as something from which the heart must be entirely weaned, in order to be fitted for its heavenly state.

It was Joseph Smith who taught me how to prize the endearing



relationships of father and mother, husband and wife; of brother and sister, son and daughter.

It was from him that I learned that the wife of my bosom might be secured to me for time and all eternity; and that the refined sympathies and affections which endeared us to each other emanated from the fountain of divine eternal love. It was from him that I learned that we might cultivate these affections, and grow and increase in the same to all eternity; while the result of our endless union would be an offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, or the sands of the sea shore.

It was from him that I learned the true dignity and destiny of a son of God, clothed with an eternal

priesthood, as the patriarch and sovereign of his countless offspring. It was from him that I learned that the highest dignity of womanhood was, to stand as a queen and priestess to her husband, and to reign for ever and ever as the queen mother of her numerous and still increasing offspring.

I had loved before, but I knew not why. But now I loved—with a pureness—an intensity of elevated, exalted feeling, which would lift my soul from the transitory things of this groveling sphere and expand it as the ocean. I felt that God was my heavenly Father indeed; that Jesus was my brother, and that the wife of my bosom was an immortal, eternal companion; a kind ministering angel, given to me as a comfort, and a crown of glory for ever and ever. In short, I could now love with the spirit and with the understanding also. ■

*From Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt (1979), 297–98.*

# INSIGHTS



## **How do we develop godly fear?**

"Godly fear is loving and trusting in Him. As we fear God more completely, we love Him more perfectly. And 'perfect love casteth out all fear' (Moroni 8:16). I promise the bright light of godly fear will chase away the dark shadows of mortal fears (see D&C 50:25) as we look to the Savior, build upon Him as our foundation, and press forward on His covenant path with consecrated commitment."

**Elder David A. Bednar** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Therefore They Hushed Their Fears," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2015, 49.

# Also in This Issue

## FOR YOUNG ADULTS

### PATIENCE: More Than Waiting

Patience isn't a lesson you learn just once, but through our trials we can understand what patience is—and what it isn't.



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## FOR YOUTH



p. 56

### Recipe for a **Happy Family**

By applying these nine principles from the family proclamation, you can help your family be stronger and happier!

## FOR CHILDREN



### **Help!** Someone's Getting a Divorce

If your parents get divorced, it's normal to feel a lot of emotions. These thoughts might help you work through those feelings.

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