

Liahona



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"It is given unto you to judge, that ye may know good from evil; and the way to judge is as plain, that ye may know with a perfect knowledge, as the daylight is from the dark night."

Moroni 7:15



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Front: Photograph by Matthew Reier of mother and daughter, taken in Ghana, West Africa. Inside front cover: Photograph © iStock/Thinkstock. Inside back cover: Photograph by Les Nilsson.

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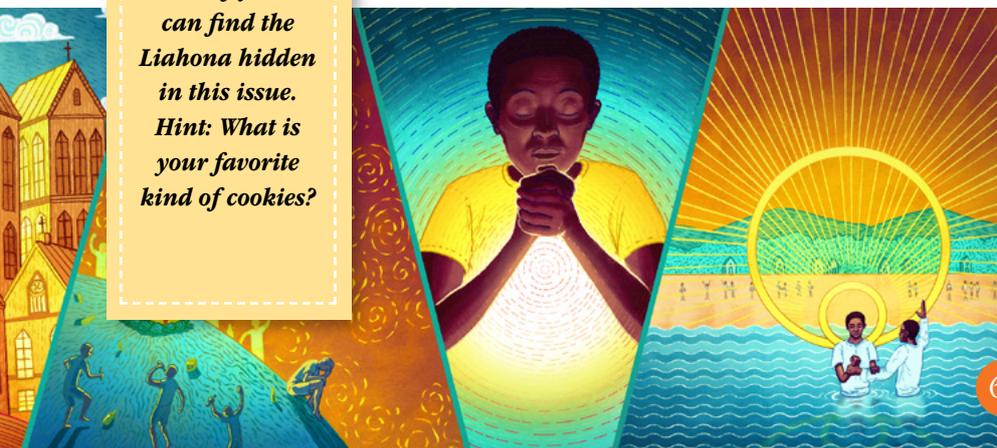
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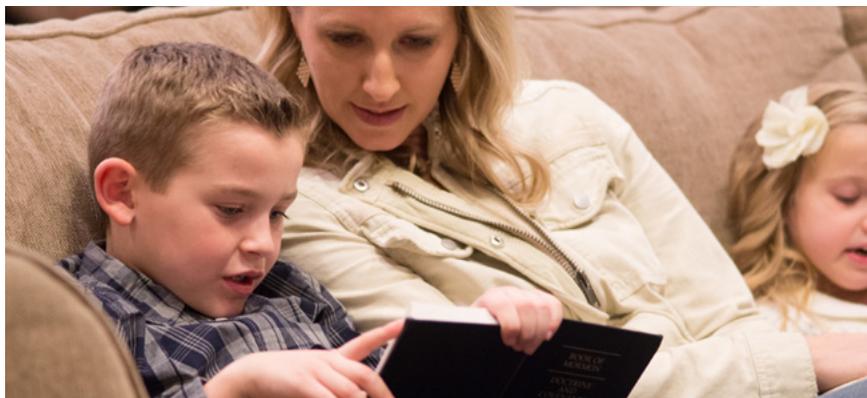
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Family Home Evening Ideas

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



“Ten Reasons I Love the Book of Mormon,” page 12: After reading this article together as a family, you could invite each member of the family to list the reasons *they* love the Book of Mormon. Consider having each person share their list and their favorite scripture from the Book of Mormon. You could make a goal to look for more reasons to love the Book of Mormon as you read it together regularly.

“Being Where We Should Be,” page 66: You could read about Elder Funk’s experience in choosing to stand in a holy place and then do the accompanying activity on page 67. Consider discussing as a family what makes a place holy and how each person can stand in holy places, even if it’s not inside a church or a temple. Discuss the importance and role of the Holy Ghost in helping us stand in holy places.

MORE ONLINE

The *Liahona* and other Church materials are available in many languages at languages.lds.org. Visit [facebook.com/liahona.magazine](https://www.facebook.com/liahona.magazine) (available in English, Portuguese, and Spanish) to find inspirational messages, family home evening ideas, and material you can share with your friends and family.

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**By President
Henry B. Eyring**

First Counselor in
the First Presidency

THE HOPE OF Eternal Family Love

Of all the gifts our loving Heavenly Father has provided to His children, the greatest is eternal life (see D&C 14:7). That gift is to live in the presence of God the Father and His Beloved Son forever in families. Only in the highest of the kingdoms of God, the celestial, will the loving bonds of family life continue.

All of us hope for the joy of living in loving families. For some of us, it is a feeling we have not experienced—a feeling we know is possible but have not yet realized. We may have seen it in the lives of others. For others of us, family love has seemed more real and precious when death has separated us from a child, a mother, a father, a brother, a sister, or a loving and beloved grandparent.

We have all felt the hope that someday we could feel again the warm affection of that family member we loved so much and now ache to embrace again.

Our loving Heavenly Father knows our hearts. His purpose is to give us happiness (see 2 Nephi 2:25). And so He gave the gift of His Son to make possible the joy of family bonds that continue forever. Because the Savior broke the bands of death, we will be resurrected. Because He atoned for our sins, we can, by our faith and repentance, become worthy of the celestial kingdom, where families are bound together in love forever.

The Savior sent the Prophet Elijah to Joseph Smith to restore the keys of the priesthood (see D&C 110). With those keys came the sealing power, offering God's greatest gift to His children—eternal life in families bound together forever.

It is an offer that every child of God who comes into the world may claim. A third of His spirit children rejected His offer in the spirit world. Out of lack of sufficient faith and then open rebellion, they chose never to know the joy of Heavenly Father's gift of eternal families.

For those of us who passed the crucial test in the pre-mortal spirit world and so qualified to receive the gift of mortal bodies, the great choice of eternal life is still ours to make. If we are blessed to find the restored gospel, we can choose to make and keep the covenants with God that qualify us for eternal life. As we endure in that faithfulness, the Holy Ghost will confirm our hope and confidence that we are on the path to eternal life, to live in families forever in the celestial kingdom.

For some, that eternal joy may seem a faint or even a fading hope. Parents, children, brothers, and sisters may have made choices that seem to disqualify them from eternal life. You may even wonder whether you have yet been qualified through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.



A prophet of God once offered me counsel that gives me peace. I was worried that the choices of others might make it impossible for our family to be together forever. He said, “You are worrying about the wrong problem. You just live worthy of the celestial kingdom, and the family arrangements will be more wonderful than you can imagine.”

To all of those whose personal experience or whose marriage and children—or absence thereof—cast a shadow over their hopes, I offer my witness: Heavenly Father knows and loves you as His spirit child. While you were with Him and His Beloved Son before this life, They placed in your heart the hope you have of eternal life. With the power of the Atonement of

Jesus Christ working and with the Holy Spirit guiding, you can feel now and will feel in the world to come the family love your Father and His Beloved Son want so much for you to receive.

I testify that as you live worthy of the celestial kingdom, the prophetic promise that “family arrangements will be more wonderful than you can imagine” will be yours. ■

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

Consider beginning by telling those you teach of a moment when you were grateful for the hope of eternal families. Invite them to ponder the moments when they’ve felt gratitude for eternal families. Ask

them if they’d like to share. You could then invite them to think of ways to improve and live more worthy of the celestial kingdom so that the prophetic promise of “family arrangements . . . more wonderful than you can imagine” can be theirs.

Sharing Eternal Happiness

One of the best things about the gospel is the knowledge of the plan of salvation. We have the awesome opportunity to be with our family for eternity. That knowledge helps us to have hope whenever we feel overwhelmed by the world. President Eyring teaches, “Our loving Heavenly Father knows our hearts. His purpose is to give us happiness (see 2 Nephi 2:25). And so He gave the gift of His Son to make possible the joy of family bonds that continue forever. . . . It is an offer that every child of God who comes into the world may claim.”

That blessing applies to those of us living right now and to those who have passed on—but only through our help. Our ancestors are in the spirit world right now, waiting for us to prepare their names for the temple ordinances to be performed on their behalf. But sometimes it can be hard to do



the work for them. We may be too busy, or we may live too far away from a temple to go very often.

Fortunately, there are other ways we can help our ancestors, like doing family history work, indexing, or babysitting for our parents while they go to the temple. By helping, we serve the Lord *and* bring the hope of eternal families to those on the other side of the veil.

Families Are Forever

Because of Jesus Christ’s Atonement and the restoration of priesthood power to seal families, we can live with our families forever! What do you love about your family? Follow these instructions to make this paper chain to celebrate your family.

1. Fold a piece of paper in half twice so you have one long strip.
2. Draw a person with hands reaching the folded edges.
3. Cut the person out. Don’t cut where the hands touch the folded edges.
4. Unfold it. Write or draw something you love about each family member.
5. Tape multiple chains together if you have a larger family!



Prayerfully study this material and seek to know what to share. How will understanding “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” increase your faith in God and bless those you watch over through visiting teaching? For more information, go to reliefsociety.lds.org.

Nurturing Families Together

A “husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children.”¹ “The home is to be God’s laboratory of love and service,” said President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

“Our Heavenly Father wants husbands and wives to be faithful to each other and to esteem and treat their children as an heritage from the Lord.”²

In the Book of Mormon, Jacob said that the love that husbands had for their wives, the love that wives had for their husbands, and the love that both had for their children was among the reasons the Lamanites were at one point more righteous than the Nephites (see Jacob 3:7).

One of the best ways to invite love and harmony into our homes is by speaking kindly to our family members. Speaking kindly brings the Holy



Ghost. Sister Linda K. Burton, Relief Society general president, asked us to consider: “How often do we intentionally ‘speak kind words to each other?’”³

Additional Scriptures

Romans 12:10; Mosiah 4:15; Doctrine and Covenants 25:5

NOTES

1. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “Salvation and Exaltation,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2008, 8.
3. Linda K. Burton, “We’ll Ascend Together,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 31.
4. D. Todd Christofferson, “Let Us Be Men,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 46.

Faith, Family, Relief



Living Stories

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared a childhood experience that impressed upon him the importance of a loving family. When he and his brothers were boys, their mother had radical cancer surgery that made it very painful for her to use her right arm. With a family of boys, there was a lot of ironing, but as his mother ironed, she often stopped and went into the bedroom to cry until the pain subsided.

When Elder Christofferson’s father realized what was happening, he secretly went without lunches for almost a year to save enough money to buy a machine that made ironing easier. Out of his love for his wife, he set an example of nurturing within families for his boys. Of this tender interaction, Elder Christofferson said, “I was not aware of my father’s sacrifice and act of love for my mother at the time, but now that I know, I say to myself, ‘There is a man.’”⁴

Consider This

How does loving and caring for one another invite the Spirit into our homes?

APRIL 2016 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 2016 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 Remission of Our Sins

“The ordinances of baptism by immersion, the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the sacrament are not isolated and discrete events; rather, they are elements in an interrelated and additive pattern of redemptive progress. Each successive ordinance elevates and enlarges our spiritual purpose, desire, and performance. The Father’s plan, the Savior’s Atonement, and the ordinances of the gospel provide the grace we need to press forward and progress line upon line and precept upon precept toward our eternal destiny.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Always Retain a Remission of Your Sins,” *Ensign or Liahona, May 2016, 62.*

PROPHETIC PROMISE



Eternity

“My message tonight is an attempt to describe . . . what we must do to be a part of the plan of happiness our Heavenly Father has prepared for us. Before we were born, we lived in a family with our exalted and eternal Heavenly Father. He ordained a plan that enables us to advance and progress to become like Him. He did it out of love for us. The purpose of the plan was to allow us the privilege of living forever as our Heavenly Father lives. This gospel plan offered us a life of mortality in which we would be tested. A promise was given that through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, if we obeyed the laws and priesthood ordinances of the gospel, we would have eternal life, the greatest of all His gifts.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Eternal Families,” *Ensign or Liahona, May 2016, 81.*

DRAWING PARALLELS

Divine Roles of Men



Multiple speakers sometimes address the same gospel topic. Here is what three speakers said about the divine roles of men:

- Husband: “Treat your wife . . . the way Heavenly Father has treated you.” —Henry B. Eyring, “Eternal Families,” 83.
- Priesthood holder: “Live up to [your] privileges as bearers of the priesthood. In a coming day, *only* those men who have taken their priesthood seriously, by *diligently* seeking to be taught by the Lord Himself, will be able to bless, guide, protect, strengthen, and heal others.” —Russell M. Nelson, “The Price of Priesthood Power,” 67–68.
- Father: “The role of father is of divine origin, beginning with a Father in Heaven and, in this mortal sphere, with Father Adam. . . .

“ . . . Fatherhood requires sacrifice. . . .

“Loving the mother of his children—and showing that love—are two of the best things a father can do for his children. This reaffirms and strengthens the marriage that is the foundation of their family life and security.”

—D. Todd Christofferson, “Fathers,” 94, 95.

Great Stories from Conference

What catches our attention better than a story? The following stories are among the many shared at conference:

- What is the connection between magnolia blossoms and how love makes space for others in our lives? —See Neill F. Marriott, “What Shall We Do?” 10.
- Why did Elder Hales stay after stake conference to shake hands with everyone? —See Robert D. Hales, “The Holy Ghost,” 105.
- By age 11, Yvette Buggingo was a refugee whose father had been killed and whose three brothers were missing. How did her story end? —See Linda K. Burton, “I Was a Stranger,” 13.
- What can these stories of Latter-day Saint children from nonmember homes inspire us to do? —See Neil L. Andersen, “Whoso Receiveth Them, Receiveth Me,” 49.

“Obedience is the lifeblood of faith.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf,
Second Counselor in the First Presidency,
“He Will Place You on His Shoulders and Carry You Home,” *Ensign or Liahona*,
May 2016, 103.

To read, watch, or listen to general conference addresses, visit conference.lds.org.

WE BELIEVE IN KEEPING THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The Ten Commandments are found in the Old Testament (see Exodus 20:1–17), but Latter-day Saints know that those commandments apply in all ages, not just in Old Testament times. Abinadi taught the Ten Commandments in the Book of Mormon (see Mosiah 12:33–36; 13:13–24), and the Lord revealed them again to the Prophet Joseph Smith for our day (see D&C 42:18–29; 59:5–13).

Although people in many societies today disregard these commandments, we believe they are still in effect. President Thomas S. Monson explained:

“Behaviors which once were considered inappropriate and immoral are now not only tolerated but also viewed by ever so many as acceptable. . . .

“Although the world has changed, the laws of God remain constant. They have not changed; they will not change. The Ten Commandments are just that—commandments. They are *not* suggestions. They are every bit as requisite today as they were when God gave them to the children of Israel.”¹

We do not speak ill of others for not following the commandments. Rather, we look at our own lives and

determine how well we live by the divine instruction we’ve been given.

The Ten Commandments represent basic standards of behavior that can be divided into two groups: how we treat God and how we treat others. To help us keep God at the center of our lives, He commands us to worship no other gods, to keep the Sabbath day holy, and to avoid blasphemy and idolatry. To help us love God’s children, He commands us to honor our parents and to not steal, kill, lie, covet, or commit adultery.

Because of God’s continued revelations to His prophets, we have learned more about what He expects of us, but the Ten Commandments remain a good place to start in our quest to be obedient. “[God’s] commandments are a manifestation of His love for us and obedience to His commandments is an expression of our love for Him.”² ■

“Which is the great commandment in the law?” See the Savior’s response in Matthew 22:37–40.

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Stand in Holy Places,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 82, 83.
2. Carole M. Stephens, “If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 120.

COMMANDMENTS ARE FOR OUR HAPPINESS



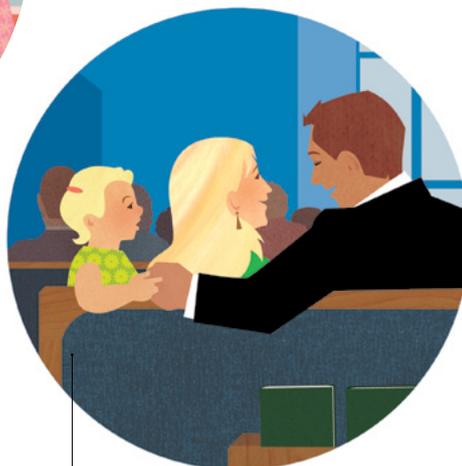
“God’s commandments are not given to frustrate us or to become obstacles to our happiness. Just the opposite is true. He who created us and who loves us perfectly knows just how we need to live our lives in order to obtain the greatest happiness possible. . . .

“Our Heavenly Father loves us enough to say: Thou shalt not lie; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; and so on. We know the commandments. He understands that when we keep the commandments, our lives will be happier, more fulfilling, and less complicated.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Keep the Commandments,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 83.

Here are some examples of living the commandments today:

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). While most people are not tempted today to worship a golden calf, we should not worship "idols" such as prestige or material possessions (see 2 Nephi 9:30).



"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8). Keeping the Sabbath day holy can help us learn to have an eye "single to [God's] glory" (D&C 88:67).

"Honour thy father and thy mother" (Exodus 20:12). This can include honoring our ancestors, our parents, and our heavenly parents.



"Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). Having pure thoughts helps us keep this commandment (see D&C 42:23).



"Thou shalt not covet" (Exodus 20:17). Coveting leads to, among other things, dissatisfaction and unhappiness.

TEN REASONS I LOVE THE BOOK OF MORMON

By David Fullmer

As a second witness of Jesus Christ, this remarkable book teaches concepts and doctrines not found anywhere else.

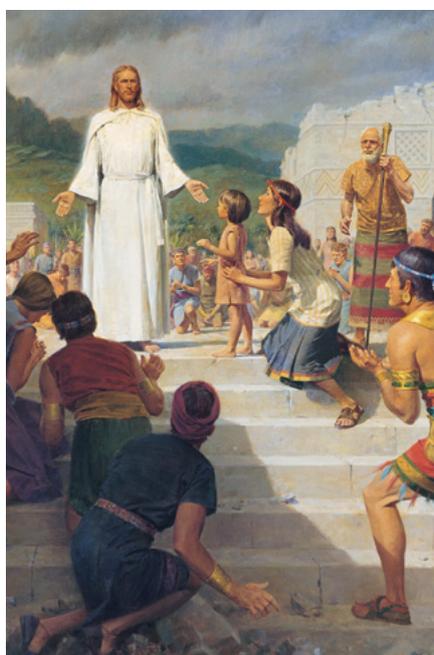
I love the Book of Mormon. In general, I love it for the power it has in bringing its readers “nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.” Perhaps that is why the Prophet Joseph Smith referred to it as the “keystone of our religion” and “the most correct of any book on earth.”¹

But I love the book for specific reasons too. Here are 10 of the many reasons:

The Book of Mormon . . .

1. Was recorded in one period of history for use by readers in another—ours. See Mormon 8:16, 34–35.
2. Clearly describes Lucifer’s methods for spreading mayhem in the last days. See 2 Nephi 28:3–29.
3. Declares that human weakness is an opportunity to be made strong, with humility in coming unto Christ as the requirement. See Ether 12:27.
4. Defines charity as the pure love of Christ and a divine gift we can take specific steps to obtain. See Moroni 7:43–48.

5. Clarifies the need for opposition in all things. See 2 Nephi 2:11–13.
6. Delineates clearly under which circumstances mercy can satisfy the demands of justice. See Alma 34:11–30.
7. Records *two* groups of people being given specific instructions to study the words of Isaiah, one of which is us. See 2 Nephi 25:4–8; Mormon 8:23.



8. Serves as a companion witness with the Bible of God’s relationship with humankind, as foretold by an Old Testament prophecy. See Ezekiel 37:15–20; 2 Nephi 28:29; 29:3–8.
9. Contains a promise that if we read and pray about it with a sincere heart, having faith in Christ, the Lord will reveal to us that it is His word. See Moroni 10:4–5.
10. Teaches that the Savior’s suffering gave Him perfect empathy for our trials and the ability to succor us as we struggle with them. See Alma 7:11–13.

Above all, I love the Book of Mormon for its clear testimony that Jesus is the Christ. I love it for its promise that the Lord will eventually redeem all the house of Israel as they make and keep sacred covenants with Him. The Book of Mormon is a modern-day miracle—a gift of love to us from God Himself. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTE

1. Joseph Smith, in introduction to the Book of Mormon.

A FAR GREATER GIFT

By Chris Deaver

Brother Reynolds didn't just teach us—he loved us.

During my last year in Primary we got a new teacher: Brother Reynolds. He had gray hair and wrinkles, and he shared stories about the Depression and his service in the U.S. military during World War II. At first I didn't relate to his stories—they were boring and happened so long ago.

One time my friends and I were misbehaving in class. Brother Reynolds took me aside and spoke directly to me. He simply asked me to do better and told me he wanted the best for me. Before then, my friends and I hadn't been paying much attention. But we soon learned something special about Brother Reynolds—he cared deeply about us, and his only agenda was to love us.

Brother Reynolds constantly shared his testimony of the Savior Jesus Christ. He had a light in his eyes as he taught us about the power of living a Christ-centered life. His stories became real adventures that sparked our imaginations and made us want to serve the Lord.

I still remember a lesson he taught about the Prophet Joseph Smith and how he testified that Joseph was once a young boy like us. With tears in his eyes, he told us that the Lord had high

expectations for us, just as He had had for Joseph. Brother Reynolds said we would each do great things in our lives, even change the world, if we would be like Joseph and stay close to the Savior.

A few years later when my friends and I were in high school, we learned that Brother Reynolds needed his apricot trees trimmed. We gladly trimmed the trees, which took several hours of climbing on ladders and cutting away. It was hard work, but we knew it would matter to Brother Reynolds.

That year we also learned that Brother Reynolds needed a new

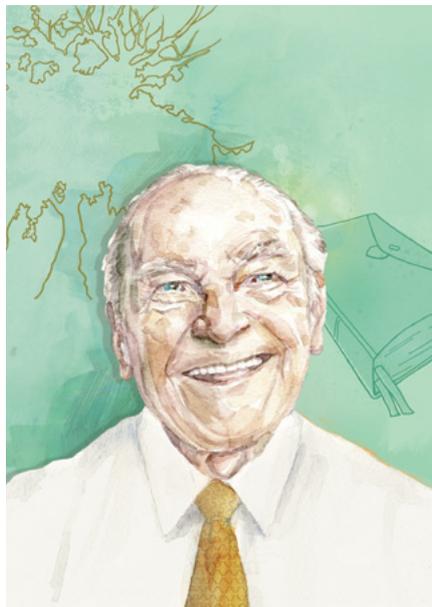
set of scriptures. His were old, dog-eared, and tearing at the seams. We pooled our money and bought him a beautiful leather quad with his name engraved on it. We gave it to him at our ward Christmas party. I'll never forget the way his face glowed and his eyes twinkled with tears and excitement from seeing us boys do something that meant so much to him.

After I went to college some years later, I found out that Brother Reynolds had passed away. I went to visit his wife and family to share my deep respect and appreciation for him. When I saw all his happy children and grandchildren, I realized how blessed I had been to know this great man.

"He loved you boys," Sister Reynolds said through tears and with a smile. "He *really* loved you."

In a world where it's difficult to focus on the right things, Brother Reynolds showed us that our relationship with Heavenly Father and His Son matters most. We may have trimmed Brother Reynolds's trees and given him a new set of scriptures, but he gave us a far greater gift: an abiding love for the Savior, Jesus Christ. ■

The author lives in California, USA.



NEWS OF THE CHURCH

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

New Area Leaders Assigned

The First Presidency has announced changes in area leadership assignments, effective on August 1, 2016. All members of Area Presidencies are General Authority Seventies.

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.

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).

In a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1835, the Lord revealed, among other things, “the order of the Seventy, that they should have seven presidents to preside over them, chosen out of the number of the seventy” (D&C 107:93). ■

Presidency of the Seventy						
						
L. Whitney Clayton Assists in all areas	Donald L. Hallstrom North America Northwest North America West	Richard J. Maynes North America Southeast	Craig C. Christensen Utah North Utah Salt Lake City Utah South	Ulisses Soares Idaho North America Central	Lynn G. Robbins North America Southwest	Gerrit W. Gong North America Northeast

Africa Southeast			Africa West			Asia		
								
Stanley G. Ellis First Counselor	Kevin S. Hamilton President	S. Mark Palmer Second Counselor	Marcus B. Nash First Counselor	Terence M. Vinson President	Vern P. Stanfill Second Counselor	Chi Hong (Sam) Wong First Counselor	Randy D. Funk President	David F. Evans Second Counselor

Asia North



Kazuhiko
Yamashita
**First
Counselor**



Scott D.
Whiting
President



Yoon Hwan
Choi
**Second
Counselor**

Brazil



Marcos A.
Aidukaitis
**First
Counselor**



Claudio R. M.
Costa
President



W. Mark
Bassett
**Second
Counselor**

Caribbean



Claudio D.
Zivic
**First
Counselor**



Walter F.
González
President



Hugo E.
Martínez
**Second
Counselor**

Central America



Adrián
Ochoa
**First
Counselor**



Kevin R.
Duncan
President



Jose L.
Alonso
**Second
Counselor**

Europe



Paul V.
Johnson
**First
Counselor**



Patrick
Kearon
President



Gary B.
Sabin
**Second
Counselor**

Europe East



James B.
Martino
**First
Counselor**



Bruce D.
Porter
President



Larry S.
Kacher
**Second
Counselor**

Mexico



Arnulfo
Valenzuela
**First
Counselor**



Paul B.
Pieper
President



Rafael E.
Pino
**Second
Counselor**

Middle East/Africa North



Larry R.
Lawrence



Wilford W.
Andersen

**Administered from Church
headquarters**

Pacific



S. Gifford
Nielsen
**First
Counselor**



O. Vincent
Haleck
President



Craig A.
Cardon
**Second
Counselor**

Philippines



Allen D.
Haynie
**First
Counselor**



Shayne M.
Bowen
President



Evan A.
Schmutz
**Second
Counselor**

South America Northwest



Lawrence E.
Corbridge
**First
Counselor**



Carlos A.
Godoy
President



Hugo
Montoya
**Second
Counselor**

South America South



Allan F.
Packer
**First
Counselor**



José A.
Teixeira
President



Mark A.
Bragg
**Second
Counselor**



DETAIL FROM CHRIST IN GETSEMANE, BY HARRY ANDERSON

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



Accepting the Lord's Will and Timing

Strong faith in the Savior is submissively accepting of His will and timing in our lives—even if the outcome is not what we hoped for or wanted.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) was a beloved disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. He served as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles for 23 years, from 1981 to 2004. The spiritual power of his teachings and his example of faithful discipleship blessed and continue to bless in marvelous ways the members of the Savior's restored Church and the people of the world.

In October 1997, Sister Bednar and I hosted Elder and Sister Maxwell at Brigham Young University–Idaho (then Ricks College). Elder Maxwell was to speak to the students, staff, and faculty in a devotional assembly.

Earlier in that same year, Elder Maxwell underwent 46 days and nights of debilitating chemotherapy for leukemia. His rehabilitation and continued therapy progressed positively through the spring and summer months, but Elder Maxwell's physical strength and stamina were nonetheless limited when he traveled to Rexburg. After greeting Elder and Sister Maxwell at the airport, Susan and I drove them to our home for rest and a light lunch before the devotional.

I asked Elder Maxwell what lessons he had learned through his illness. I will remember always the precise and penetrating answer he gave. "Dave," he said, "I have learned that not shrinking is more important than surviving."



My faith was strengthened as I witnessed this couple allowing their strong and understandable desires for healing to be “swallowed up in the will of the Father” (Mosiah 15:7).

His response to my inquiry was a principle with which he had gained extensive personal experience during his chemotherapy. In January 1997, on the day he was scheduled to begin his first round of treatment, Elder Maxwell looked at his wife, reached for her hand, breathed a deep sigh, and said, “I just don’t want to shrink.”

In his October 1997 general conference message, Elder Maxwell taught with great authenticity: “As we confront our own . . . trials and tribulations, we too can plead with the Father, just as Jesus did, that we ‘might not . . . shrink’—meaning to retreat or to recoil (D&C 19:18). Not shrinking is much more important than surviving! Moreover, partaking of a bitter cup without becoming bitter is likewise part of the emulation of Jesus.”¹

Scriptures concerning the Savior’s suffering as He offered the infinite and eternal atoning sacrifice became even more poignant and meaningful to me.

“For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

“But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

“Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

“Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men” (D&C 19:16–19).

The Savior did not shrink in Gethsemane or on Golgotha.

Elder Maxwell also did not shrink. This mighty Apostle pressed forward steadfastly and was blessed with additional time in mortality to love, to serve, to teach, and to testify. Those concluding years of his life were an emphatic exclamation point to his example of devoted discipleship—through both his words and his deeds.

I believe most of us likely would expect a man with the spiritual capacity, experience, and stature of Elder Maxwell to face serious illness and death with an understanding of God’s plan of happiness, with assurance and grace, and with dignity. But I testify that such blessings are not reserved exclusively for General Authorities or for a select few members of the Church.

Since my call to the Quorum of the Twelve, my assignments and travels have enabled me to become acquainted with

faithful, courageous, and valiant Latter-day Saints all over the world. I want to tell you about one young man and one young woman who have blessed my life and with whom I have learned spiritually vital lessons about not shrinking and about allowing our individual will to be “swallowed up in the will of the Father” (Mosiah 15:7).

The account is true and the characters are real. I will not, however, use the actual names of the individuals who are involved. I use with permission selected statements from their personal journals.

“Not My Will, but Thine, Be Done”

John is a worthy priesthood holder and served faithfully as a full-time missionary. After returning home from his mission, he dated and married a righteous and wonderful young woman, Heather. John was 23 and Heather was 20 on the day they were sealed together for time and for all eternity in the house of the Lord.

Approximately three weeks after their temple marriage, John was diagnosed with bone cancer. Because cancer nodules also were discovered in his lungs, the prognosis was not good.

John recorded in his journal: “This was the scariest day of my life. Not only because I was told I had cancer, but also because I was newly married and somehow felt that I had failed as a husband. I was the provider and protector of our new family, and now—three weeks into that role—I felt like I had failed.”

Heather noted: “This was devastating news, and I remember how greatly it changed our perspectives. I was in a hospital waiting room writing wedding thank-you notes as we anticipated the results of John’s tests. But after learning about John’s cancer, Crock-Pots and cookware did not seem so important anymore. This was the worst day of my life, but I remember going to bed that night with gratitude for our temple sealing. Though the doctors had given John

only a 30 percent chance of survival, I knew that if we remained faithful I had a 100 percent chance to be with him forever.”

Approximately one month later John began chemotherapy. He described his experience: “The treatments caused me to be sicker than I had ever been in my life. I lost my hair, dropped 41 pounds, and my body felt like it was falling apart. The chemotherapy also affected me emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Life was a roller coaster during the months of chemo with highs, lows, and everything in between. But through it all, Heather and I maintained the faith that God would heal me. We just knew it.”

Heather chronicled her thoughts and feelings: “I could not stand to let John spend the night alone in the hospital, so I would sleep every night on the small couch in his room. We had lots of friends and family visit during the day, but the nights were the hardest. I would stare at the ceiling and wonder what Heavenly Father had planned for us. Sometimes my mind would wander into dark places, and my fear of losing John would almost overtake me. But I knew these thoughts were not from Heavenly Father. My prayers for comfort became more frequent, and the Lord gave me the strength to keep going.”

Three months later, John underwent a surgical procedure to remove a large tumor in his leg. Two days following the operation, I visited John and Heather in the hospital. We talked about the first time I met John in the mission field, about their marriage, about the cancer, and about the eternally important lessons we learn through the trials of mortality. As we concluded our time together, John asked if I would give him a priesthood blessing. I responded that I gladly would give such a blessing, but I first needed to ask some questions.

I then posed questions I had not planned to ask and had never previously considered: “John, do you have the faith not to be healed? If it is the will of our Heavenly Father that you are transferred by death in your youth to

One of the greatest blessings of mortality is to not shrink and to allow our individual will to be “swallowed up in the will of the Father.”



My heart swelled with appreciation and admiration as I witnessed this young couple confront the most demanding of all spiritual struggles—the submissive surrender of their wills to God’s will.

the spirit world to continue your ministry, do you have the faith to submit to His will and not be healed?”

Frequently in the scriptures, the Savior or His servants exercised the spiritual gift of healing (see 1 Corinthians 12:9; D&C 35:9; 46:20) and perceived that an individual had the faith to be healed (see Acts 14:9; 3 Nephi 17:8; D&C 46:19). But as John and Heather and I counseled together and wrestled with these questions, we increasingly understood that if God’s will were for this good young man to be healed, then that blessing could be received only if this valiant couple first had the faith not to be healed. In other words, John and Heather needed to overcome, through the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, the “natural man” (Mosiah 3:19) tendency in all of us to demand impatiently and insist incessantly on the blessings we want and believe we deserve.

We recognized a principle that applies to

every devoted disciple: strong faith in the Savior is submissively accepting of His will and timing in our lives—even if the outcome is not what we hoped for or wanted. Certainly, John and Heather would desire, yearn, and plead for healing with all of their might, mind, and strength. But more important, they would be “willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon [them], even as a child doth submit to his father” (Mosiah 3:19). Indeed, they would be willing to “offer [their] whole souls as an offering unto him” (Omni 1:26) and humbly pray, “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42).

What initially seemed to John, Heather, and me to be perplexing questions became part of a pervasive pattern of gospel paradoxes. Consider the admonition of the Savior: “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it”

(Matthew 10:39). He also declared, “But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first” (Matthew 19:30). And the Lord counseled His latter-day disciples, “By thy word many high ones shall be brought low, and by thy word many low ones shall be exalted” (D&C 112:8). Thus, having the faith not to be healed seemed to fit appropriately into a powerful pattern of penetrating paradoxes that require us to ask, to seek, and to knock that we might receive knowledge and understanding (see 3 Nephi 14:7).

After taking the necessary time to ponder my inquiries and to talk with his wife, John said to me: “Elder Bednar, I do not want to die. I do not want to leave Heather. But if the will of the Lord is to transfer me to the spirit world, then I guess I am good with that.”

My heart swelled with appreciation and admiration as I witnessed this young couple confront the most demanding of all spiritual struggles—the submissive surrender of their wills to God’s will. My faith was strengthened as I witnessed this couple allowing their strong and understandable desires for healing to be “swallowed up in the will of the Father” (Mosiah 15:7).

John described his reaction to our conversation and the blessing he received: “Elder Bednar shared with us the thought from Elder Maxwell that it is better to not shrink than to survive. Elder Bednar then asked us, ‘I know you have the faith to be healed, but do you have the faith not to be healed?’ This was a foreign concept to me. Essentially he was asking if I had the faith to accept God’s will if His will were that I not be healed? If the time were approaching for me to enter the spirit world through death, was I prepared to submit and accept?”

John continued: “Having the faith not to be healed seemed counterintuitive; but that perspective changed the way my wife and I thought and allowed us to put our trust fully in the Father’s plan for us. We learned we needed to gain the faith that the Lord is in charge

whatever the outcome may be, and He will guide us from where we are to where we need to be. As we prayed, our petitions changed from ‘Please make me whole’ to ‘Please give me the faith to accept whatever outcome Thou hast planned for me.’

“I was sure that since Elder Bednar was an Apostle, he would bless the elements of my body to realign, and I would jump out of the bed and start to dance or do something dramatic like that! But as he blessed me that day, I was amazed that the words he spoke were almost identical to those of my father, my father-in-law, and my mission president. I realized that ultimately it does not matter whose hands are on my head. God’s power does not change, and His will is made known to us individually and through His authorized servants.”

Heather wrote: “This day was filled with mixed emotions for me. I was convinced that Elder Bednar would place his hands on John’s head and completely heal him of the cancer. I knew that through the power of the priesthood he could be healed, and I wanted so bad for that to happen. After he taught us about the faith to not be healed, I was

terrified. Up to that point, I had never had to come to grips with the fact that the Lord’s plan might include losing my new husband. My faith was dependent upon the outcomes I wanted. In a manner of speaking, it was one-dimensional. Though terrifying at first, the thought of having the faith not to be healed ultimately freed me from worry. It allowed me to have complete trust that my Heavenly Father knew me better than I knew myself, and He would do what was best for me and John.”

A blessing was given, and weeks, months, and years passed by. John’s cancer miraculously went into remission. He was able to complete his university studies and obtained gainful employment. John and Heather continued to strengthen their relationship and enjoy life together.

Sometime later I received a letter from John and Heather informing me that the cancer had returned. Chemotherapy

***Even if we have
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infirm will be healed.***

was resumed and surgery scheduled. John explained: “Not only did this news come as a disappointment to Heather and me, but we were puzzled by it. Was there something we did not learn the first time? Did the Lord expect something more from us?”

“So I began to pray for clarity and for the Lord to help me understand why this recurrence of the cancer was happening. One day as I was reading in the New Testament I received my answer. I read the account of Christ and His Apostles on the sea when a tempest arose. Fearing the boat would capsize, the disciples went to the Savior and asked, ‘Master, carest thou not that we perish?’ This is exactly how I felt! Carest thou not that I have cancer? Carest thou not that we want to start a family? But as I read on in the story, I found my answer. The Lord looked at them and said, ‘O ye of little faith,’ and He stretched forth His hand and calmed the waters.

“In that moment I had to ask myself, ‘Do I really believe this? Do I really believe He calmed the waters that day? Or is it just a nice story to read about?’ The answer is: I do believe, and because I know He calmed the waters, I instantly knew He could heal me. Up until this point, I had a hard time reconciling the need for my faith in Christ with the inevitability of His will. I saw them as two separate things, and sometimes I felt that one contradicted the other. ‘Why should I have faith if His will ultimately is what will prevail,’ I asked? After this experience, I knew that having faith—at least in my circumstance—was not necessarily knowing that he *would* heal me, but that He *could* heal me. I had to believe that He could, and then whether it happened was up to Him.

“As I allowed those two ideas to coexist in my life, focused faith in Jesus Christ and complete submission to His will, I found greater comfort and peace. It has been so remarkable to see the Lord’s hand in our lives. Things have fallen into place, miracles have happened, and we

continually are humbled to see God’s plan for us unfold.”

Righteousness and faith certainly are instrumental in moving mountains—if moving mountains accomplishes God’s purposes and is in accordance with His will. Righteousness and faith certainly are instrumental in healing the sick, deaf, and lame—if such healing accomplishes God’s purposes and is in accordance with His will. Thus, even if we have strong faith, many mountains will not be moved. And not all of the sick and infirm will be healed. If all opposition were curtailed, if all maladies were removed, then the primary purposes of the Father’s plan would be frustrated.

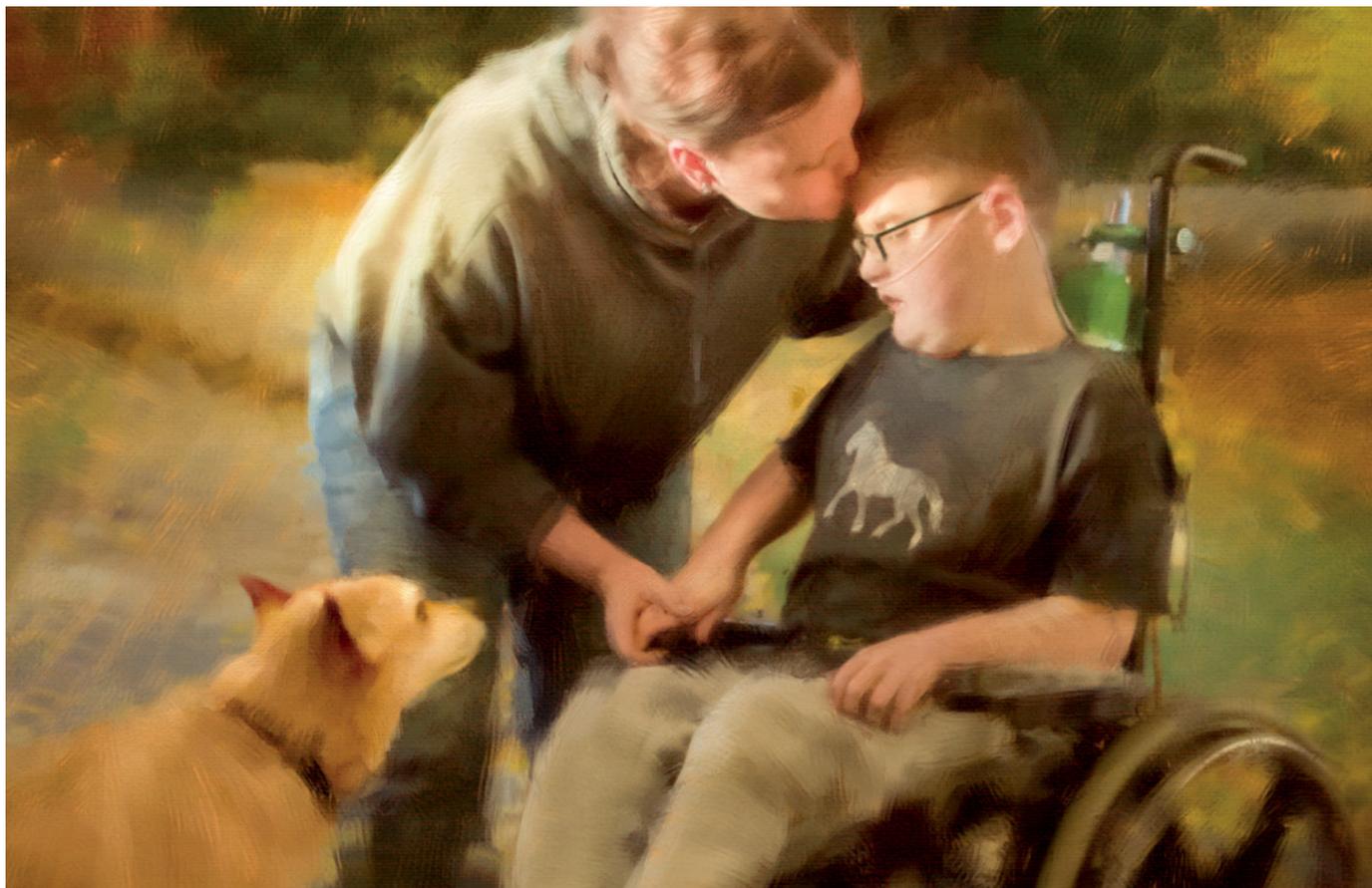
Many of the lessons we are to learn in mortality can be received only through the things we experience and sometimes suffer. And God expects and trusts us to face temporary mortal adversity with His help so we can learn what we need to learn and ultimately become what we are to become in eternity.

The Meaning of All Things

This story about John and Heather is both ordinary and extraordinary. This young couple is representative of millions of faithful, covenant-keeping Latter-day Saints all over the world who are pressing forward along the strait and narrow path with steadfast faith in Christ and a perfect brightness of hope (see 2 Nephi 31:19–20). John and Heather were not serving in highly visible leadership positions in the Church, they were not related to General Authorities, and sometimes they had doubts and fears. In many of these aspects, their story is quite ordinary.

But this young man and young woman were blessed in extraordinary ways to learn essential lessons for eternity through affliction and hardship. I have shared this episode with you because John and Heather, who are just like so many of you, came to understand that not shrinking is more important than surviving. Thus, their experience

God expects and trusts us to face temporary mortal adversity with His help so we can learn what we need to learn and ultimately become what we are to become in eternity.



was not primarily about living and dying; rather, it was about learning, living, and becoming.

For many of you, their story is, has been, or could be your story. You are facing, have faced, or will yet face equivalent challenges in your lives with the same courage and spiritual perspective that John and Heather did. I do not know why some people learn the lessons of eternity through trial and suffering—while others learn similar lessons through rescue and healing. I do not know all of the reasons, all of the purposes, and I do not know everything about the Lord’s timing. With Nephi, you and I can say that we “do not know the meaning of all things” (1 Nephi 11:17).

But some things I absolutely do know. I know we are spirit sons and daughters of a loving Heavenly Father. I know the Eternal Father is the author of the plan of happiness. I know Jesus Christ is our Savior

and Redeemer. I know Jesus enabled the Father’s plan through His infinite and eternal Atonement. I know the Lord, who was “bruised, broken, [and] torn for us,”² can succor and strengthen “his people according to their infirmities” (Alma 7:12). And I know one of the greatest blessings of mortality is to not shrink and to allow our individual will to be “swallowed up in the will of the Father” (Mosiah 15:7).

Though I do not know everything about how and when and where and why these blessings occur, I do witness they are real. And I know that as you press forward in your lives with steadfast faith in Christ, you will have the capacity to not shrink. ■

From a Church Educational System devotional, “That We Might ‘Not . . . Shrink,’” delivered at the University of Texas at Arlington on March 3, 2013.

NOTES

1. Neal A. Maxwell, “Apply the Atoning Blood of Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 22.
2. “Jesus of Nazareth, Savior and King,” *Hymns*, no. 181.

Many of the lessons we are to learn in mortality can be received only through the things we experience and sometimes suffer.



By **Brian K. Ashton**

Second Counselor,
Sunday School
General Presidency

HELPING YOUTH Teach

Youth need to teach. The Lord made this clear when He listed the duties of a priest:

“The priest’s duty is *to preach, teach, expound, exhort, and baptize, and administer the sacrament*” (D&C 20:46; emphasis added).

Just a few verses later the Lord extends the duty to teach and expound to teachers and deacons (see D&C 20:58–59). The truth is that all of our young men and young women need the opportunity to teach occasionally.

The Benefits of Youth Teaching Other Youth

Jesus Christ was the perfect teacher. Teaching helps youth follow the Savior’s example and become more like Him. Teaching also prepares them to become missionaries, parents, and leaders in the Church. When youth teach, they have to study the gospel and live it. They also have to have the Spirit in order to teach (see D&C 42:14). As a result, youth teachers usually learn more and gain a stronger testimony of the topic than those they teach.

In addition, youth who teach gain confidence and learn teaching skills. Youth who have had the opportunity to be teachers also learn to be better students and class members.

What’s more, the youth being taught are also blessed. Youth often listen and participate more when their peers teach. Friendships are strengthened as youth discuss gospel

topics with the Spirit present. And youth are frequently better able to help one another work through common problems.

How Can Adult Leaders Help Youth Succeed?

When youth teach, adult leaders are responsible for ensuring appropriate behavior and a spiritual atmosphere.

Adult leaders follow the Spirit when inviting youth to teach.¹ Some youth are not ready to teach, and leaders must be careful not to make these youth feel uncomfortable. Other youth may be ready to teach only part of a lesson, but others could teach an entire lesson. While youth should usually have at least a part in teaching most lessons, they should not teach every lesson. In small classes, youth should not be asked to teach too often. Some lessons, especially those on difficult topics, are best taught by adults. Furthermore, youth need to see adult leaders model correct teaching principles.

Adult leaders or parents should work one-on-one with youth to help them prepare their lessons. This assistance includes asking youth to read the lesson at least a week in advance,² suggesting they pray to know what Heavenly Father would have them teach, developing a lesson plan, and practicing teaching the lesson together. As youth receive revelation during the preparation process, leaders can help them recognize it as such.



*Youth need to teach,
and with some help,
they can teach well.*

together. Jacob took the first half of the lesson, showed a short video, shared scriptures related to our topic, and asked thoughtful questions.

Jacob also asked the class members

Adult leaders can help youth teachers create questions that generate discussion, invite the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and help students discover truth for themselves. Leaders can also help youth learn to be silent after asking a question to give class members time to receive revelation.

During the lesson, adult leaders could share personal experiences and testimonies that help the youth see that they are not alone in their challenges and give them hope to overcome them. Youth need the wisdom and experience that adult leaders offer. Leaders should also clarify doctrine when necessary.

Adult leaders avoid taking over the lesson even if the youth teacher is struggling. However, leaders can be prepared to provide support by studying the lesson materials beforehand and praying about how they can best help the youth teacher.

Youth Can Teach, and Teach Well

I recently was asked to substitute teach my ward's 12- and 13-year-old Sunday School class. I asked my 13-year-old son, Jacob, to help me teach. We made a lesson plan

what they were feeling and helped them recognize the Holy Ghost.

In the second half of the class, I had the class members teach each other the First Vision. We then invited them to teach the First Vision to their families in family home evening. After the class we sent an email to the parents informing them of our invitation.

When I asked Jacob how he felt about the lesson, he said, "It was really good. I know the Spirit was there because I didn't think my classmates could answer our questions, but they did."

Youth need to teach, and you can help them succeed. As they do, their testimonies will grow, and they will be better prepared to be missionaries, parents, and leaders in the Church. More importantly, they will become more like the Savior. ■

Please see the new manual, Teaching in the Savior's Way, at teaching.lds.org for more ideas on improving teaching.

NOTES

1. Aaronic Priesthood quorum presidents counsel with their adult leaders in deciding which youth will teach upcoming lessons (see *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 8.3.2).
2. Because revelation comes "line upon line, precept upon precept" (2 Nephi 28:30), reading the lesson at least a week in advance gives teachers time to receive revelation.

Being a Woman

AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

I WANT TO GO
ON RECORD
FROM MY OWN
EXPERIENCE
THAT MY LIFE
IS RICH AND
NOBLE AND INFI-
NITELY BETTER
AS A WOMAN
BECAUSE OF
THE GOSPEL OF
JESUS CHRIST.

By Sharon Eubank
Director of LDS Charities

Many years ago, my friend and her husband were doing leadership training in rural Ghana, and a woman came up to her afterward and said very emotionally, “This is a woman’s church.” My friend asked the woman what she meant. She said, in essence, “We have the glorious Relief Society, which teaches us about spiritual things and everyday things that bless our families and us. And at the same time your husband is in the next room teaching our husbands that they must treat their wives and children with kindness and gentleness. We have the temple, so my children who are dead will be mine forever. Everything I want I find in this church. This is a woman’s church.”

Is this a woman’s church? With a few colorful exceptions, my personal experience has been largely one of empowerment. So rather than answer the question for you, I will rely simply on what I have witnessed around the world. I’m not a scholar, an academic, or a Church spokesperson. But I want to go on record from my own experience that my life is rich and noble and infinitely better as a woman because of the gospel and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Far from being restrictive and conservative, the Church’s doctrine on women’s roles in the family, Church, community, nation, and temple—and how men and women relate and interact in concert—is the most moderate, powerful, enlightened, and energizing doctrine I have ever heard expressed. So I say to my sisters that what you are hungry for as a woman, as a Christian, as an intellectual, as an eternal being is here in the doctrine of Jesus Christ in the Church.



“GOOD WOMEN . . .
WILL BE DRAWN
TO THE CHURCH IN
LARGE NUMBERS . . .
TO THE DEGREE THAT
THE . . . WOMEN OF
THE CHURCH ARE
SEEN AS DISTINCT
AND DIFFERENT—IN
HAPPY WAYS—FROM
THE WOMEN OF THE
WORLD.”

**PRESIDENT SPENCER W.
KIMBALL**



God’s Doctrine Holds Men and Women Equally Accountable

The gospel of Jesus Christ applies to both men and women, and God’s doctrine holds both equally accountable, without a double standard. God doesn’t tolerate pornography, adultery, abuse, neglect, inequality, or oppression, regardless of our gender.

This doctrine also gives us our knowledge of where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going. It gives us our understanding of our gender as women and men as well as our roles as daughters and sons, sisters and brothers, wives and husbands, and mothers and fathers.¹

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, “Prophets have revealed that we first existed as intelligences and that we were given form, or spirit bodies, by God, thus becoming His spirit children—sons and daughters of heavenly parents.”² Intelligence has always existed (see D&C 93:29).

I am a *woman*. With gender came certain attributes and responsibilities.

I am a *daughter*. This role defines who I am in relation to Deity. I have divine parents and have the right, as a daughter, to communicate with Heavenly Father through prayer and to receive revelation through the Holy Ghost.³

I am a *sister*. This role means that I am a Christian, a member of the Church, a sister in the gospel, a disciple, and that I have made covenants that I will sacrifice and consecrate and serve and lead.

I may also have the opportunity in this

life to be a *wife*—if not in this life, then certainly in the next. This role is who I am in relation to a chosen equal partner, a husband. Though we are not the same—since nobody has the combination of gifts and traits that I have or that he has—we use our complementary attributes to try to become one. The word *sealing* is an excellent description of the eternal unifying potential of a marriage created by priesthood authority in a temple.

The role of *mother* is who I am in relation to my progeny. Whether I actually attain this role in this brief span on the earth or afterward, the promise of eternal family is made to those whose marriages are sealed in the temple and by the Holy Spirit of Promise (see D&C 132:19).

Our doctrine is unique on earth, and it’s part of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Think what it means if you understand this doctrine and believe it. To me it gives eternal perspective to everything I do.

Church Is Where We Practice God’s Doctrine

I believe being a member of the Church makes me a part of one of the best development programs ever designed. A broad curriculum of personal development, empowerment, and leadership for women happens simply by doing the things all members do: leadership, public speaking, decision making, persuasive discussion, budgeting, influencing, serving in the community, literacy, research, resource development, gardening, food preservation, family health—it goes on and on.



I believe that misunderstandings regarding women's roles arise when there is a disconnect between the doctrine and the practice of the doctrine. However, through continuing revelation from God to His prophets and to us through the Holy Ghost, we can continue to recognize and eliminate most misunderstandings that surface.

For example, Apostles and prophets continue to clarify concepts we have always believed:

- Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said that “when men and women go to the temple, they are both endowed with the same power, which by definition is priesthood power.”⁴
- Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated, “We are not accustomed to speaking of women having the authority of the priesthood in their Church callings, but what other authority can it be?”⁵
- President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, explained, “Every father is to his family a patriarch and every mother a matriarch as coequals in their distinctive parental roles.”⁶

1. Keep the Big Picture in Mind

May I now make three suggestions that will help us with our practice of the doctrine? My first suggestion is to keep in mind the big picture provided by the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

Some time ago, as director of LDS Charities, I was in a meeting when I got an urgent plea regarding Christian refugees who were purged from Mosul, Iraq, by Islamic State forces and were pouring into Kurdistan. The Anglican

vicar of Baghdad had 5,000 people jostling for space in his church courtyard, and they had no food to eat. The Latter-day Saint humanitarian missionary couple was asking for emergency funds to purchase rice, beans, oil, and blankets, and we responded immediately so they could get dinner that evening.

Because of my work, these are the kinds of things in front of my face every day. Being forced to see the broad picture so often, I ask myself, what is the best use of my energies? As we seek answers, let us search the doctrines of the gospel. “Looking beyond the mark” (Jacob 4:14) or becoming obsessed with one question or one practice often shifts our focus and time from gospel living.

Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women general president, spoke of remaining anchored in the gospel as we seek answers: “We can choose whether or not we are going to stick with what we have already felt. There are not answers to everything, but we choose whether we will be true to what we have felt from the Holy Ghost. Let’s keep working to make things better, but keep our faith in the meantime.”⁷

Our practices will continue to change in the Church as we learn to apply our doctrine in better and more perfect ways. I hope the next generation is even more fair and equal in its practice of the gospel. But I also believe that the large foundational stones are in place and are enough to nurture our faith and our testimonies.

2. Stay Faithful in the Face of Opposition

Opposition isn’t necessarily bad. I believe that opposition strengthens us too. When I visited the Huntington Botanical Gardens in San Marino, California, USA, I noticed that huge fans in the exhibit simulated the constant trade winds that strengthen tropical trees to withstand potential hurricanes. The Lord sends us or allows daily “trade winds” in the form of problems and resistance in order to strengthen our roots and make us more flexible. Such challenges are actually a gift.

The following two vignettes from Church history give us perspective on opposition:

THE HOLY SPIRIT
LEAVES AS SOON AS
EITHER A MAN OR A
WOMAN STARTS TO
EXERCISE UNRIGH-
TEOUS DOMINION
AND FAILS TO LEAD
WITH MEEKNESS,
LOVE, AND PURITY.

SEE D&C 121:37



The first vignette is Brigham Young's arrival in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847, as described by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008): “No plow had even broken its soil. [Brigham Young] knew nothing of its fertility, nothing of the seasons, the weather, the frost, the severity of the winters, the possibility of insect plagues. [Early explorers] Jim Bridger and Miles Goodyear had nothing good to say concerning this place. Sam Brannan pleaded with him to go on to California. He listened to none of them. He led his people to this hot and what must have appeared as a very forlorn place. When he arrived, he looked across this broad expanse to the salt lake in the west and said, ‘This is the right place.’”⁸

The second vignette is Wilford Woodruff's remembering a statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith. The Prophet spoke in the early days of the Restoration to a small gathering of leaders about the vast doctrinal knowledge that lay ahead for them: “I have been very much edified and instructed in your testimonies here tonight, but I want to say to you before the Lord, that you know no more concerning the destinies of this Church and kingdom than a babe upon its mother's lap. You don't comprehend it.”⁹

I share these two stories because they describe how I feel. Being in the right place or having the right doctrine doesn't mean there won't be blinding salt flats and swarms of black crickets or killing frosts



or naysayers, but this is the right place and the right doctrine. And we should be driving on. We understand about as much as a baby on her mother's lap about what the Lord is doing with men and women and priesthood. But the Lord is content to teach us as we are able, as we grow, as we ask. And as we increase in our understanding, we can do as Sister Oscarson said, “Keep our faith in the meantime.”

3. Seek the Holy Ghost

Asking questions and finding answers are at the heart of gaining a testimony of God's doctrine. The Holy Ghost will testify when something is true through peaceful and warm feelings. Linda K. Burton, Relief Society general president, said of this process: “Let's go to the right sources for answers. Why would we believe the Internet and not the prophets? We can figure out how to ask the questions in a way that facilitates cooperation and brings honest concerns to the table. . . . But be patient and humble.”¹⁰

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles teaches us the difference between influences from Satan and



answers from God: “Who is it that whispers [lies] so subtly in our ear? . . . You and I both know who does this—it is the father of all lies. It is Lucifer, our common enemy.”¹¹

The Prophet Joseph Smith, who had more experience getting revelation than anyone in this dispensation, tried to teach us that questions must be approached with a commitment to unity and respect.

This invites the Holy Ghost. In 1839, Joseph wrote in his letter from Liberty Jail that “the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven” and that power in the priesthood must be maintained “by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned” (D&C 121:36, 41). The Prophet taught similar principles to the Relief Society: “Meekness, love, purity—these are the things that should magnify [us].”¹²

Joseph Smith spoke of gentleness and meekness as the means of feeling the Holy Ghost and exercising righteous influence. He said this to both men and women because it affects both halves of the equation in marriage and in the Church. All authority and divine sanction is negated (because the Holy Spirit leaves) as soon as either a man or a woman starts to exercise unrighteous dominion (see D&C 121:37) and fails to lead with meekness, love, and purity.

What Women Hunger for Is in Our Doctrine

There is a hunger among many women in the world to be valued, to find purpose for their energies, to find men who want to build families and be faithful.

I once met a British dancer while traveling on a train in Finland. We were both happy to be speaking English, and as we chatted we asked each other questions: What are you doing in Finland? What do you believe? Learning of my beliefs, she asked, “You don’t smoke or drink? You don’t believe in premarital sex?” And throughout our conversation, she kept coming back to this subject, intrigued. “I suppose if

you dated men who felt the same way, it would work out,” she said. And then later: “Are there any men who feel the same way?” She started off disdainful and ended up wistful. She was hungry for something she heard in our doctrine.

The memory of our meeting on the train has never left me and often reminds me of the well-known statement by President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985): “Much of the major growth that is coming to the Church in the last days will come because many of the good women of the world . . . will be drawn to the Church in large numbers. This will happen to the degree that the women of the Church reflect righteousness and articulateness in their lives and to the degree that the women of the Church are seen as distinct and different—in happy ways—from the women of the world.”¹³

The doctrine of the identity and roles of women embodies the greatest desires of my heart. Mortal members’ practice of God’s doctrine is not perfect, but it is responsive, living, full of hope and good intent. We believe that God “will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God” (Articles of Faith 1:9). We can choose to follow that doctrine.

So I will ask again: Is this a woman’s church? My reply is based simply on my own experience around the world. Yes. ■

From an address given at the FairMormon Conference in Provo, Utah, USA, on August 8, 2014.

NOTES

1. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129.
2. D. Todd Christofferson, “Why Marriage, Why Family,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 50.
3. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 129.
4. M. Russell Ballard, “Men and Women and Priesthood Power,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2014, 32; *Liahona*, Sept. 2014, 36.
5. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 51.
6. James E. Faust, “The Prophetic Voice,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 6.
7. Bonnie L. Oscarson, personal conversation with the author, July 21, 2014.
8. Gordon B. Hinckley, in James E. Faust, “Brigham Young: A Bold Prophet” (Education Week address, Aug. 21, 2001), 1, speeches.byu.edu.
9. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 137.
10. Linda K. Burton, personal conversation with the author, July 21, 2014.
11. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Other Prodigal,” *Ensign*, May 2002, 63; *Liahona*, July 2002, 70.
12. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 482.
13. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 222–23.





**By Elder
Gene R. Cook**

Served as a
General Authority
Seventy from 1975
to 2007

THE Lost SCRIPTURES

*God does hear and answer our prayers if we exercise faith in
Him and in His Son.*

On July 29, 1977, Sister Cook and I had just finished visiting the Bolivia Santa Cruz Mission as part of my assignment as a member of the Seventy when we had a layover in the Cochabamba, Bolivia, airport for about five hours. We were very tired, so we were both delighted to have a few hours to rest. As I was drifting off to sleep, I had a strong impression that I should awaken and write down some ideas flowing into my mind.

I wrote for nearly three hours, solving some organizational problems I had struggled with in my responsibility at Church headquarters for a number of years. I felt a great outpouring of the Spirit and excitedly wrote down each inspired thought.

Finally we left for La Paz, Bolivia. We were graciously met by President and Sister Chase Allred at the airport and driven in their van to the mission office. We locked the van, leaving our luggage and my briefcase inside, but only did so because Sister Allred asked an elder to keep his eye on the van.

Upon entering the office, the president was confronted by a woman whose husband was dying. Both the president and I helped calm her and assist with her needs. Meanwhile, Sisters Cook and Allred left for the mission home.

The woman had a strong impression that something holy was being desecrated.

When the president and I returned to the van, all of our property was gone. I assumed that Sister Cook had taken the things with her to the mission home. But while we were driving toward the home, I discovered that the right front small window-wing had been damaged and began to fear that perhaps our property had been stolen.

Upon arrival at the mission home, we realized that all of our property had indeed been stolen. The loss of the clothing and a large amount of cash created an immediate but only temporary problem. What was more disheartening was that my scriptures were in the stolen briefcase along with the inspired ideas I had just received in Cochabamba. I was overwhelmed with discouragement, anger, and feelings of helplessness.

After we had all prayed for the recovery of our possessions, we tried to enjoy our dinner but could not. My scriptures had been given to me by my parents, with a sacred inscription to me from my mother and my father before he died. I had spent thousands of hours marking, cross-referencing, and loving the only earthly possessions I had ever considered to be of much value.

Though President Allred and I had much to discuss, I felt a strong impression that we must do all in our power to recover the scriptures. So after supper all of those present knelt to pray once again. I pled with the Lord that the scriptures would be returned, that the persons who had taken them would be led to know of their unrighteous act and repent, and that the return of the books would be the means of bringing someone into the true Church.

We determined to search the area near the mission office and in a nearby field, hoping that the thief or thieves might have taken the saleable items and discarded the English books.

About 10 of us then loaded into the van with flashlights and warm clothing. We drove up and down streets, scouring vacant lots and talking with people until we'd exhausted all possibilities. No one had seen or heard anything. Finally we returned home dejected. President Allred and I finished our business late into the night, and the next day Sister

Cook and I flew back to our home in Quito, Ecuador.

Over the next few weeks, the missionaries in Bolivia kept searching. In sheer desperation, they decided to place an ad in two daily newspapers offering a reward.

Meanwhile, in Quito, I was struggling. I had not studied the scriptures at all since mine were stolen. I had tried to study, but every time I read a verse, I could recall only a few of the many cross-references I had made over 20 years. I was disheartened, depressed, and had no desire to read. I prayed many times that my scriptures would be found. My wife and young children also continued praying every day for three weeks, saying, "Heavenly Father, please bring back Daddy's scriptures."

After about three weeks I felt a strong spiritual impression: "Elder Cook, how long will you go on without reading and studying?" The words burned, and I determined that I must be humble enough and submissive enough to start all over again. Using my wife's scriptures, I began reading in Genesis in the Old Testament, and with her permission, marking and cross-referencing once again.

On August 18, a Church employee, Brother Eb Davis, arrived in Ecuador from Bolivia with a package from the mission president in La Paz. He laid my scriptures on my desk along with the inspired notes I had made of my spiritual impressions.

The joy I experienced is indescribable. To realize that the Lord, in some miraculous way, could lift those books out of La Paz, a city of 700,000–800,000 people, from the hands of thieves and return them intact—not one page removed, torn, or soiled—is still beyond me. That day I promised the Lord I would make better use of my time and my scriptures than I had ever made before.

A few days later I returned to Bolivia and discovered that a lady had been in a marketplace—one of hundreds in La Paz—and saw a drunken man waving around a black book. She was a member of a protestant church and had a strong spiritual impression that something holy was being desecrated. She approached the man and asked him what it was. He did not know but showed her the book. She



asked if he had anything else. He pulled out another black book. She asked if there was more. He removed a folder full of papers that he said he was going to burn. She then asked to purchase those things from him, to which he agreed, for the price of 50 pesos (about U.S. \$2.50).

Afterward, she felt unsure why she had purchased the books. They were in English, but she didn't even know English. And they had been expensive—nearly 10 percent of her monthly income. She had no reason to buy the books except for her spiritual impression. She immediately began a search for the church that was named on the front of the books: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

After approaching a number of churches, she finally arrived at the mission office of the Church in La Paz. She hadn't heard about the reward or seen the ad in the newspaper, which was to appear that day. She did not ask for any money, not even to reclaim the 50 pesos she had paid. The elders received the books with joy and paid her the reward anyway.

She told the missionaries that she was associated with a Pentecostal sect but listened intently as they told her about the gospel. She recalled reading something about Joseph Smith from a pamphlet she had picked up in the street two or three years previously. She accepted the missionary lessons, and after the second lesson, she committed to baptism. Two weeks later, on September 11, 1977, on a Sunday afternoon at a branch in La Paz, Bolivia, Maria Cloefe Cardenas Terrazas and her son Marco Fernando Miranda Cardenas, age 12, were baptized.

The Lord had transformed my overpowering feelings of helplessness when the scriptures were lost into great feelings of joy at seeing His hand revealed. The Lord said, "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24).

God does hear and answer our prayers if we exercise faith in Him and in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. ■

Self-reliance takes many forms. With the Lord's help, we develop in body, mind, and spirit—and help others do the same. The following six stories show how members have been blessed by becoming more self-reliant.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: EARTHQUAKES AND DEMIJOHNS

When I was nine months old, my parents—a young couple, with three children and pregnant with another—were caught in a magnitude-7.5 earthquake in Argentina. As our house began to fall down, my father and mother grabbed us and ran. After checking to see that we were OK, they looked around at the devastation. My father quickly assessed the damages and losses, and realized that we would have no clean water from the public network. There wasn't even enough water to wash off the dust from the crumbling houses!

My grandmother had listened to the prophet and filled two demijohns with fresh drinking water, which supplied our family's needs until emergency assistance arrived.

When the shock wore off, my father grabbed his bicycle and went to check on his mother, who lived a few blocks away. When he arrived at his mother's destroyed house, he walked around back where she was sitting with only a few scratches.

My grandmother asked my father to save some things from the debris, and while he was doing so, he found two demijohns (glass containers in which 5 to 15 gallons [20 to 60 L] of wine were sold) filled with fresh drinking water. They were undamaged.

A few months before the earthquake, President Spencer W. Kimball

(1895–1985) had instructed the Saints throughout the world to store food and water. My grandmother, a recent convert, had listened. From those two demijohns, we were able to supply our family's needs for a couple of days until emergency assistance arrived.

This example of my grandmother's obedience was a testimony to my father, who later converted to the gospel. Our family has since been sealed in the temple. I am so grateful for my grandmother's faith and obedience to the call to be prepared. ■ Ricardo Sosa, Santa Lucia, Argentina



PHYSICAL HEALTH: WEIGHT LOSS AND THE WORD OF WISDOM

In my mid-60s, it was getting harder for me to get around. I weighed almost 300 pounds (136 kg). I had low energy and stamina and even obtained a handicapped parking permit so that I could park as close to stores as possible.

I decided it was time to lose weight. I turned to Doctrine and Covenants 89 and prayed to Heavenly Father, “Help me to understand what this is really telling me.” Over time each verse, each word took on new meaning. Even though I don’t drink alcohol, tea, or coffee, and I don’t smoke, I hadn’t really absorbed the overall message. I knew the Word of Wisdom was a health code, but I had never before thought of it as a way of life.

For the first time I truly felt that I could change my lifestyle. I set a

realistic goal of losing 50 pounds (23 kg) in 50 weeks.

I kept track of my calories and nutrients. I researched the health benefits of everything I ate. As I ate healthier foods, I felt satisfied. I had no cravings. My body seemed to know what it needed. Unhealthy food I used to enjoy lost its appeal. I quit eating sugar. Over time, I quit counting calories and ate plant-based foods, as the Word of Wisdom says: “that which yieldeth fruit, whether in the ground or above the ground” (D&C 89:16). I met my goal and more. In just over 23 months I had lost over half my body weight. That’s 12 dress sizes smaller! I have now maintained that weight for over three years.

I feel healthy. I no longer have blood-sugar spikes when I’m hungry,

and I can’t remember the last time I had a headache. I don’t have to take medications. While losing weight has contributed to my overall feeling of well-being, my new lifestyle does also.

Controlling the things I eat is part of overcoming the natural man (see Mosiah 3:19). In turn, it tweaks my spiritual discernment, allowing me to receive the promise that I “shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures” (D&C 89:19). Giving up fast food for wisdom is a good trade-off.

I am most grateful to a loving Heavenly Father who heard my simple plea and gave me insight into the Word of Wisdom. I know the Word of Wisdom is revelation. I know it can change lives. ■
Carol E. Wolf, Utah, USA



EMPLOYMENT: A LOT OF FAITH, A LITTLE FURNITURE

When my wife and I married, I was unemployed. We had very little furniture, but we had a lot of love and a lot of faith.

When I finally got a job, it required me to work Sunday afternoons. I had promised the Lord that I wouldn't work on His day. But I was still responsible for providing for my family. Even so, the promise I'd made didn't leave my mind.

My answer came the next Sunday while singing "Welcome, Welcome, Sabbath Morning" (*Hymns*, no. 280) and realizing the importance of the Sabbath day. After learning that negotiating a new schedule wouldn't be an option, I quit my job. We went on with life, believing that the Lord would take care of us. My wife worked

to support us, and we had our first daughter, Saria. Meanwhile, I took a course in electronic mechanics, utilizing the Perpetual Education Fund. Still no job came.

My wife had to return to work three months after Saria was born, but Saria missed her desperately. We prayed to know what to do and decided to have her leave work. It seemed imprudent, but we felt it was what we were supposed to do. We had four months of unemployment insurance for me to find some work, and at a providential time I obtained some temporary employment.

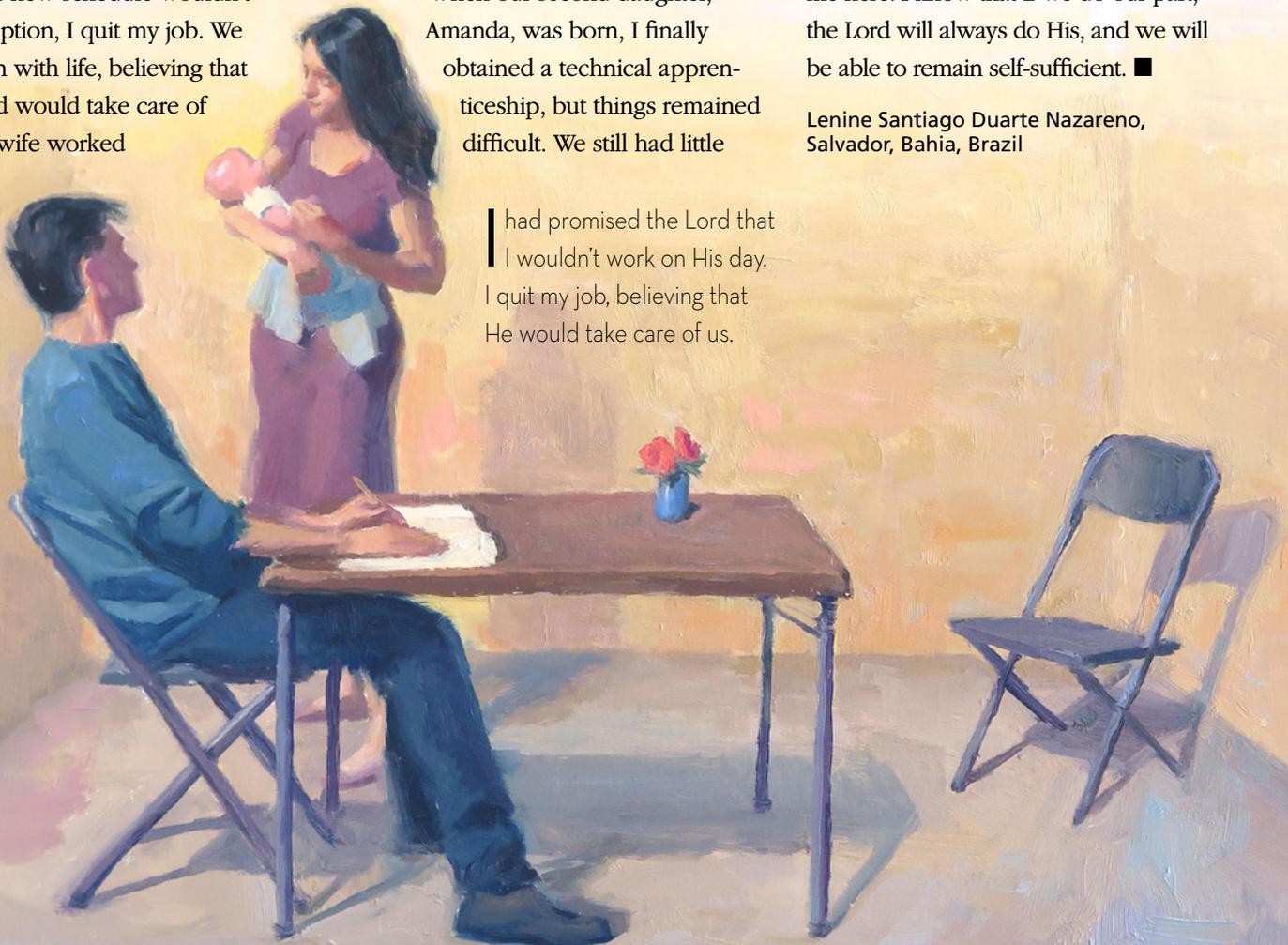
When our second daughter, Amanda, was born, I finally obtained a technical apprenticeship, but things remained difficult. We still had little

furniture and no stable work. I took the professional self-sufficiency course offered by the Church twice. I did my best, although the little I earned hardly covered our basic necessities.

Fifteen months after I started my apprenticeship, I got my current job. I am now a technician in electrical energy measurement at a large shopping center. I work Monday through Friday, which I consider to be a miracle in this industry. All my other colleagues work Sundays and holidays. We have a health plan and furniture! I know that the Lord and the Perpetual Education Fund got me here. I know that if we do our part, the Lord will always do His, and we will be able to remain self-sufficient. ■

Lenine Santiago Duarte Nazareno,
Salvador, Bahia, Brazil

I had promised the Lord that I wouldn't work on His day. I quit my job, believing that He would take care of us.



FINANCES: OATMEAL, BREAD, AND RICE AND BEANS

My husband's graduate school had been expensive, so we looked forward to a job that would help us pay off our debts. We were offered several positions but felt best about a professorship in Hawaii. However, when our contract arrived, the salary was lower than we had discussed. We were informed that there was a new policy and negotiation was not an option. We had felt sure about the new job, so we signed the contract anyway.

We loved Hawaii, my husband loved his job, and we were blessed as a family. Things seemed to be going well with our student-debt payments until the credit card company informed us that our new interest rate would be 14 percent instead of our current 3 percent. We argued that we always made our payments on time and that had paid down a lot of the debt already. But the company was adamant.

First, we did some creative financing, transferring our balance to different credit cards with short-term zero percent interest rates. Then we started cutting costs. We drastically reduced our food, clothing, and diapers budget for our seven-person family. We lived on our food storage. Every morning we ate oatmeal; every afternoon we ate homemade bread; and every evening we ate rice and beans. There were no luxuries such as butter, fresh milk, or juice. After we paid tithing and basic expenses, all of our income went to paying off our credit cards.

Six months later, we had paid off 90 percent of our debt! The Lord had multiplied our income in miraculous ways. We were able to quickly pay off the remaining debt, and we are very thankful. My daughter still complains about when she had to eat oatmeal every morning, but I know that by paying our tithing and obeying the prophet, we were blessed financially and temporally. ■

Name withheld, Hawaii, USA



Things seemed to be going well with our student-debt payments until the credit card company informed us that our interest rate was going up.



My husband and I wanted to accumulate a large supply of food storage, so we decided we would buy something extra every week.

FOOD STORAGE: CANNED CHEESE AND MORTGAGE RATES

When I got married, I began to diligently store food. My husband and I wanted to accumulate a large supply, but we couldn't afford to buy it all at once, so we decided we would buy something extra every week. We looked for special offers on the things we bought regularly, especially canned foods.

I loved looking in my cupboard to see my little pile of canned and dried foodstuffs gradually growing bigger. Once we made the mistake of buying canned cheese, which was revolting,

but my husband steeled himself and ate a can each week until it was gone. After we had a decent amount of food storage, we began to eat from it, resolving to replace each item eaten with two more items.

Soon our cupboard became quite full, so we bought storage items for our dog and cats. We also began to store herbs and spices, vacuum-packed wheat, water and soft drinks, and anything we used daily that wasn't food, like soap, deodorant, and detergent.

Then we bought a house, and just

before we signed on the dotted line, mortgage rates increased drastically. We had to live on our food storage for almost a year to avoid losing our home.

Food storage is just a part of general housekeeping now. We use it and are blessed by it every day. I am so grateful that we listened to the inspired counsel from the Lord's prophets because it means that now I can look around in gratitude at my warm and cozy home. ■

Yvonne Aston, Channel Islands, United Kingdom

ON THE PATH TO GREATER SELF-RELIANCE

Are you becoming more self-reliant each day?

Rate yourself on these statements to get an idea of where you are on the journey to self-reliance.

This evaluation is not a comprehensive list of guidelines. As you and your family prayerfully study this topic and counsel together, the Spirit can prompt you to know how to improve.

After completing the self-evaluation, consider setting some goals in the areas where you had lower scores.

Preparedness

- ___ 1. I have cash set aside to use in case of an emergency.
- ___ 2. I keep my home stocked with emergency supplies (such as blankets, candles, flashlights).
- ___ 3. I keep important documents in a secure place, and my family and I know where to access them.
- ___ 4. I regularly buy and store extra food and water.
- ___ 5. I use the food storage I have and replace it with new food so it doesn't expire.

Physical Health

- ___ 1. I make an effort to exercise regularly.
- ___ 2. I eat healthy foods and drink enough water every day.
- ___ 3. I live the Word of Wisdom and encourage others to do so as well.
- ___ 4. I avoid becoming addicted to harmful substances.
- ___ 5. I get adequate sleep and avoid oversleeping.

Finances

- ___ 1. I seek ways to save money by reducing unnecessary expenses.
- ___ 2. I regularly put money aside in a savings or investment account.
- ___ 3. I avoid going into unnecessary debt.
- ___ 4. I pay an honest tithe and donate a generous fast offering.
- ___ 5. I take care of my possessions so they last longer.

Education

- ___ 1. I seek formal and informal opportunities to learn.
- ___ 2. When seeking to gain more education, I look for resources such as scholarships or the Perpetual Education Fund.
- ___ 3. I welcome exposure to views and opinions that are different from mine.
- ___ 4. I seek the Spirit to help me discern truth and retain what I learn.
- ___ 5. I include daily gospel study as part of my education.

Employment

- ___ 1. I make efforts to improve my work skills and productivity through seminars and work-sponsored classes.
- ___ 2. I work well with others, and they trust me.
- ___ 3. Before job searching, I seek feedback on my resume and my interviewing skills.
- ___ 4. I am prayerful and positive while searching for work.
- ___ 5. I look for opportunities to make new contacts with potential to lead to employment.

Response Key

1=Never, **2**=Sometimes, **3**=Often, **4**=Almost Always, **5**=Always



By **Elder L. Whitney Clayton**

Of the Presidency of the Seventy

Rooted in

One of the most troubling scenes in all scripture is recorded in the Book of John. It occurred after the Savior had suffered incomprehensible agony for our sins and mortal weaknesses in the Garden of Gethsemane (see D&C 19:15–18).

This scene also followed His betrayal and arrest and happened after the night of indignities and physical abuse He suffered at the hands of the leaders of the Jews. It came after He was brutally scourged by Roman soldiers acting under the direction of Pontius Pilate. It occurred after the crown of thorns was pressed onto His head.

Pilate concluded that Jesus had done nothing that merited crucifixion. He ordered that Jesus be scourged, a form of extreme but normally not-fatal physical punishment. Perhaps Pilate hoped that by thus torturing

and humiliating the Savior, he would persuade the leaders of the Jews that Jesus had been taught a terribly painful lesson and been made a public example. Perhaps he hoped to awaken some sense of mercy in them. Thus, following the scourging, Pilate ordered that Jesus be brought into public view.

“Behold the Man!”

“Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!

“When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him” (John 19:5–6).

As critically important as the rest of the story is, I stop with Pilate’s words: “Behold the man!”

In this article and the next, Elder Clayton and his wife, Kathy, testify of the Savior and of His ability to help God’s children reach their eternal potential.

Christ



Pilate's plea was profoundly ironic. Jesus's physical appearance at that moment was marred, but there never had been until then, and has not been since, any man or woman who more richly deserved to be "beheld." His life was perfect. He was without peer. No one had ever lived as He did. No one ever would. He possessed every virtue in its consummate form.

The Savior had every power of self-control. His emotions and feelings were perfect, as were His thoughts. His understanding was unlimited. He alone was truly worthy of being beheld—from every perspective—and of being examined, measured, and worshipped. No view into His mind, heart, and feelings would or could

possibly disappoint. His appearance did not reflect it then, but Jesus was the embodiment of the abundant life.

So it was not His appearance at that moment of suffering that we should remember first and foremost (see Isaiah 53:2). It was what He was inside that afflicted physical tabernacle that meant absolutely everything for all of us. What He was made possible what He did. It was the magnificence of what He was that invites our attention.

What we should see as we "behold the man" is His crescendoing triumph over the forces of evil, even though it did not then appear to be a victory at all. It was His perfect calm in the center of the most violent storm any human would ever suffer. Every

diabolical device the enemy ever invented had been or soon would be unleashed against Him. He overcame and conquered them all. He stood before Pilate in perfect peace and composure.

His dominion over the physical elements of the world and the conditions of mankind was demonstrated beyond doubt. He commanded evil spirits. He healed the sick and gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf. He restored the dead to life, including children He returned to their parents. He perceived the thoughts and feelings of everyone. He forgave sins and cleansed lepers. He carried the burden of the sins, pains, illnesses, and failings of all humanity the night



before the scene with Pilate. Ironically, He even suffered for the sins of those who at that very moment were mistreating Him.

“Behold the man” indeed. He is the Son of the living God. He is the exemplar of life, the One sent to show the way and to be the Way. He is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6) for all of us. With those three words, “behold the man,” Pilate unknowingly and unintentionally expressed the simple formula for achieving the highest purposes of life.

When Pilate asked the Jews to behold the Savior, he pointed them and us toward the One, the only one, who can make our lives abundant and our “salvation perfect.”¹ Thus the commandment “Look to God and live” (Alma 37:47).

What we should remember when we behold Him is that because of Him, and all He did and all He was and is, we too can triumph. We also can overcome. We can live abundantly in the midst of trials. If we choose to “behold” Him and accept and apply His saving gospel, He will save us. He will rescue us from the effects of our own fallen natures and foibles, and He will save us from sin, from spiritual mediocrity, and from ultimate, eternal failure. He will purge, refine, beautify, and eventually even perfect us. He will give us joy and peace. He is the key to abundant life.

A Sermon of Seedlings

My wife, Kathy, and I live on a hillside. A species of trees—the scrub oak—grows there. Unlike large and mighty oak trees, scrub oak trees never get big, but they are hardy and beautiful.

A few years ago we placed a large flowerpot on the walkway that leads to the front door of our home. We planted colorful flowers in the pot, which sits under the branches of a scrub oak tree. When the season changed and fall began, the scrub oak tree began to drop its seeds, or acorns, and a few fell into the flowerpot.

One spring day I noticed that a few seedlings had sprouted. We didn’t want anything but flowers in the pot, so I started to pull the seedlings out of the potting soil. To my surprise, the roots were three or four times longer than the visible part of the seedlings above the surface of the soil.

In Utah, USA, the summers are hot, with little rainfall, and the winters are cold, with wind and snow. But the deep roots of the scrub oak seedlings quickly get down through the surface soils. This allows more exposed root to draw moisture and nutrients from the soil. The deep roots also firmly anchor the trees to hold them erect and steadfast in the wind, beginning when they are young. Deep roots make survival easier for the scrub oak.

As the seedlings eventually grow to their full height, their roots continue to nourish, protect, and sustain them.

We can take a lesson from the scrub oak. We all have experiences that are like hot summers and cold winters. We have easy times and hard times, successes and failures, times of health and sickness, periods of happiness and moments of sorrow. Life isn’t static. It isn’t smooth.

Life is similar in other regards as well. We are all surrounded by the culture and traditions of our native communities and countries. Some of those influences are good, and some are bad. Some will lift us, and others will diminish and degrade us. Our homes may be blessed by the light of the gospel or be blighted by failure to keep the commandments of God. The examples of friends may be terrific or terrible. None of us knows where life will take us. We can’t fully predict our future health or wealth. We can’t foretell the influence of war or weather. Variable circumstances beyond our control press challenges on all of us.

But unlike trees, we can choose to deliberately develop the spiritual root structure for our lives. We decide where to set our roots down and how deeply to sink them into the soil. Daily decisions make tiny, almost imperceptible differences in the roots of our faith, the effect of which becomes foundational.

Rooted in the Savior

Because we don't know when or how our own challenges will come, or how long our personal seasons of winter or summer will last, we should set down our roots as deeply as we can into the only true source of nourishment for our souls, the Lord Jesus Christ. He wants our lives to be abundant. He invites us to come unto Him. He said, "Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me" (D&C 19:23).

We build strength of soul to weather the storms of our lives by learning of Him. We learn by study and by prayer. We learn by watching righteous examples. We learn as we serve others in order to serve Him (see Matthew 25:40). We learn as we seek to emulate Him in any way we can.

Listening means heeding and hearkening, not just hearing. We listen to Him in private scripture study. We listen in sacrament meeting and in the temple. We hear Him in the "still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12). We listen to Him in the voice of living prophets and apostles.

Careful listening reminds us that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). We strengthen our roots with incremental, one-step-at-a-time growth. As we listen, we follow the path He

walked. He is the path that leads to the abundant life, and He is the light that illuminates it (see John 8:12).

Keep the Commandments

There is no secret or surprise about what we can and should do to develop our roots: we keep the commandments of God. Our ability to do His will grows as we do His will. It becomes easier because we grow in conviction and faith. When we faithfully persist in applying the fundamentals of the gospel in our lives, the Lord blesses us with increased inner strength.

Worthy, thoughtful worship makes an important contribution to the depth of our spiritual roots. Reverently attending sacrament meeting and partaking of the sacrament with real intent make the Sabbath day more than just another Sunday. We cannot truly sink our roots deep unless we "always remember him" (D&C 20:77, 79). When we prepare ourselves before our meetings, the Sabbath becomes a richer experience for us. As we contemplate our need for forgiveness and the blessing of always having His Spirit to be with us, we begin to see the chapel as a sanctuary and the sacrament as a time of sanctification.

For that reason, there are some things we should always take with us when we go to church. Foremost among these are a broken heart

and a contrite spirit. We should go eager to seek and feel the blessings of the Savior's Atonement. Similarly, we should always leave some things at home. Thoughts of sports, work, entertainment, and shopping ought to be left locked in a closet inside our homes to be opened on any day other than the Sabbath day. Genuine worship promotes real conversion. It helps us send the roots of our faith down deep, where we find a spiritual reservoir, which "shall be in [us] a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14).

Paul wrote:

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

"Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught" (Colossians 2:6-7).

If we don't experience personal storms and drought, our roots never have the chance to become strong. Ironically, smooth sailing is its own test—and a difficult one. The absence of problems can soften us if we aren't careful. We may "not watch [ourselves], and [our] thoughts, and [our] words, and [our] deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith" (Mosiah 4:30) without a trial that bends our knees and works on our hearts.

Life has a way of bringing distress to all of us even when we are doing

our best. Unless we make terrible choices, which always results in tragedy, we usually don't choose when or how the problems of life will knock on our doors. But we surely do decide each day how we will prepare for them. Thus the reminder from Joshua: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Joshua 24:15).

Here's another reminder:

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13–14).

We shouldn't be surprised when we suffer a failure of faith if we walk on the margins of the strait and narrow path. What we do and don't do really matters because actions have consequences, as does inaction. When we become inattentive to the small, daily, repetitive but essential actions of belief, we weaken our roots. Over time we slowly draw away from God.

Thus, the way we speak to each other, the books and articles we read, the television shows and movies we watch, the things we don't read and would never watch, and the jokes we choose not to listen to or repeat all reflect where we are on the strait and narrow path—in

the center or on the edges. We can't claim to be nourishing our roots if the things we do and don't do aren't calculated to make us better Saints. Safety is found only in the center of the strait and narrow path.

The Path to Peace

There is no better pattern of life anywhere, no surer way to find peace and the pathway forward, than by following the Lord Jesus Christ. His is the only name given under heaven with the power to make our lives more heavenly (see 2 Nephi 31:21; Moses 6:52). There is no one else we can "behold" who has the saving, renewing, transformative power the Savior does.



Jude's words capture the inevitable emptiness of life that eventually envelops those who choose anyone or anything other than the Savior: "Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots" (Jude 1:12).

Our souls should be so deeply rooted in Christ that we will be able to endure any challenge, triumph over any affliction, withstand any attack on our faith, and become like oak trees—firm, immovable, and steadfast. That kind of rootedness transcends time and outlasts every enemy, even the most subtle, invisible, and insidious ones.

We learn from Helaman how the promise of rock-like strength depends on our building our lives on the Redeemer, "a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall" (Helaman 5:12). Isaiah captured in just a few words the essence of what it means to be rooted in the Lord Jesus Christ and to bring to fruition in our souls something of the attributes of the Savior. He wrote, "And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (Isaiah 58:11).

The Savior Jesus Christ is the exemplar of every virtue. He was

the one perfect man ever to live. He atoned for our sins. Through His Atonement we can become women and men of Christ. We can be cleansed, changed, healed, and refined. Our souls can become things of beauty.

May we "behold the man" more completely. May we emulate Him more worshipfully. May we follow Him more eagerly. May we sink our roots deeper in the soil of salvation until we rest on Him, the Rock of our Redeemer. May we increasingly enjoy the blessing of the abundant life He offers. ■

NOTE

1. See "O God, the Eternal Father," *Hymns*, no. 175.



YOU ARE ROYALTY

By Kathy Kipp Clayton

Rise to the level of your eternal stature.

While our family was in Argentina on assignment from the Church, our son and I often visited sites of interest in our free time. Among them was a zoo unlike any zoo we had seen before.

Rather than wander past cages of sleepy animals, visitors were invited to enter the pens and pet the animals. Following the trainer, we made our way into the enclosure prepared for the large lions and petted them while they seemed to ignore us.

I asked the trainers how they had convinced those giant beasts to not eat us. They called my attention to several little dogs that likewise inhabited the pens. When the lions were small, those yappy dogs chased the lions mercilessly and nipped at their heels. The lion cubs became accustomed to cowering in the corner, afraid of the dogs.

When the lions grew, they continued to cower in fear. With the flick of a paw, they could easily have sent those dogs flying, but the lions didn't see themselves as they really were. They were unaware of their regal identity and potential.

We all face pesky little dogs that steal our confidence and keep us cowering in figurative corners. I name three.

Lack of Confidence

Many of us characterize our performance more by our failures than by our successes. If we get 80 questions right out of 100, we sadly admit that we missed 20 questions rather than proudly note that we got 80 correct. Lack of confidence in our potential and in ourselves can blind us to our true worth and capacity.

Incomplete Knowledge

Nephi saw a vision of the mother of the Savior, but when asked if he understood the condescension of God, he admitted he didn't know the meaning of all things. But first he asserted what he did know: "[God] loveth his children" (see 1 Nephi 11:12–17). That's the most essential thing to know. It keeps us from allowing pesky dogs of incomplete knowledge to compromise our certainty of the truthfulness of the Church and of our relationship with God and His unfailing and empowering love for us.

Carelessness or Inattention

Bad choices or the neglect of good ones cloud our vision of reality. There was a symbolic reason the children of Israel needed to gather manna daily (see Exodus 16:4). The daily obligation to gather food helped them to remember God. Today, scripture reading, praying, attending church, and serving each other are our daily manna as children of God to help us remember the Lord.

We have God's spiritual DNA coursing through our veins. We are His sons and daughters and His heirs. Swat away any deceiving messages, beliefs, or habits that cause you to cower in the corners of your life. Don't let them nip at your heels and make you feel fearful or hurt. Rise to the level of your eternal stature. You are royalty. ■

From the Church Educational System addresses, "Like a Watered Garden" and "A Regal Identity," delivered in New York, USA, on September 13, 2015.





RESCUED by My Brother

When my brother Tanner turned 12, I invited him to start attending the temple with me. Little did I know how badly we would need each other's support in the coming years.

By Brittney Ann Harman

I was almost 12 years old when the Twin Falls Idaho Temple was dedicated. I was so excited when my older sister asked me for the first time if I wanted to start going to the temple regularly with her and her friend.

I was happy when my younger brother Tanner turned 12 three years later because I could finally invite him to attend the temple with me.

Each morning that we went, we would help each other get up and go, and when we were tired Tanner would make jokes to help us wake up. After going to the temple,

we would take some time to talk about how we'd felt in the temple and what we'd thought about.

Going to the temple with Tanner became the spiritual highlight of my week. Through our regular temple visits we became better friends, which strengthened me more than I would have imagined when some trials came my way. Our two older sisters had left for college and our ward had just been split, leaving Tanner and me as some of the only active youth in our ward.

Tanner and I spent hours calling and inviting less-active



youth to church and Mutual. It often felt like a hopeless effort because no one ever came no matter how many girls I tried to befriend.

Our parents tried to help. They would bear testimony to us when we were discouraged, and they let us talk out our frustration when we came home upset. But even so, we didn't suddenly have more friends at church, and wanting to go when I'd be the only young woman there was getting harder and harder. Our temple visits started becoming less frequent because of our busy school schedules.

I spent a lot of time reading my scriptures and pleading with the Lord to help me be strong. I was lonely and tired—tired of being alone, tired of my efforts not making a difference, tired of struggling spiritually and emotionally.

During this time, I worked as a lifeguard at the city pool. I liked being there a lot more than I liked being at church because my co-workers were my friends and were always

excited to see me. One day I decided that I wouldn't go back to Mutual since work was more fun and more helpful for me financially.

I decided that work was more fun than Mutual.

I didn't think it was a big deal until I noticed myself lowering my standards. I didn't say anything about my friends' swearing, and one day I was shocked to hear myself accidentally swear when I never had before. I even watched an inappropriate movie one night at a party with my lifeguarding friends. I felt terrible and wondered what I was doing.

Meanwhile my parents had told me how much more lonely Tanner had become since I stopped attending Mutual. Every week he would ask me, "Hey, are you going to come to Mutual tonight?" When he would get home from Mutual, he would go straight to his room and read his



scriptures for a long time. He wasn't talking as much anymore, and when I asked if he was OK, he just said, "No" and walked away.

One night he came home crying because he had felt so alone.

That's when I decided that I needed to go back. It didn't matter how hard being alone was for me; Tanner needed me.

Tanner had been taking a family history course at church, and I decided that I wanted to take it with him. We wanted to start going to the temple more regularly again, and now we would be able to find names ourselves.

We enjoyed taking the class together on Sundays. After church, we'd search for names together. The coolest thing about taking our own names to the temple was that we had found them together, and even better, we were able to support each other at church and even enjoy church because we were doing the Lord's work.

Tanner's diligence in attending church and Mutual was a powerful example to me. I had a testimony of the gospel, but he helped me gain a testimony of attending church meetings and activities.

Our testimonies of the temple helped us be strong in the Church.

Together we were able to comfort one another and use our testimonies of the temple to help each other be strong in the Church. Youth attendance at church and Mutual never really got better, but Tanner and I became stronger and more able to bear our burdens as we helped each other press forward.

I'm so glad that I invited him to come to the temple with me. While I'm sure it helped him, I know it rescued me. ■

The author lives in Idaho, USA.

DON'T GET SUCKED IN

Pay attention to your family and friends.
Your status update can wait.



GETTING A **JUMP** ON HER FUTURE

By Miriam Bay
Church Self-Reliance Services

An idea, a trampoline, and a desire to help others propelled an 11-year-old girl to great lessons about self-reliance and service.

Most 11-year-olds are already busy with school, home chores, and activities with friends. But Alexandra C., from the state of Durango, Mexico, wasn't a typical 11-year-old. In addition to all the normal things young people do at that age, Alexandra was making money from her own business and serving in her community.

So how does a girl that young start her own company?

Starting with an Idea

It began when Alexandra heard of some classes the Church offers to help people learn to be self-reliant. The group was mainly for people 18 and older, but Alexandra was determined to join. She loved the idea of learning how to get a job or start her own business.

Could it be that she, a girl still in elementary school, might not only shape her *own* future but also help people who had even less than she did? After all, many of the Church members she knew from her town had little education and few resources.

Alexandra joined a group called "Starting and Growing My Business," one of three subjects offered. Rather than being taught by a teacher, the group was led by a facilitator—a fellow group member who guides the other members through the course and encourages discussion. Alexandra met with her group every week for three months.

As Alexandra learned how to be both temporally and spiritually self-reliant, she began to look around at the needs in her area. She noticed that there weren't enough recreational activities for all the kids in her town, so she saved up money and bought a small trampoline. Alexandra put the trampoline in a public area and started renting it out, using ideas she'd learned about marketing and finance in her course.

The trampoline became very popular in her community.



Alexandra learned to balance homework, the trampoline business, and her facilitator role exceptionally well.



BLESSINGS OF WORK

“Developing the capacity to work will help you contribute to the world in which you live. It will bring you an increased sense of self-worth. It will bless you and your family, both now and in the future. . . .

“To be truly self-reliant, you must learn how to work with others and turn to the Lord for His help and strength.”

For the Strength of Youth (2011), 40, 41.

The Blessings of Service and Hard Work

Alexandra started using her skills in other ways too. Because she’d shown great respect for all her group members and had followed through on all her commitments, Alexandra was trusted to facilitate a new group—a position normally held by people 18 or older.

When Alexandra became a facilitator, she was by far the youngest of the six participants in her group. She carefully studied the materials before each group meeting so she’d know how to best help her fellow group members. She took her new role seriously. “She would get anxious when her group didn’t arrive on time or when the video equipment didn’t work,” said her father, David.

Alexandra learned to balance homework, the trampoline business, and her facilitator role exceptionally well. And she thinks it was well worth it. “God blessed me when He made me a facilitator,” she said. For her, one blessing was to learn about loving those you serve.





“I learned I could improve myself. . . . I know that God called the prophet and that the self-reliance training was revelation from Him.”

That love led her to reach out to her group with a real desire for them to succeed. For instance, each time they met, group members made weekly commitments to apply what they studied to their businesses and then teach their families the gospel principles they’d learned. When participants in Alexandra’s group didn’t reach their goals or missed a class, she’d visit them in their homes to see if they were all right and to encourage them to fulfill their commitments. “I loved visiting my group members,” she said.

Alexandra’s dad added, “I marvel to see how my little daughter could feel so strongly about the well-being of those in need. She has great compassion for those she serves.”

Now a Beehive in Young Women, Alexandra has plans to expand her trampoline business to a nearby community. By learning to be more self-reliant and helping others do the same, she said she’s already started to see changes in herself and her new friends in her group. “My testimony of Christ has grown,” Alexandra said. “I feel more sure of myself, and I want to serve.”

Alexandra said that because of this training course, she’s more aware of who she really is and how she can serve. “I learned I could improve myself. And I loved to see all of the group members improving. I know they’ll be better off now; their businesses will improve. I know that God called the prophet and that the self-reliance training was revelation from Him.”

For Alexandra, her testimony, self-worth, and service to others have definitely been things worth working for. ■

To learn more about the self-reliance classes, visit lds.org/go/816000.

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

In this situation, she probably feels left out, lonely, or vulnerable. Fortunately, because of your friendship, there are several things you can do to encourage her:

- Help her make friends with the other youth. Introduce her to them, include her in your conversations with them, and suggest activities for the youth in your ward to get to know each other better. Also, you could talk to your Young Women president so she and other leaders can help.
- Help her recognize her divine worth. You could tell her some of the great qualities you see in her.
- Help her remember the Savior’s love and your love. The Savior said, “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine” (John 10:14). Even if she feels like no one understands, the Lord will know exactly how she is feeling. Pray for her, and of course show your love for her by including her in activities and talking to her at church.
- Suggest that she turn to the scriptures and prayer to strengthen her relationship with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.
- Above all, encourage her to always attend church, even if it’s tough for her. Remind her of the importance of taking the sacrament and learning the gospel at Church meetings.

If your ideas aren’t working out immediately, continue to be there for your friend and encourage her to do the right things.



Be Stronger Together

Encourage and help her to approach other youth. Individually

we are strong, but together we are stronger. Tell your friends that she will be better able to help the kingdom of God grow if she has more friends who will edify her, be a support in her life, and help her love Jesus Christ and His gospel!

Scarlet M., age 16, Cautín Province, Chile

Invite Her to Activities

When I joined the Church, I felt alone, though some of the youth made efforts to interact with me. I went to Mutual activities and got more involved in their conversations. I listened to them and gave my contribution. I smiled at them and showed genuine interest in them. My advice is to help your friend open up. Help her participate in any Church activity, and she will begin to enjoy the company of many friends.

Faith O., age 17, Abia, Nigeria



Include Her

I would try to help include your friend in conversations and activities with the other

youth at church. Talking with other good friends about how this friend feels can help. Asking for their help to include her might bring awareness to other friends of this person’s needs



and help them remember to be kinder and include her in conversations and activities.

Trevor C., age 14, Idaho, USA

Tell Her What She Means to You

I felt the same way when I changed wards. That stage is difficult. It is important to tell your friend how special she is, what she means to you, and the good qualities she has so that she will feel confident and that she doesn't need to fear. We are all important. Encourage her to speak with a leader, pray, and read the scriptures to know that she is not alone.

Sharon G., age 14, Yucatán, Mexico

Host a Party

You or she could host a party with just a few people from church. It's better to get to know others when it's a smaller group.

Trais H., age 13, Idaho, USA

Be Ready to Help

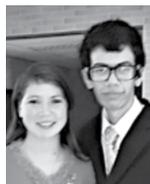
You can help her understand that we are all members of God's family, sisters and brothers, and that she needs to show love and interact with everyone. Also, let her know that in our large spiritual family, we are always ready to help and strengthen each other. We all share the same goal that we strive for. In the gospel, we are never alone.

*Sister Anna Kaigorodova,
Russia Moscow Mission*

Listen to the Lord's Guidance

Pray for her and ask Heavenly Father to help you know how you can help her. Talk to your leaders and try involving her in the conversations with the other girls at church. Continue to be her friend and do the best you can, and the Lord will help you know how to help her.

Anastasia B., age 18, Utah, USA



Tell Her She Is Never Alone

First, we would pray for that young woman and invite her to each

activity or service project so that she can feel she is a part of the group. Let's not let anyone fall! Second, we would tell her that she is never alone, that Heavenly Father is always with us and loves us deeply and eternally. We would remind her of the quote from our prophet: "You will one day



A TRUE FRIEND

"All of us need true friends to love us, to listen to us, to show us the way, and

to testify of truth to us so that we may retain the companionship of the Holy Ghost. You must be such a true friend."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "True Friends," Ensign, May 2002, 29; Liahona, July 2002, 32.

stand aside and look at your difficult times, and you will realize that He was always there beside you" (Thomas S. Monson, "We Never Walk Alone," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 124).

Yenifer S., age 18, and Fernando P., age 18, Tacuarembó, Uruguay

UPCOMING QUESTION

"How can I help my friends overcome problems like swearing or excessive video gaming?"

Submit your answer and, if desired, a high-resolution photograph by September 15, 2016, at liahona.lds.org (click "Submit an Article") or by email to liahona@ldschurch.org.

Please include the following information: (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.



By Elder
Timothy J. Dyches
Of the Seventy

When we recognize that we are dependent on God, we also realize that He is eager to help us.

ONLY WITH THE HELP OF GOD

My senior year in high school brought a challenge I wasn't expecting. Shortly after school began, our speech teacher assigned me to participate in debate. We studied, practiced, and competed, and I humbly learned many valuable lessons.

Months later and four weeks before the state speech competition, my teacher casually informed me that he had also just entered my name to compete in extemporaneous speech. He began explaining that on the first day I would be required to deliver at least three different seven-minute speeches in front of a panel of judges.

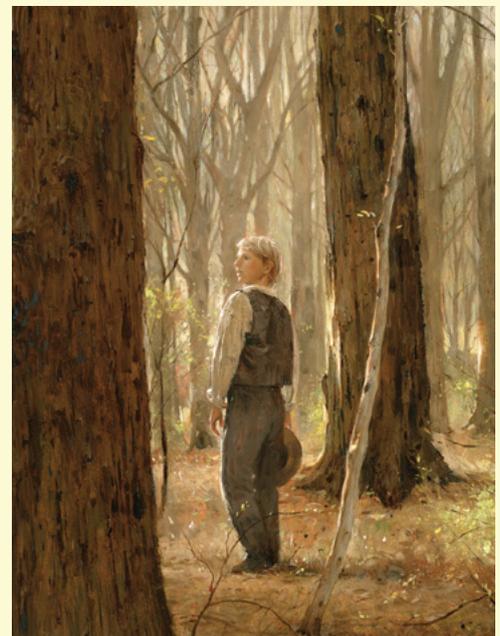
And there was another catch—the speech topics were randomly assigned contemporary issues, with only 30 minutes to prepare. I was stunned; I had never even witnessed an extemporaneous speech.

Preparing in the remaining weeks, reading as many articles on contemporary issues as I could, I still felt overwhelming self-doubt and anxiety. On the day of the competition, I asked the officials, "I've already drawn my topic, but may I go in and listen a couple of moments to someone who's actually giving his talk?" They replied, "You've only got 30 minutes. If you want to spend it listening, that's up to you."

Asking for Help

That very first time, I went in and listened for a few precious moments. I knew I needed to be alone and pray to my Heavenly Father. I noticed a secluded grove on the university campus next to a pond where I could be alone, on my knees.

I pleaded with Heavenly Father for help. It wasn't a prayer to win—it was an earnest prayer for the assistance of the Holy Ghost so that I would be able to do something I had never done before and make it through this challenge. I realized I needed God's help.



Heavenly Father answered my prayer. I remembered what I had studied and was able to connect facts and impressions. With every new topic drawn, I would first leave to pray. Then I would go to work. The next day surprisingly brought me to the final round.

My faith in God was developing into my testimony, and my faith grew stronger as I felt Him near. I thanked Heavenly Father for the help I had received, for after doing all that I could do, He made more of me than I could ever have done myself (see 2 Nephi 25:23).

In my professional life, I was an ear, nose, and throat surgeon. On one occasion in Reno, Nevada, USA, I was called on to assist the hospital's pediatric intensive care team as they treated a fragile baby boy who had been born very early. That little guy overcame some tough challenges in the first few months of life and gained enough strength to go home with his parents and family.

Unfortunately, after being home for two months, he was now back in the hospital with a serious infection in his left lung, and he was not responding well to a high dose of medication.

The intensive care specialists were suspicious that the baby might have breathed something in that became stuck in his lung, but it had not shown up on any X-rays. Due to his worsening state, they recommended that I look into his lungs with him asleep in the operating room.

At the time we did not have the technology to see very far down into the small airways of infants well. As we labored to clear the infection from his left lung, for just a brief moment I saw what he had inhaled—a bright yellow

It wasn't a prayer to win. It was a prayer that I would be able to do something I had never done before.



fragment of crayon, wedged beyond the reach of any of the instruments available to retrieve it.

A nurse in the operating suite realized the severity of the situation and mentioned that she had seen a long, slender instrument used in removing kidney stones from tight places. She quickly produced one, a slender spiral flexible wire basket that un-spirals just enough when used properly to retrieve a small stone without damaging the surrounding tissue. But how to get it there?

“I Can’t Do This by Myself”

I asked the anesthesiologist to continue to manage our little patient for a moment while I went to the corner of the operating room. “Heavenly Father, I can’t do this by myself.” The thought came to my mind: “Do your best. Together we can do this.”

I practiced several times opening and closing the wire basket in my hands in different positions. Ever so gently, the slender wire basket was passed through the instrument right up to the crayon. With delicate maneuvering, it was passed beyond, opened, and then slowly allowed to close. The airway was now clear and clean.

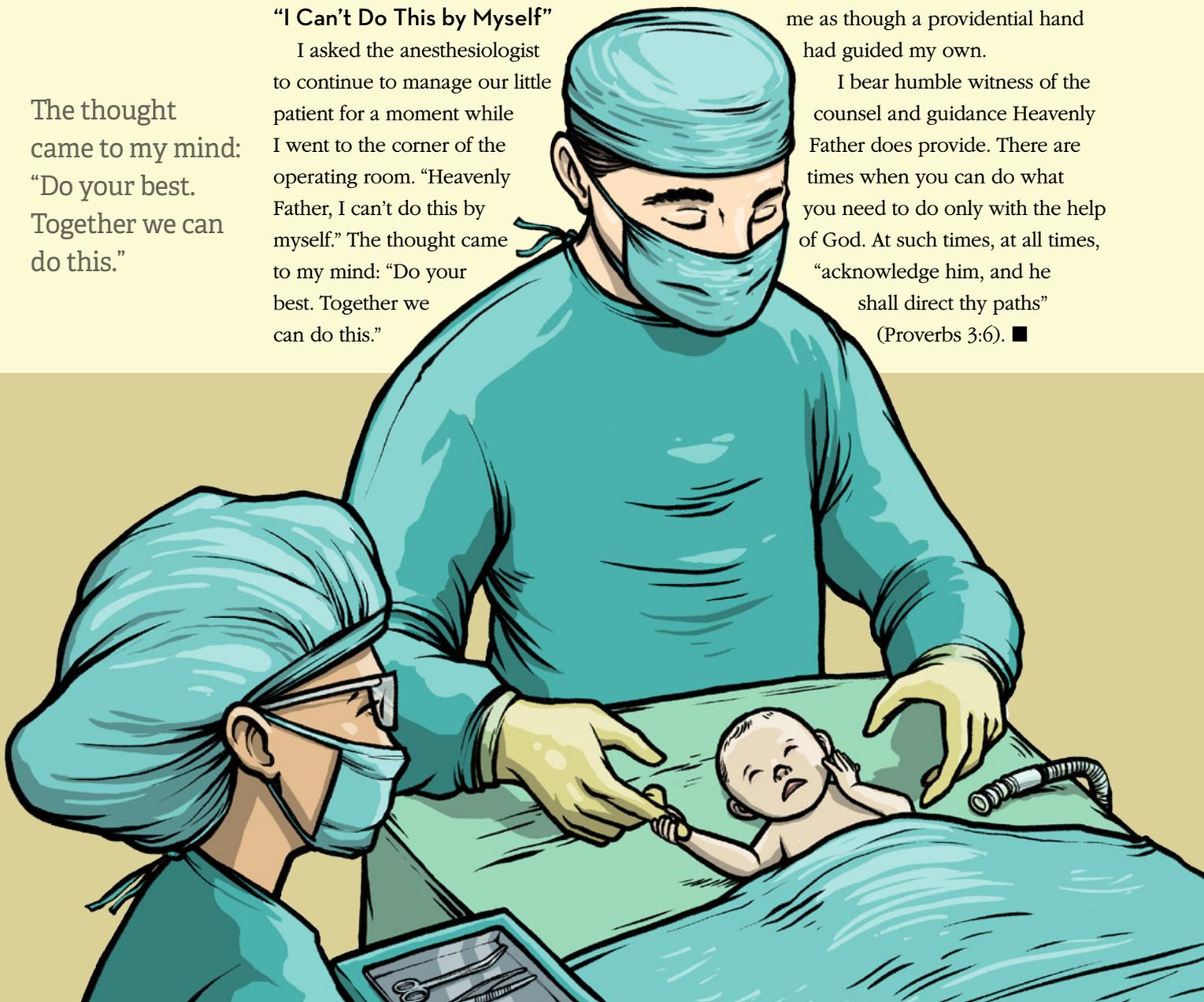
With the crayon removed, the child quickly recovered and thrived. He was discharged within the week with a little jar containing a bright yellow souvenir.

I know I received divine help, as real to me as though a providential hand had guided my own.

I bear humble witness of the counsel and guidance Heavenly Father does provide. There are times when you can do what you need to do only with the help of God. At such times, at all times, “acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths”

(Proverbs 3:6). ■

The thought came to my mind: “Do your best. Together we can do this.”





By President
Thomas S. Monson

HOW TO STAY WORTHY

I've lived long enough to have witnessed much of the metamorphosis of society's morals. Where once the standards of the Church and the standards of society were mostly compatible, now there is a wide chasm between us, and it's growing ever wider.

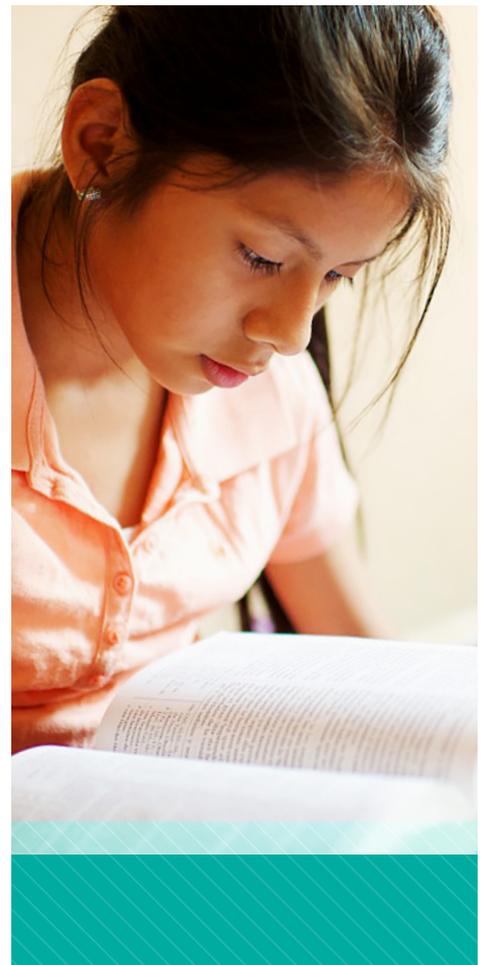
Many movies and television shows portray behavior which is in direct opposition to the laws of God.

Do not subject yourself to the innuendo and outright filth which are so often found there. The lyrics in much of today's music fall in the same category. The profanity so prevalent around us today would never have been tolerated in the not-too-distant past. I implore you **not to say or to do anything of which you cannot be proud.**

Stay completely away from pornography. Do not allow yourself to view it, ever. It has proven to be an addiction which

is more than difficult to overcome. **Avoid alcohol and tobacco or any other drugs,** also addictions which you would be hard-pressed to conquer.

What will protect you from the sin and evil around you? I maintain that a strong testimony of our Savior and of His gospel will help see you through to safety. If you have not **read the Book of Mormon,** read it. If you do so prayerfully and with a sincere desire to know the truth, the Holy Ghost will manifest its truth to you. If it is true—and it *is*—then Joseph Smith was a prophet who saw God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. The Church is true. If you do not already have a testimony of these things, do that which is necessary to obtain one. **It is essential for you to have your own testimony,** for the testimonies of others will carry you only so far. Once obtained, a testimony needs to be kept vital and alive



through obedience to the commandments of God and through regular prayer and scripture study. Attend church. Attend seminary.

Should there be anything amiss in your life, there is open to you a way out. **Cease any unrighteousness.** Talk with your bishop. Whatever the problem, it can be worked out through proper repentance. You can become clean once again (see D&C 58:42).

The Savior of mankind described Himself as being in the world but not of the world. We also can be in the world but not of the world as we reject false concepts and false teachings. Remain true to that which God has commanded. ■

From an April 2011 general conference address.

SEARCHING FOR GOD



I have never felt such a strong feeling of peace as I did when I first attended seminary.

By Ismael Ezequiel Polanco Almonte

When I was only about eight years old, I wondered about the nature of God. One day my father read the scripture from the book of James that promises that if we lack wisdom, we can “ask of God, that giveth . . . liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given” (James 1:5). Those words filled my heart and were imprinted on my mind.

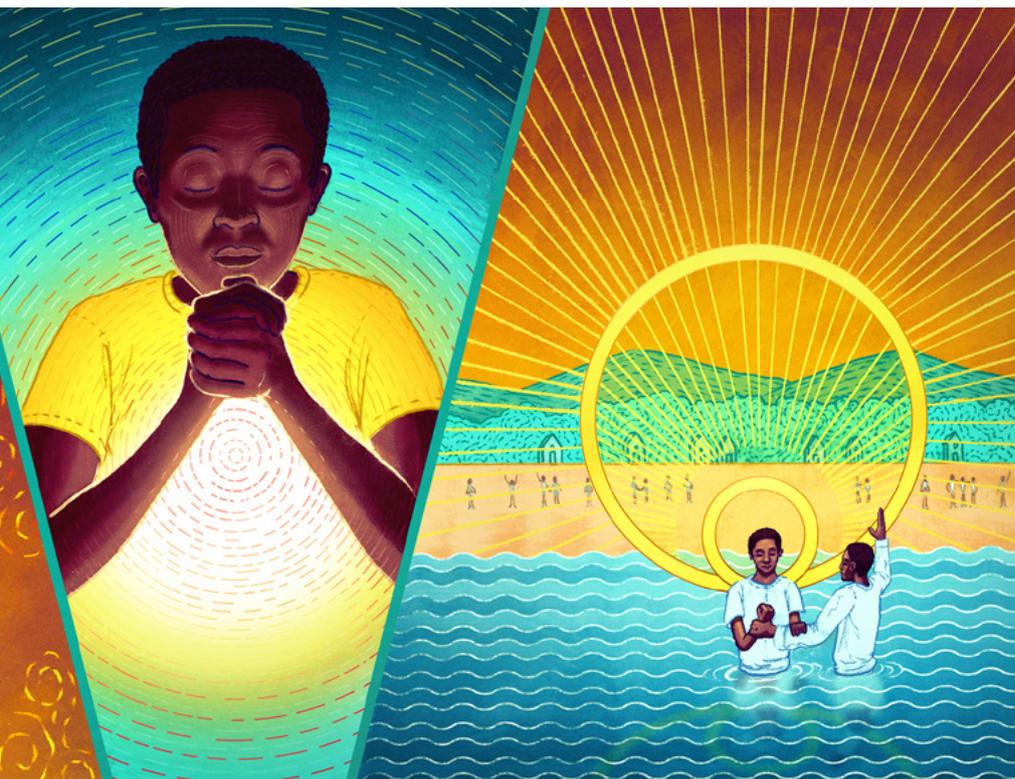
When I was alone in my bedroom, I prayed to God, asking Him to tell me if the church I was attending was the right one. I wanted Him to answer me immediately. But that didn’t happen. God didn’t do what I wanted, and I was sad that He hadn’t answered my prayer immediately.

I wanted to know! I had done what I thought was sufficient.

Growing up, I had the opportunity to search for the answer in many churches. As I did, I got more and more confused. Everybody contradicted each other, and they would just gloss over my questions about the nature of God.

Years later, tired of searching, I said, “There is no answer.”

I began to do things that some modern youth do, such as partying and participating in a lot of worldly diversions. Each week I sank further and further into darkness because my decisions weren’t the best. The bad habits were also distancing me from my family, who had always supported me.



But once again the desire came to me to ask God. I prayed, “Father, I am here waiting. I have searched, and I have not found. The scriptures promise answers, but nothing is coming. Look at me. I am alone. I want to know, but I don’t know how to find You.”

At that time only—not before and not after, but just when I needed it—I felt that my chest burned as strong as if a volcano were inside of me. I couldn’t control the tears. I knew it was an answer to my question.

In the afternoon, when I was at school, I was thinking about my answer when my best friend asked me, “What are you thinking about, Ismael?” I didn’t give him a truthful

answer then, telling him that I was thinking about the beach and that I wanted to go see the sunrise in the morning. I invited him to go.

“I can’t,” he told me, smiling.

“Why not?” I asked him. “What are you doing so early in the morning?”

“Seminary,” he said.

“Seminary? What is seminary?”

I asked him. He explained to me that it was classes that his church held.

“How long have you been going to a church?” I asked him, surprised.

“As long as I can remember. I’m a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”

I told him I wanted to go and see. I knew inside that it was an answer to my long years of prayer.

The next day I woke up at 5:30 a.m. and went to seminary. The greatest surprise was that they were studying the Bible. I can say that I have never felt such a strong feeling of peace as I did when I entered the branch’s building in Matancita, the Dominican Republic, where pure doctrine was shared, delicious to a soul that had sought so anxiously. The hymns sung filled my mind and my heart with a thought: “This is the truth.”

“Wow,” I thought, “I want to feel this every day.” I asked when I could come back, and the teacher, my friend’s mother, gave me the class schedule and invited me to come to the branch’s Sunday services also.

From then on, every Monday through Friday, I got up at 5:30 to go to seminary and every Sunday to church. I couldn’t miss. I had found what I had always been looking for.

Sadly, there were no missionaries to teach me and baptize me. After a year and a half and much prayer, missionaries arrived and taught me all of the missionary lessons in a week. I remember the moment when I was submerged in the blue waters on my village’s beautiful beach.

I now enjoy the privilege of being not a stranger or foreigner (see Ephesians 2:19) but a brother of all those who have entered in the path of the Lord, the strait and narrow path. ■

The author lives in Santiago, Dominican Republic.



By Elder
Randy D. Funk
Of the Seventy



Being Where We Should Be

When I was 11 years old, I lived in Manti, Utah, USA. At the beginning of the year, my Primary teacher brought to our class a small, beautiful hatchet.

“Whoever comes to Primary the most this year gets to keep the hatchet,” she said. Right then I decided to come every week. And I did. At the end of the year, I got the hatchet!

Soon my 12th birthday came. I was ordained a deacon. Around this

time, my family moved to Madison, Wisconsin, USA. I missed my friends but wanted to make new ones. Madison was much bigger than Manti. My new school was large. There weren’t many members of the Church. One day some popular kids invited me to a party. But the party was on the same night as a Church activity. I had learned from my experience in Primary that good things happen when I am faithful in attending my Church

meetings. So I thanked them for inviting me and explained why I couldn’t come.

I am glad I went to the Church activity. The next day, everyone at school was talking about the party. Some kids had been drinking alcohol, they had damaged some furniture, and everyone who went got in a lot of trouble! I was so grateful that I had been where I needed to be.

I am thankful that I went to Primary and youth activities and

DRAW NEAR UNTO JESUS

At church, we learn how to make good choices and become better followers of Jesus. Fill in the blanks to help the children in the pictures know what to do.

1. "Be ye _____ one to another." (Ephesians 4:32)
2. "Blessed are the _____." (Matthew 5:9)
3. "When ye are in the _____ of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God." (Mosiah 2:17)
4. "If there is anything _____, lovely, or of good report or _____, we seek after these things." (Articles of Faith 1:13)

other Church meetings as I was growing up. I learned important lessons about the gospel there. I was protected from temptation and sin. And I had fun at the activities.

Heavenly Father strengthens our faith and blesses us when we try to be where we should be and do what we should do.

In Doctrine and Covenants 88:63, Jesus said, "Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you."

As we attend our Church meetings, including sacrament meeting, we draw closer to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. We learn important truths to guide our decisions throughout the week, even when we are not at church or surrounded by others who share our beliefs. When you live righteously, the Holy Ghost will help you know where you need to be and what you need to do. ■



*Why would
Grandpa give Gage
an empty bottle?*

The Little Bottle of Silence

By Ray Goldrup

Based on a true story

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you” (John 14:27).

Gage stared at the empty old bottle and turned it over in his hands. It was small and misty green, with a cork stopper in the top. Grandpa Russell had given it to him after his baptism.

“What *is* it?” Gage asked. “I know it’s a bottle—but there’s nothing in it.”

“Oh, it’s full,” Grandpa said.

Gage shook the bottle. “Well, it looks empty to me.”

Grandpa laughed. He pulled out the cork and held the little bottle near Gage’s ear. “Can you hear it?” he whispered.

“Hear what?” Gage whispered back.

Grandpa smiled. “Silence,” he said. Then he put the cork back in the bottle. “In today’s world, silence is pretty hard to find. It’s like medicine, and each drop is as precious as gold.”

Gage said thank you and took Grandpa’s strange gift home. But he didn’t think about it much.

A few weeks later, Gage’s uncle Vince passed away. After the funeral, lots of relatives crowded into the front room at Gage’s house to visit. Gage escaped to his bedroom and closed the door. He could hear the muffled voices of his parents and relatives down the hall.

Gage saw the old green bottle sitting on his desk and picked it up. He turned it over in his hands. Grandpa had said silence was like medicine. Gage needed to find



some peace and comfort after Uncle Vince's funeral.

Gage pulled the cork loose from the bottle and tipped it over his head, pretending to let a little silence pour out. He knew the bottle wasn't *really* full of silence. But he knew he needed some quiet time to feel close to God.

He felt tears build up in his eyes. Uncle Vince wouldn't be there anymore—no more silly jokes, no more wrestling with

him. Gage's heart hurt from missing him.

Then in the silence, Gage felt something warm grow in his heart and soften the pain. He remembered that Uncle Vince wasn't gone forever; he had just moved on to the next world. Because of Jesus Christ and the plan of salvation, everyone would live forever. Gage knew that someday he could see his Uncle Vince again.

As he held the bottle in his

hands, Gage felt peaceful inside. He knew it was because of the Holy Ghost and not the bottle. The bottle had just reminded him to be quiet so he could feel the Holy Ghost. He corked the bottle and set it down.

Then he went back to the front room to be with his family. He could carry the peace and comfort of the Holy Ghost inside of him even outside his quiet room. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



By Laura Goodrich
Based on a true story

Lydia
L watched
Mommy
get ready
for work.
Mommy put
on pretty pink
lipstick. She
looked beautiful.

Lydia looked in
the mirror. She felt
sad. "I don't have
any lipstick,"
Lydia said.
"So I'm not
beautiful."

Hands, Heart, and a Smile

Mommy
hugged her
tight. "Wearing
lipstick isn't
what makes
people beau-
tiful. Being
strong and kind
makes people
beautiful.

"You are strong and
kind when your hands
help others.

"You are strong
and kind when
your heart loves
everyone.



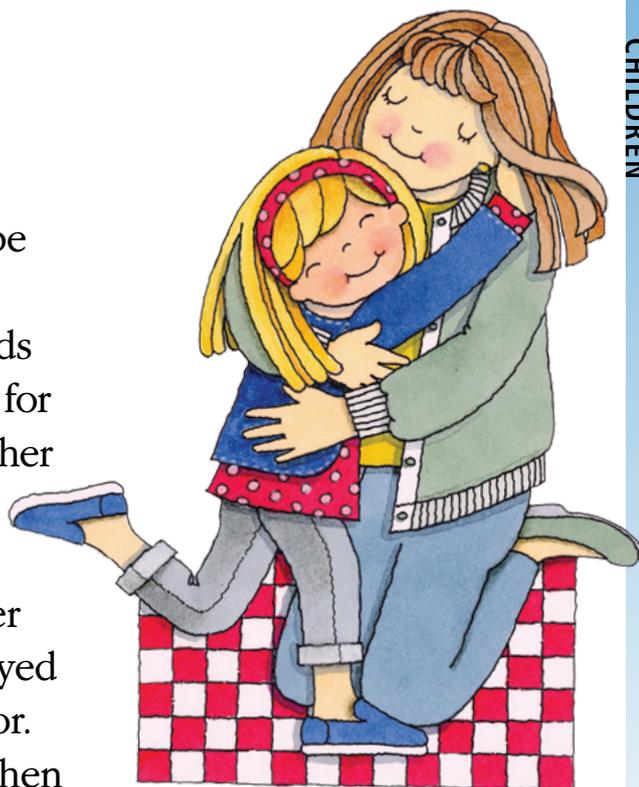
“And you are strong and kind when you smile. That makes everyone happy too.”

“Being strong and kind makes you beautiful inside, not just outside.”

Lydia wanted to be strong and kind!

She used her hands to carry the mail in for Grandpa. She gave her last cookie to her cousin.

She felt love in her heart when she played with a new neighbor. And she felt love when she gave coins to a girl collecting money for people who didn't have homes.

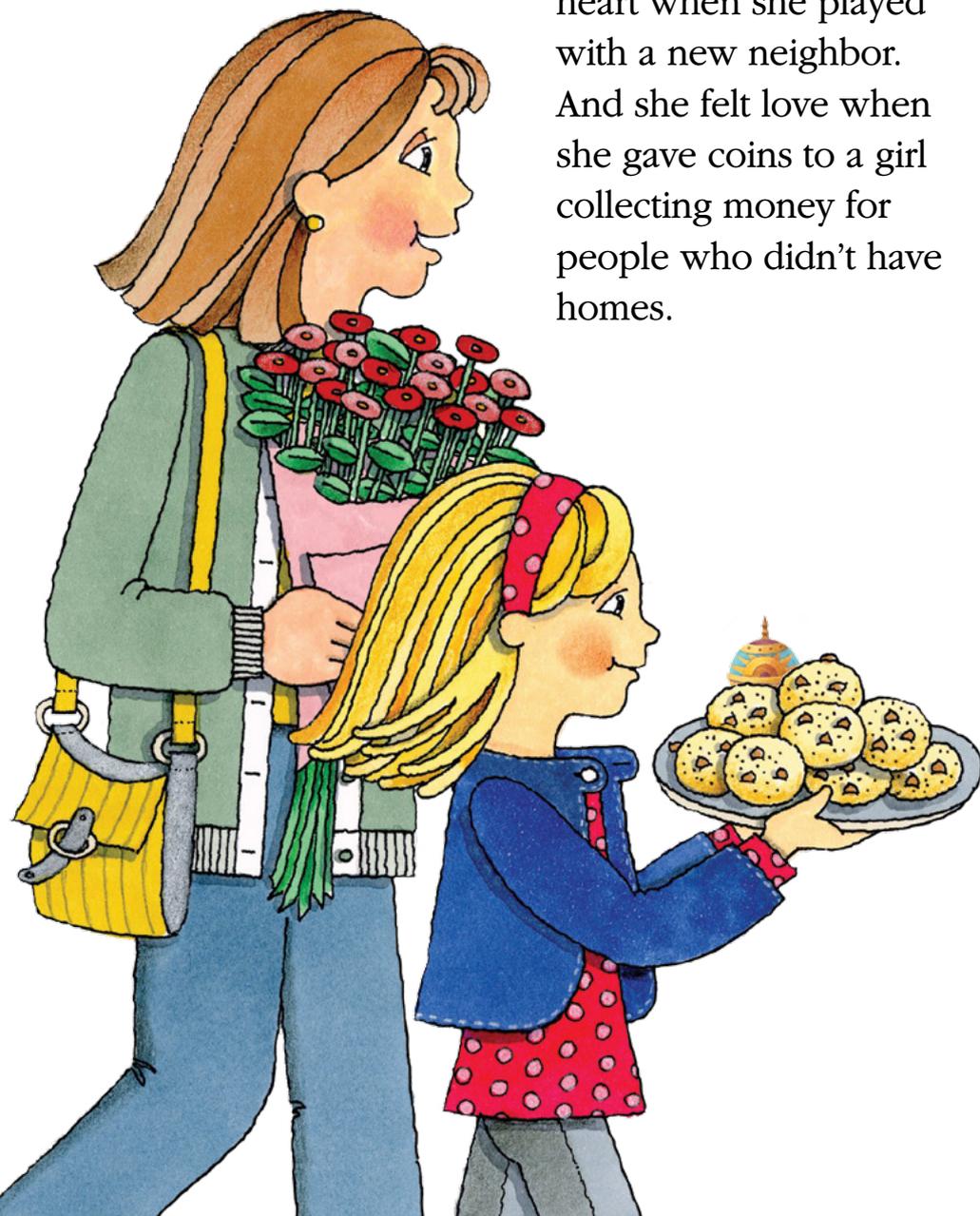


She smiled at people she saw. They all smiled back.

That night Lydia told Mommy, “You are right! I feel strong and kind. I used my hands and my heart and my smile today.”

Mommy smiled. “You are strong and kind, just like Jesus wants you to be!” ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

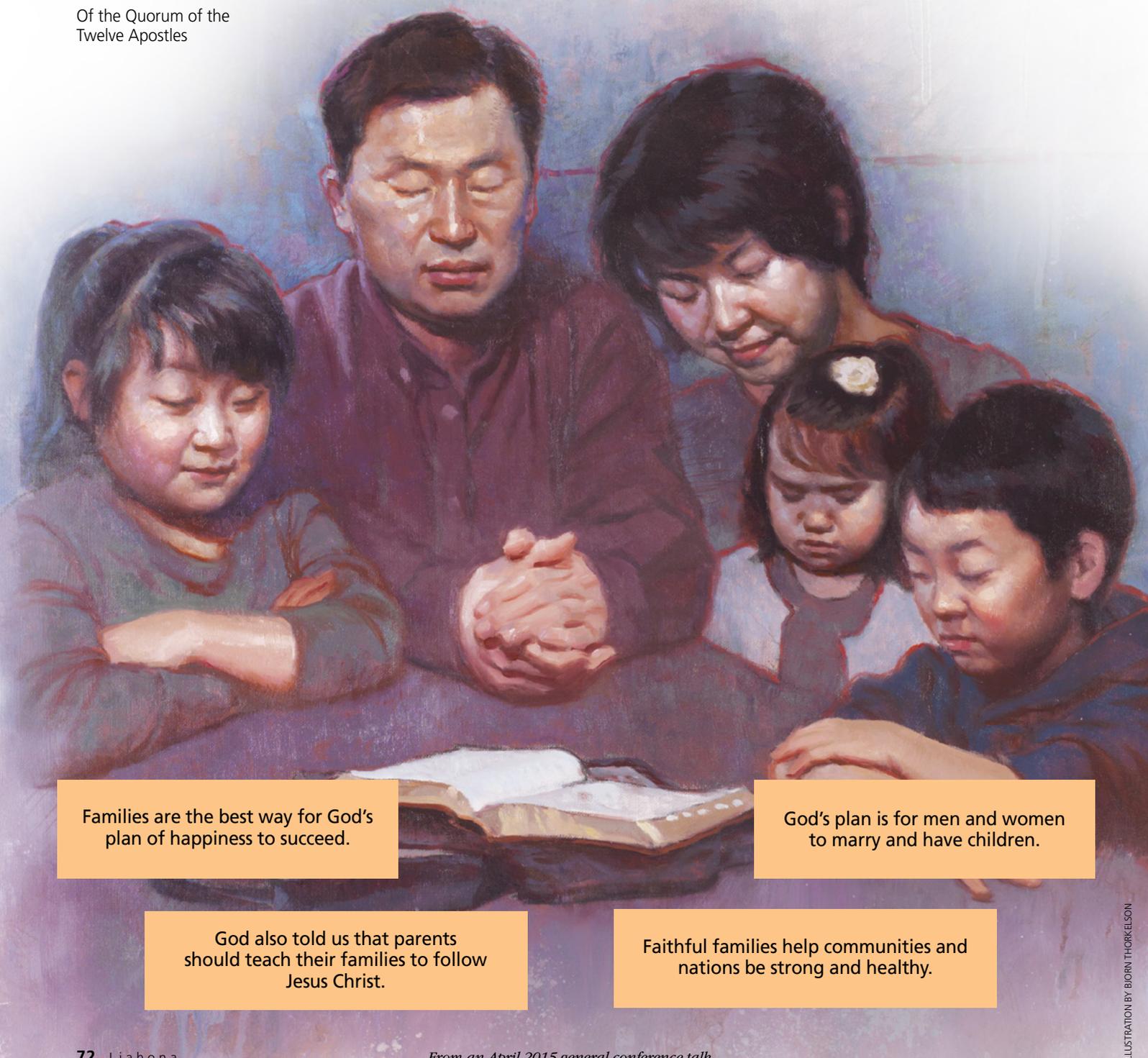




By Elder D. Todd Christofferson

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Why are families so important?



Families are the best way for God's plan of happiness to succeed.

God's plan is for men and women to marry and have children.

God also told us that parents should teach their families to follow Jesus Christ.

Faithful families help communities and nations be strong and healthy.

OUR PAGE



Jesus is like a good shepherd, and we are His sheep. He wants to take care of us.

Victoria P., age 10, Federal District, Brazil



I had a good experience when I was seven years old. I wanted to know if the Church was true. So I said a prayer and asked our Heavenly Father. I finished praying, and I lay down to sleep. I had a dream where Jesus Christ told me, "This is the true Church." When I woke up, I remembered my dream, and I knew that I was in the true Church.

Miranda R., age 9, Querétaro, Mexico



I am happy to be a member of the Church. Jesus Christ is my friend and protects me and my family. I like to visit the temple. I like family home evening and Primary.

Angel M., age 11, Colón, Panama



For a goal in our Faith in God booklet, we decided to make a model of the Montevideo Uruguay Temple. It took a year to do, but it was worth it. When we turn 12, our goal is to be able to go to the temple.

Samuel O., age 10, and Enzo S., age 11, Rivera Department, Uruguay



IT'S YOUR TURN!

You can share your experience, testimony, and photo with Our Page.

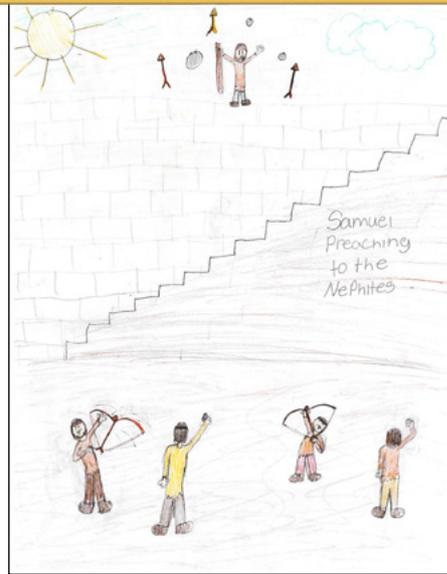
Email liahona@ldschurch.org and include a parent's permission, or visit liahona.lds.org and click "Submit an Article."

Samuel Testified

Samuel was a prophet who was a Lamanite. Heavenly Father told Samuel to tell the wicked Nephites to repent. The Nephites wouldn't let Samuel into their city, so he stood on the city wall. They threw stones and shot arrows at him. But Heavenly Father protected him. Samuel told the people what Heavenly Father wanted them to hear.



One time I was scared because I had to bear my testimony. When I bore my testimony, I wasn't scared.
Chase C., age 6, Arizona, USA



Lauren P., age 11, Utah, USA

ILLUSTRATION BY JARED BECKSTRAND



Cut, fold, and keep this challenge card!



I Can Testify!

- Memorize Helaman 14:8.
- Help others choose the right by being a good example this week.
- Watch chapter 40 of the Book of Mormon stories at scripturestories.lds.org.
- I challenge myself to . . .

This Month's Scriptures

After you read a scripture passage, color the matching numbered areas on the picture!

- 1 Helaman 10:1–7, 14–18
- 2 Helaman 13:1–7
- 3 Helaman 14:2–8
- 4 Helaman 16:1–5
- 5 3 Nephi 1:10–17, 21–24
- 6 3 Nephi 2:1–2
- 7 3 Nephi 8:2–7, 22–23
- 8 3 Nephi 11:3–11, 13–17, 37–39

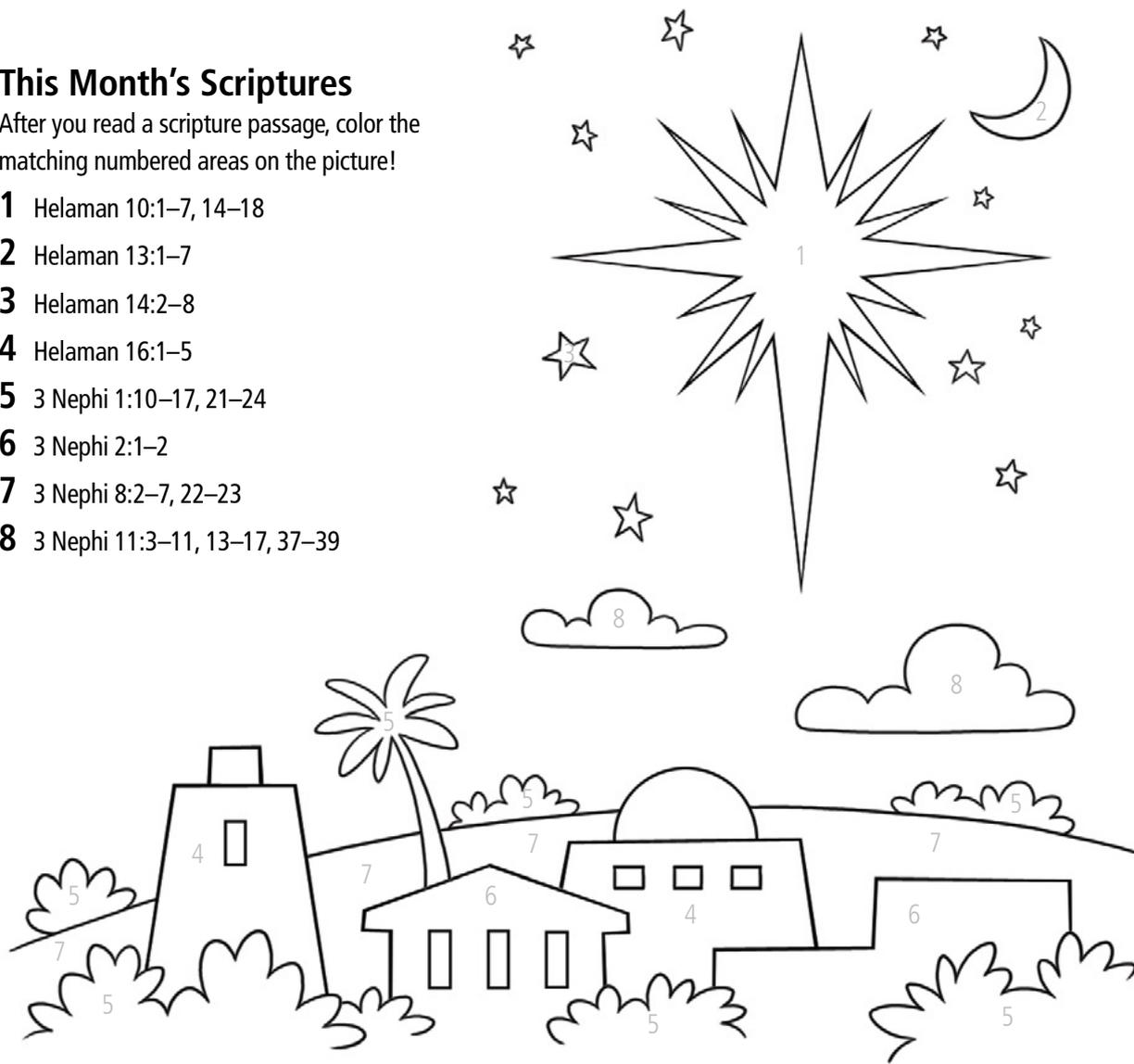


ILLUSTRATION BY JARED BECKSTRAND



The New Star

One thing Samuel told the Nephites was that Jesus Christ would be born soon and would be the Savior. A new star would shine when Jesus was born. Some people were angry and tried to hurt Samuel. Others believed his words and wanted to be baptized. Read about Samuel on pages 76–78. And look for another reading challenge next issue! ■

Samuel Teaches about Jesus



Samuel was a prophet. He climbed onto a city wall to preach. He told the people they needed to repent and have faith in Jesus Christ.

Samuel taught that Jesus would soon be born. A new star would shine. The sky would stay bright the whole night!

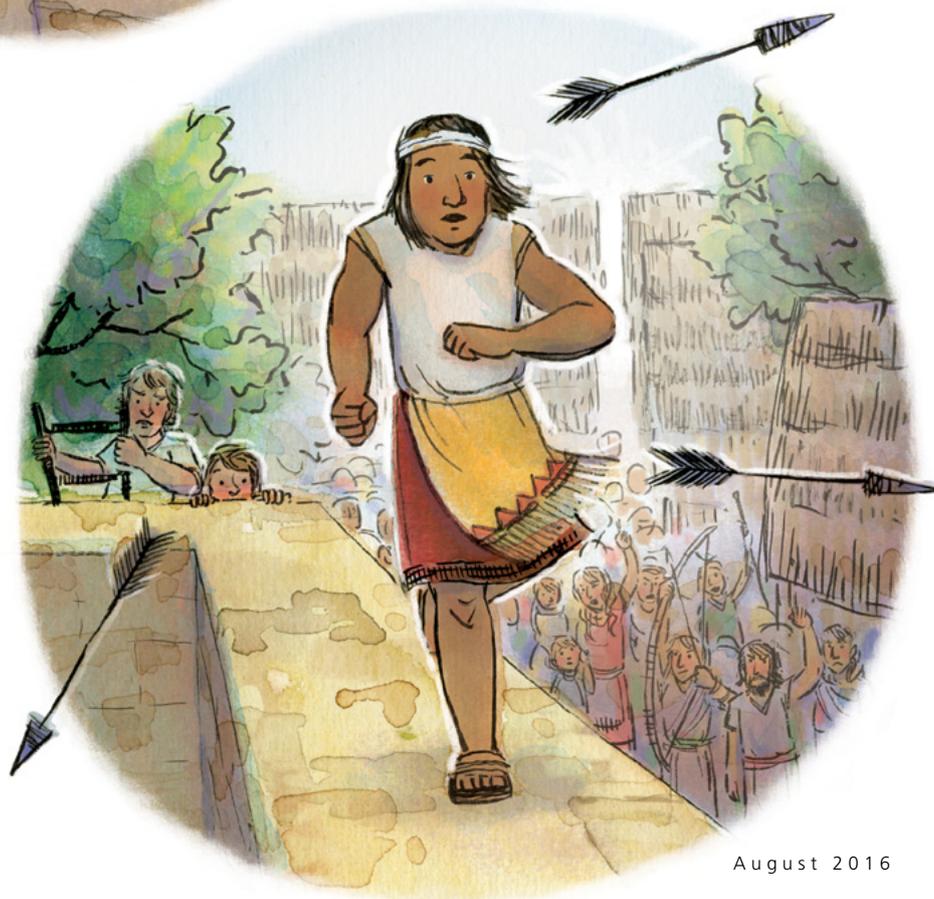
He taught that when Jesus died, it would be dark for three days. Many cities would be destroyed.





Some people believed and were baptized. Others did not believe and were angry. They threw rocks and shot arrows at Samuel. But God protected him, and he wasn't hurt.

The people who did not believe tried to capture Samuel. But Samuel got away.





Five years later, Jesus was born. A new star shone in the sky. It was just like Samuel had taught! ■

From Helaman 13–15; 3 Nephi 1:13–15, 21

I Can Pay Tithing



ILLUSTRATION BY APRYL STOTT



**By Elder
Matthew Cowley
(1897-1953)**
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

MIRACLES

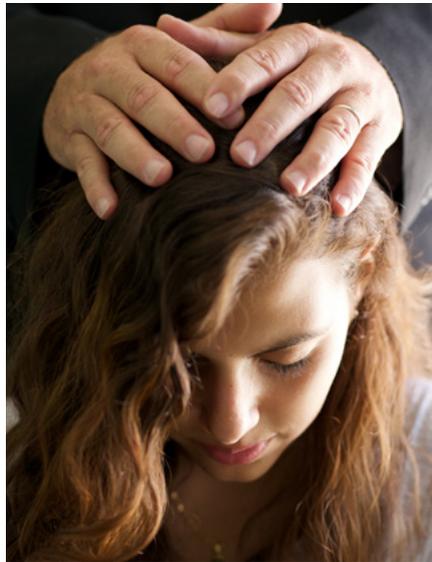
"Send for the elders; I don't feel very well."

A little over a year ago a couple came into my office carrying a little boy. The father said to me, "My wife and I have been fasting for two days, and we've brought our little boy up for a blessing. You are the one we've been sent to."

I said, "What's the matter with him?"

They said he was born blind, deaf, and dumb, no coordination of his muscles, couldn't even crawl at the age of five years.

I said to myself, "This is it. 'This kind cometh not out save by fasting and by prayer' [see Matthew 17:21]." I had implicit faith in the fasting and the prayers of those parents. I blessed that child, and a few weeks later I received a letter: "Brother Cowley, we wish you could see our little boy now. He's crawling. When we throw a ball across the floor he races after it on his hands and knees. He can see. When we clap our hands over his head he jumps. He can hear."



Medical science had laid the burden down. God had taken over. . . .

I was called to a home in a little village in New Zealand one day. There the Relief Society sisters were preparing the body of one of our Saints. They had placed his body in front of the big house, as they call it, the house where the people come to wail and weep and mourn over the dead, when in rushed the dead man's brother. He said, "Administer to him."

And the young natives said, "Why, you shouldn't do that. He's dead."

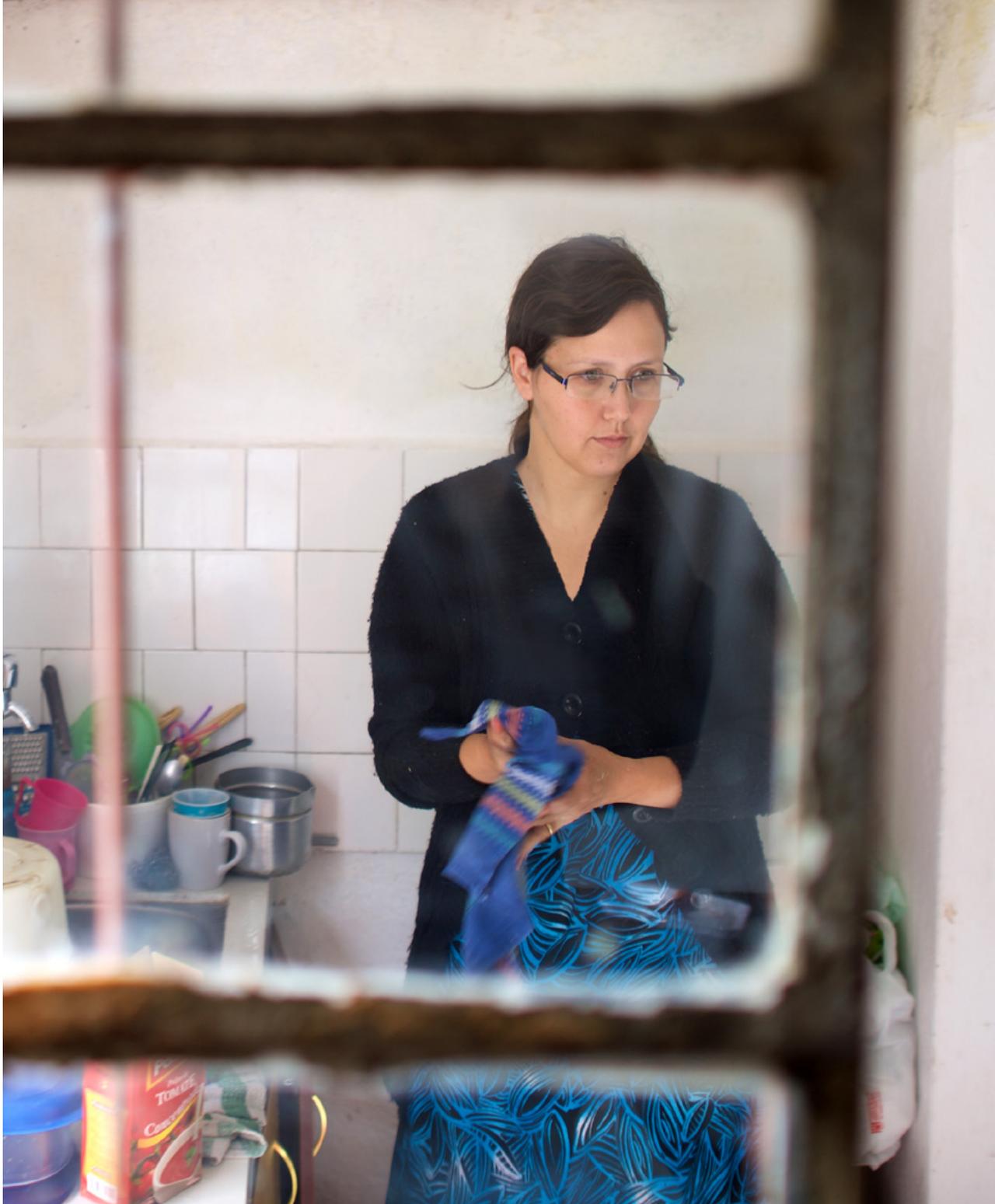
"You do it!"

. . . I had [a faithful old Maori] with me. . . . The younger native got down on his knees and he anointed this man. Then this great old sage got down and blessed him and commanded him to rise.

You should have seen the Relief Society sisters scatter. He sat up and said, "Send for the elders; I don't feel very well." . . . We told him he had just been administered to, and he said, "Oh, that was it." He said, "I was dead. I could feel life coming back into me just like a blanket unrolling." He outlived the brother that came in and told us to administer to him. . . .

God does have control of all of these elements. You and I can reach out, and if it's His will, we can bring those elements under our control for His purposes. ■

From "Miracles," New Era, June 1975, 39-44, an article adapted from a talk given at a Brigham Young University devotional on February 18, 1953. Punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing standardized.



What is our reason for hope?

“If we give our heart to God, if we love the Lord Jesus Christ, if we do the best we can to live the gospel, then tomorrow—and every other day—is ultimately going to be magnificent, even if we don’t always recognize it as such. Why? Because our Heavenly Father wants it to be! He wants to bless us. A rewarding, abundant, and eternal life is the very object of His merciful plan for His children!”

Elder **Jeffrey R. Holland** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Tomorrow the Lord Will Do Wonders among You,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2016, 127.

Also in This Issue

FOR YOUNG ADULTS



Rooted in Christ

Having trouble withstanding the storms of life? Elder and Sister Clayton suggest ways to anchor our lives in Jesus Christ and realize our true potential.

p. 42

FOR YOUTH

GETTING A **JUMP** ON HER FUTURE

p. 54

What do trampolines have to do with starting a business? Meet Alexandra, an 11-year-old from Mexico. She can explain.



FOR CHILDREN



Where I Should Be

p. 66

There are many ways we can “stand in holy places.” How can you stand in a holy place, no matter where you are?

