


Liahona

A photograph of two young women sitting outdoors on a paved surface. The woman on the left, seen from the back and side, has dark hair in a ponytail with a pink scrunchie and wears glasses and a dark blue sweater. She is holding a white spiral notebook and a pen. The woman on the right, facing her, has long dark hair and is smiling. She wears a light pink long-sleeved shirt with lace detailing on the shoulders. The background is a blurred green lawn and a grey wall.

Talking about Sexuality from a Gospel Perspective

pages 12, 18, 42, 52

7 Tips for Managing Digital
Devices at Home, page 26

Changing Lives through
Self-Reliance, pages 8, 24

THE
CHURCH
IS HERE

Kyiv

Ukraine





PHOTOGRAPH FROM GETTY IMAGES

Kyiv, the largest city and capital of Ukraine, has been inhabited for at least 1,400 years. The Kyiv Ukraine Stake has eight wards and three branches. Here are some facts about the Church in Ukraine:



11,153

Church members

congregations, 2 missions,
1 stake

48



35



family history
centers

temple



1

30

hours required (one way)
to travel by train to nearest
temple (Freiberg, Germany)
prior to temple in Kyiv

1990

First Latter-day Saint missionaries
arrive in Ukraine

1996

Church is granted national registration

2004

First stake organized

2010

Kyiv Temple dedicated



Learn more about the Church in various locations at
history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/GlobalHistories.



Ministering through
Self-Reliance

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The Divine Purposes of
Sexual Intimacy

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How, When,
and Why:
Talking to Your
Children about
Sexuality

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Walker and
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How to Manage Digital Devices
and Get Your Family Back

Geoff Steurer

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Teaching How to Be Sexually Pure and Prepared

As a professor at Brigham Young University, I have researched and taught about parenting for the past 15 years. When I speak with parents, one of the most common questions I get is when and how to talk with children about sexuality. When I talk with college students, I often hear about how scared or uncertain they are about sexuality or how little they know and understand.

We hear increasingly from Church leaders and wonderful new Church resources how parents and youth can better communicate about sexual intimacy so young people can have positive and accurate views of sexuality and the law of chastity. President M. Russell Ballard has said, “Be positive about how wonderful and beautiful physical intimacy can be when it happens within the bounds the Lord has set, including temple covenants and commitments of eternal marriage” (“Fathers and Sons: A Remarkable Relationship,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 49).

- With co-author Meg Jankovich, we share with parents some ideas on the how, when, and why of talking to their children about sexuality (see page 18).
- Elder and Sister Renlund discuss the importance of keeping the law of chastity (see page 12).
- The articles for young adults discuss how to develop a positive view of sexuality and how the law of chastity blesses us (see page 42).
- Teens can find some suggestions for successful parent-teen conversations about sexuality on page 52.

It is my prayer that, through these articles, young people and parents will desire to talk with one another openly and draw closer to the Lord as they resist incorrect information that is being communicated in the world today about sexual intimacy and instead contemplate the power of being both sexually pure and prepared.

Sincerely,

Laura M. Padilla-Walker, PhD

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Photograph by
Leslie Nilsson.

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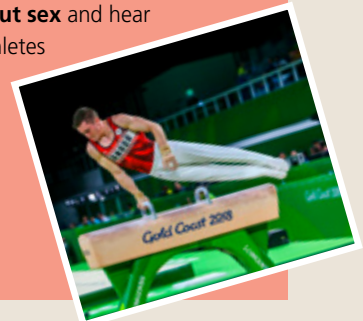
Heavenly Father has **blessed us with bodies** and feelings that can give us the greatest joy in life. But a lot of young adults have **a distorted view of sexuality**. This month, read about young adults who are coming to understand God's view of sexuality.



Youth

50

Find **tips for talking to your parents about sex** and hear from elite athletes on living the gospel.



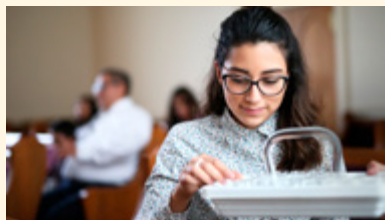
Children

Friend

You can **be brave and do hard things** like the stripling warriors!



AUGUST'S DIGITAL-ONLY ARTICLES



I'm Supposed to *Prepare* for the Sacrament?

By Zoe Campbell

Taking the time to realize the blessings of the sacrament each week can give you spiritual power.



Could I Really Keep the Law of Chastity?

By Haley S.

A young adult shares how she gained a testimony of the law of chastity before joining the Church.



Bridling Your Passions: How to Reconcile Sexual Thoughts and Feelings with the Lord's Expectations

By Liahona staff and Family Services

How can you better live the law of chastity?



How the Savior's Healing Power Applies to Repenting from Sexual Sin

By Richard Ostler

A story from the Bible helps illustrate how the Lord feels about us when we repent.

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Prepress: Joshua Dennis

Printing Director: Steven T. Lewis

Distribution Director: Nelson Gonzalez

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FOUR TRUTHS ABOUT LOVE AND MARRIAGE

Prior to her marriage to President Russell M. Nelson, Sister Wendy W. Nelson was a professor of marriage and family therapy for 25 years. In a worldwide devotional for young adults, she shared these four truths:

1. “Truths about love and marriage are brought to you by the Holy Ghost from our Heavenly Father.”



2. “Personal purity is the key to true love. The more pure your thoughts and feelings, your words and actions, the greater your capacity to give and receive true love.”

3. “As an important part of the expression of their love, the Lord wants a husband and wife to partake of the wonders and joys of marital intimacy.”

4. “For true marital intimacy, the Holy Ghost needs to be involved. It is simply not possible to have the kind of intimate experiences outside of marriage that you can have within because the Spirit will not be present.”

You can read or watch Sister Nelson's devotional address “Love and Marriage” at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/8205](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/8205). This issue also contains several articles about the gospel view of sexuality: for parents (see page 18), for young adults (see page 42), and for teens (see page 52).



Abner Garcia and Midalys Soto

Arecibo, Puerto Rico



After Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico in September 2017, Abner and Midalys moved to Florida, USA. Soon they received a prompting in the temple to move back to Puerto Rico and open a barbershop.

RAUL SANDOVAL, PHOTOGRAPHER

Abner

I found a small unit we could rent for our barbershop. When the owner told me the cost for rent, it was more than we could afford. I asked if he could lower the cost. He called me later and said, "I want to know who I'm renting to. Bring your wife so I can meet her."

Midalys

We prayed that he would see that we are good people. After meeting him, he said, "God is helping you. I've had this space for a long time. Many people have asked to rent it, but it never felt right. I feel strongly that you are good people."

He lowered the rent for three years. I was surprised. He said the exact words my husband and I had prayed for.

Abner

We are now much more secure and peaceful. We're making money, and we are blessed.

Midalys

God loves and guides us. Returning to Puerto Rico was the right thing for our family. This was Heavenly Father's perfect plan for us.



DISCOVER MORE

See more about Abner and Midalys's journey of faith, including additional photos, in the online or Gospel Library version of this article at ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/8206.

Elder Ronald A. Rasband shares how the Lord can guide us in the small details and major milestones of our lives at ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/8207.



Ministering Principles

MINISTERING THROUGH SELF-RELIANCE

Helping others become self-reliant is providing and ministering in the Lord's way.

Many of our family members, friends, and neighbors are interested in becoming more self-reliant. Using the Church's self-reliance initiative, Church members are finding opportunities to serve, care, and minister as they bless others with principles that bring "greater hope, peace, and progress."¹

"I Was Home"

By Chrissy Kepler, Arizona, USA

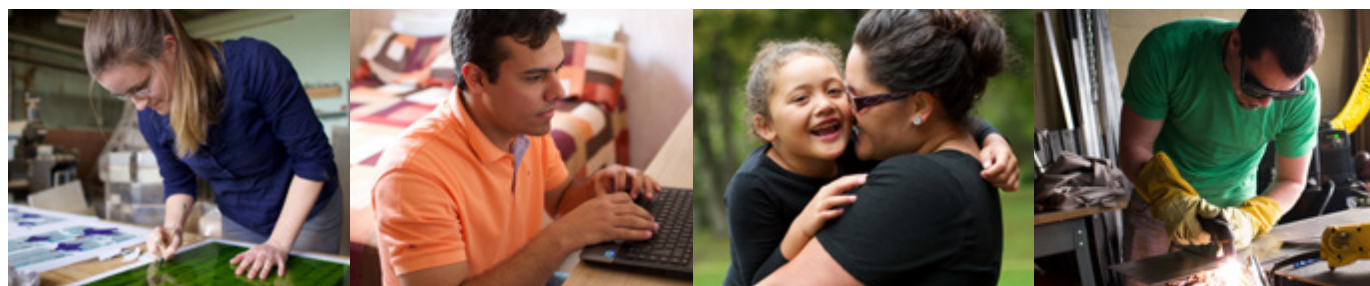
I was struggling financially following a divorce, trying to find my way back into the workforce after being a stay-at-home mom for eight years. I was also struggling spiritually, seeking truth and faith, though I had not set foot inside a chapel since I was a teenager.

One Sunday I was doing my laundry at the home of my oldest sister, Priscilla, an active member of the Church. While I was there, Priscilla invited me to attend church with her family—my first invitation in over 15 years.

I was reluctant at first, but just the night before, I had pleaded with God to show me how to get closer to Him. After feeling an internal tug, I concluded, "Why not go to hear and see for yourself as an adult with your own heart and eyes?"

While we were at sacrament meeting, I noticed a flyer in the Sunday bulletin announcing a self-reliance course on personal finances. I wasn't ready to return to church, but I felt drawn to the 12-week course. With encouragement from my sister and brother-in-law, I signed up, expecting to learn only how to make a budget and pay off debt. The classes, however, transformed me spiritually.

I had been surprised by the spiritual messages the first couple of weeks of class, but during the third class, I was overwhelmed with a feeling of confirmation that I was home and hearing new but familiar truths. I left the class and drove straight to see Priscilla. In tears, I asked her, "How do I get more of this feeling in my life?" She arranged for the missionaries to start teaching me.







INVITE, ATTEND, STRENGTHEN

To help Latter-day Saints achieve self-reliance—both financial and spiritual—the Church began its self-reliance initiative in 2014.

After an introductory devotional, attendees choose from four different 12-week courses.

Because self-reliance groups operate as a council, they offer an excellent opportunity to minister to others' financial, educational, professional, and spiritual needs. Group members learn from, counsel with, and support one another. They also share ideas and are accountable to each other.

Pray about which family members, friends, or neighbors you could invite to a self-reliance course, and attend with them. Remember that principles of self-reliance can bless all of God's children, regardless of whether they are members of the Church or not.

Members of my self-reliance class came to my missionary lessons and supported me. They made a lasting impact on my spirituality and helped me develop a testimony of the gospel and modern-day prophets.

In the time it took me to complete the course, I made several temporal and spiritual changes. I started a new career with a good company, and I paid off several loans.

But the deeper, sweeter blessings that came from the course included creating beautiful friendships, developing a positive relationship with an encouraging bishop, finding a testimony of tithing, receiving my temple recommend, being endowed, and seeing my two oldest children get baptized.

My path to self-reliance is still unfolding, but for the rest of my journey, I will cherish the lessons I've learned and the friendships I've made.

"I Left Each Class Feeling Loved"

When she visited Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, with her 10-year-old son, Vincent, in December 2016, Katie Funk considered herself "comfortably agnostic." She left the Church at age 16, became a single mother at 17, started getting tattoos, and developed a taste for coffee. But during that Temple Square visit, Vincent felt the Holy Ghost and asked his mother if he could take the missionary lessons.

Despite her two-job, 80-hour workweeks, Katie studied the gospel with Vincent, researching answers to his questions between missionary visits. By the summer of 2017, she began attending Church meetings, where she learned about the Church's self-reliance courses.

"I realized they were something that could help me," she said. "Maybe I wouldn't need to work two jobs or lean on my parents for the rest of my life."

Katie called her course "incredibly strengthening temporally and spiritually," not just because of what she learned but also because of how her self-reliance group accepted and ministered to her. ■

NOTE

1. "Message from the First Presidency," in *Personal Finances for Self-Reliance* (2016), i.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

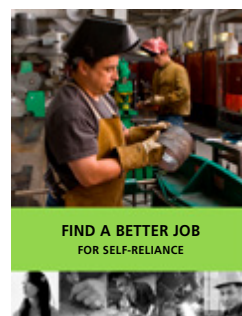
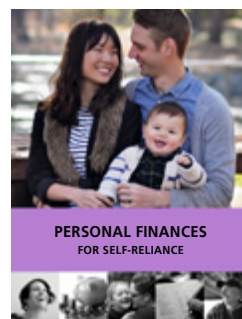
Here are some ideas from Katie for how we can make the Church's self-reliance initiative an opportunity to minister both spiritually and temporally:

- "I know it's cliché, but don't judge a book by its cover. The fact that I was able to go to that course and not feel judged by others was huge."
- "Give support and encouragement. My group supported me in such a way that I left each class feeling loved."
- "Share your experience. The honesty and openness we had for each other made our hearts feel better. You never know who's going to benefit from what you share."
- "Be vocal. I'm vocal about how my life is much better because I pay my tithing and go to church. I take my *Personal Finances for Self-Reliance* book with me to my job as a behavioral therapist. When appropriate, I share some of its principles with others."
- "Go to a self-reliance course for yourself, but watch for those who might need your help. I had to miss almost half the classes because of a change in my work schedule, but members of my group stayed in contact and cheered me on. It was amazing to feel that I still belonged even when I couldn't be there."

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES

To send us your experiences with ministering to others or being ministered to, go to [liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://liahona.churchofjesuschrist.org) and click

"Submit an Article or Feedback."



These manuals represent four of the Church's self-reliance courses. For more information, ask your bishop or visit srs.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

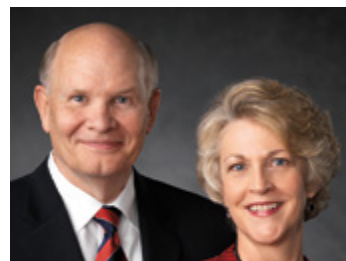
MINISTERING THROUGH SELF-RELiance

"Self-reliance is taking responsibility for our own spiritual and temporal welfare *and for those whom Heavenly Father has entrusted to our care*. Only when we are self-reliant can we truly emulate the Savior in serving and blessing others."

Elder Robert D. Hales (1932–2017) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "A Gospel Vision of Welfare: Faith in Action," in *Basic Principles of Welfare and Self-Reliance* (booklet, 2009), 1–2; emphasis added.



THE Divine Purposes OF Sexual Intimacy



By Elder Dale G. Renlund
Of the Quorum of the Twelve
Apostles
and Ruth Lybbert Renlund

Understanding the God-given gift of sexuality within the plan of happiness helps us understand the importance of the law of chastity.

Our purpose in mortality is to become like our heavenly parents. Our divine understanding and use of sexual intimacy are essential to that process of becoming.

The law of chastity is an eternal law, given by our Heavenly Father to all His children in all ages. It remains in force and is as applicable today as it was in earlier times in history. As with other commandments, the law is given by Heavenly Father to bless and help His children achieve their divine potential. Obeying the law of chastity includes abstaining from all sexual relations before marriage and remaining completely faithful and loyal after marriage. Sexual relations are to be limited to marriage between a man and a woman.¹

Heavenly Father intends that sexual relations in marriage be used to create children and to express love and strengthen the emotional, spiritual, and physical connections between husband and wife. In marriage, sexual intimacy should unite wife and husband together in trust, devotion, and consideration for each other.² Sexual relations within marriage must respect the agency of both partners and should not be used to control or dominate.

We may wonder, though, “Why should I obey the law of chastity? Why does God care about my moral behavior?” To answer these



questions, God has revealed doctrine that, if correctly understood, will motivate us to keep the law of chastity and choose to express our sexuality within the boundaries He has set.³ As with all of God's commandments, the law of chastity is best understood within the context of Heavenly Father's plan of salvation and exaltation (see Alma 12:32). Obedience to the law of chastity will bring extraordinary blessings.

Exceptional Promises

All human beings are beloved spirit sons or daughters of heavenly parents with a divine nature and eternal destiny. The reason we have bodies is to build on that divine nature so we can ultimately realize our eternal destiny.⁴ Heavenly Father wants us to gain earthly experience, progress toward perfection, and eventually enjoy the fulness of happiness that He enjoys. He knows that for us to have this kind of enduring joy, we need to progress along the course He has established, obeying the commandments He has given.

Understanding that family relationships are to be perpetuated throughout the eternities after this life is vital. After mortality, the faithful are promised that "they shall pass by the angels . . . to their exaltation and glory . . . which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever.

"Then shall they be gods, because they have no end" (Doctrine and Covenants 132:19–20).

The doctrine of eternal families in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is unique among Christian traditions. We were not created solely to praise, adore, and serve some incomprehensible God.⁵ We were created by loving heavenly parents to grow up to become like them.⁶ Male and female spirits were created to complement each other. That is why gender is not fluid in the eternities—because it provides the basis for the ultimate gift Heavenly Father can give, His kind of life.⁷

For us to realize this blessing, Heavenly Father commanded that sexual intimacy is to be reserved for marriage between a man and a woman.⁸ Marriage was intended by God "to mean the complete merger of a man and a woman—their hearts, hopes, lives, love, family, future, everything . . . to be 'one flesh' in their life together."⁹ We cannot achieve the kind of life our Heavenly Father enjoys by ourselves or without a complete commitment to fidelity within a marriage to our husband or wife according to God's plan.

God allows us to choose how we will live our lives. He will not force us to follow the path He has established even though He knows it will lead to our greatest happiness. God's commandments and covenants constitute the path that enable us to become a full inheritor in His kingdom, a joint heir with Jesus Christ (see Romans 8:17). Through making righteous choices, we develop the divine nature that is within us. Sexual relations are "one of the ultimate expressions of our divine nature."¹⁰ Our proper expression of sexuality makes it possible for God's plan to unfold on earth and in the eternities,¹¹ qualifying us to become like our Heavenly Father.¹² God promises eternal life for the faithful that

includes eternal marriage, children, and all other blessings of an eternal family.¹³

Distracting Philosophies and Satan's Deceptions

Flawed reasoning and Satan's deceptions have produced distracting philosophies that claim to eliminate the need for obeying God's commandments, especially the law of chastity. Satan's opposing voice is loud, and his philosophies are often enticing. In the Book of Mormon, some espoused these philosophies to deceive others and to profit from the deception. For example, Nehor taught the Nephites "that all mankind should be saved at the last day, and that they need not fear nor tremble, but that they might lift up their heads and rejoice; for the Lord . . . had also redeemed all men; and, in the end, all men should have eternal life" (Alma 1:4).

If we adopt Nehor's philosophy, we have no incentive to curtail our sexual appetites because there are no eternal consequences. And if we violate the law of chastity? No worries, since those who followed Nehor "did not believe in repentance of their sins" (Alma 15:15). This enticing philosophy can be seductive, and many find it appealing; we can do whatever we want with no eternal consequences.

Other false teachers in the Book of Mormon preached that believing in Jesus Christ, His Atonement, and keeping His commandments is to "yoke yourselves" to "foolish things" and derives from the ridiculous "traditions of your fathers" (Alma 30:13, 14). Indeed, they proclaimed, looking forward to "a remission of your sins" is merely a mental or emotional problem, the "effect of a frenzied mind" (Alma 30:16). The inescapable conclusion of these teachings is that every man and woman succeeds in this life "according to [their] genius" and "strength" and that whatsoever a man or woman does is "no crime" (Alma 30:17). These false teachings promote disobeying the law of chastity because the concept of right and wrong is outdated.

No wonder these philosophies are still popular! No accountability for any choice sounds like the ultimate freedom. If we can avoid most worldly consequences by being discreet and careful, what is the harm? Against this backdrop, the law of chastity seems old-fashioned, prudish, or unnecessary.

Understanding that family relationships are to be perpetuated throughout the eternities after this life is vital.

Eternal Laws

God's laws are not negotiable. He allows us to disregard them, but we are not free to create our own rules for the eternities any more than a person is free to create his or her personalized laws for physics. God wants us to be a qualified heir in His kingdom. To expect His heavenly inheritance while following a different course than He has outlined is naïve.

Before being called to full-time Church service, I (Elder Renlund) cared for patients with severe heart failure. In heart failure and transplant cardiology, there are defined, established courses to follow to obtain the best outcome: longer and better quality of life. Treating a patient in another way does not result in the best outcomes. It was astonishing that some patients tried to negotiate the treatment course. Some patients said, "I prefer not to take any medications," or "I don't want to have any heart biopsies after transplantation." Of course,





patients are free to follow their own course, but they cannot pursue an inferior course of action and expect the best outcome.

The same is true for us. We are free to choose our own course in life, but we are not free to choose the outcome that comes from following our own rules, no matter how many times someone says we can. Heavenly Father is not to blame when we do not receive blessings connected to the law of chastity because of disobedience.

In this dispensation, the Savior taught that eternal laws are not flexible and open for discussion. He said, “And again, verily I say unto you, that which is governed by law is also preserved by law and perfected and sanctified by the same.

“That which breaketh a law, and abideth not by law, but *seeketh to become a law unto itself*, . . . cannot be sanctified by law, neither by mercy, justice, nor judgment” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:34–35; emphasis added). We cannot substitute our own rules for eternal laws any more than a man who touches hot coals can decide not to get burned.

If we are not obedient, we will enjoy only “that which [we] are willing to receive, because [we] were not willing to enjoy that which [we] might have received” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:32). Obeying the law of chastity is one way we demonstrate that we are willing to do whatever it takes to receive all the extraordinary blessings associated with eternal families.

God’s Laws Are Always, in the End, Fair

Not all Heavenly Father’s children have the opportunity in this life to experience sexual intimacy in married relationships

according to God’s law. Some will not have the opportunity to marry. Others are convinced that their unique circumstances make living the law of chastity so challenging and unfair that they can choose to ignore it.

Fairness, however, must be judged from an eternal perspective, from that of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.¹⁴ The Savior exhorted His people to withhold judgment on what is fair or unfair until that day when He makes up His jewels (see Malachi 3:17–18). The “jewels” the Savior references are those who, despite perceived or temporary unfairness or any other impediment, keep His commandments.

When our circumstances feel unfair to us, it is best to follow King Benjamin’s advice. He said, “I would desire that ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are *blessed in all things*, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven, that thereby *they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness*” (Mosiah 2:41; emphasis added).

Ultimately, nothing compares to the infinite unfairness the Savior endured. Yet, if we are faithful, He will compensate us for any unfairness we experience, and we will achieve a state of never-ending happiness.

As we choose to keep the commandments of God, including the law of chastity, we will experience joy and “peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come” (Doctrine and Covenants 59:23)¹⁵ because we will be part of an eternal family, with ancestors and posterity.¹⁶ As husband and wife are eternally sealed together by priesthood authority, they will be exalted and have a fulness of glory and eternal progeny.¹⁷

As husband and wife are eternally sealed together by priesthood authority, they will be exalted and have a fulness of glory and eternal progeny.

Temptation and Repentance

God anticipated that we would be tempted as we try to live the law of chastity. That is why He provided His Son to be our Savior

and Redeemer. Through Jesus Christ and His Atonement, we can be strengthened to resist temptation. All God's children who experience temptation of any kind can turn to the Savior for help.¹⁸ Jesus Christ understands what we are going through because He "was in all points tempted like as we are," and we are encouraged to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:15, 16).

When we stumble, we need to remember that we can become clean through faith in Jesus Christ and sincere repentance.¹⁹ Repentance is joyful because, "though [our]

sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18). The Savior will not only forgive; He will forget our sin.²⁰ What more could we ask: help when tempted, forgiveness when we repent. Repentance should not be feared even though Satan does try "to block us from looking to Jesus Christ, who stands with open arms, hoping and willing to heal, forgive, cleanse, strengthen, purify, and sanctify us."²¹

Testimony

God's laws are designed for our ultimate happiness. He wants us to use our bodies and sexuality in ways He has ordained so that we can become like Him. We have been blessed in our marriage with mutual trust as we live the law of chastity. Our confidence in each other and in our Heavenly Father has grown as we have kept this commandment. God's plan is the only path that enables the fullest measure of joy. We promise that you too can know that God loves you and that you will be eternally blessed as you live His commandments. ■

NOTES

1. See Jacob 2:27–30; *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), "Lesson 4: The Commandments," 80.
2. See *General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (2020), 2.1.2, ChurchOfJesusChrist.org; David A. Bednar, "We Believe in Being Chaste," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 41–44; Russell M. Nelson, "Nurturing Marriage," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2006, 36–38; Richard G. Scott, "Making the Right Choices," *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 37–39.
3. See Boyd K. Packer, "Little Children," *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 16–18.
4. See "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 145. The intended meaning of gender in the proclamation is biological sex at birth.
5. See Thomas Watson, "Man's Chief End Is to Glorify God," in *A Body of Practical Divinity* (1833), 8; Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology* (1999), 506; *The Catechism of Christian Doctrine: Prepared and Enjoined by Order of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore* (1885); all as quoted in Terryl L. Givens, *Feeding the Flock: The Foundations of Mormon Thought: Church and Praxis* (2017), 1.
6. See Dallin H. Oaks, "Apostasy and Restoration," *Ensign*, May 1995, 84–87.
7. See "The Family: A Proclamation to the World." Throughout eternity, we will not be genderless, as some theologians have suggested. See Givens, *Feeding the Flock*, 188–90.
8. See Doctrine and Covenants 42:22–24; see also "The Family: A Proclamation to the World."
9. Jeffrey R. Holland, "Personal Purity," *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 76.
10. David A. Bednar, "We Believe in Being Chaste," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 42.
11. See Neil L. Andersen, "Children," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 28–30.
12. See Dallin H. Oaks, "Apostasy and Restoration," *Ensign*, May 1995, 84–87.
13. See Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–4; 132:19–20, 24.
14. See D. Todd Christofferson, "Why Marriage, Why Family," *Ensign*, May 2015, 50–53.
15. See also Mosiah 2:41; *General Handbook*, 2.1.2.
16. See Malachi 4:1.
17. See Doctrine and Covenants 132:19.
18. See Alma 13:28.
19. See Isaiah 1:18; Doctrine and Covenants 58:42.
20. See Doctrine and Covenants 58:42.
21. Russell M. Nelson, "We Can Do Better and Be Better," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 67.





How, When, and Why: **Talking to Your Children about Sexuality**

If you were to ask youth, “What is the law of chastity?” you may get a blank stare, or they may fidget with discomfort and then quickly quote something like, “It means not having sexual relations before marriage.” Our experience is that many young people remain abstinent before marriage but deeply misunderstand the full meaning and purpose of the law of chastity or of sexuality—misunderstandings that often, sadly, result in future marital struggles. Our goal as parents and leaders should be to help our children to be both sexually pure and prepared.



*To help our children prepare for
and enjoy sexuality in its beauty
and wonder within marriage,
we need to guide them as
they work toward controlling
their God-given feelings.*

By Laura M. Padilla-Walker

Professor, School of Family Life, Brigham Young University

and Meg O. Jankovich

Student in BYU Marriage, Family, and Human Development
master's program

Consider All Aspects of the Law

The physical aspects of the law of chastity (for example, abstinence before marriage and complete fidelity after marriage) are central and important. However, abstinence is sometimes discussed more often than the emotional and spiritual aspects of the joy and beauty of sexual intimacy in marriage, as well as the peace that comes from living a life of virtue and purity both before and after marriage.

In addition to procreation, sexual intimacy in marriage has another important purpose.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: “Intimate relations . . . are not merely a curiosity to be explored, an appetite to be satisfied, or a type of recreation or entertainment to be pursued selfishly. They are not a conquest to be achieved or simply an act to be performed. Rather, they are in mortality one of the ultimate expressions of our divine nature and potential and a way of strengthening emotional and spiritual bonds between husband and wife.”¹

In order to help our children prepare to enjoy sexual intimacy in its beauty and wonder within marriage, we need to help them understand their sexual development and guide them as they work toward controlling their God-given feelings and emotions.



As our children grow, they need information taught by parents more directly and plainly about what is and is not appropriate.

If you worry that you haven't talked with your children about sexuality soon enough or in the right ways, you're not alone. There are a number of reasons why these conversations can be challenging. However, it is never too late to start teaching. Below are three tips to help you get you started:

1. How to Talk about Sexuality

One critical element of healthy parent-child conversations about sexuality is to promote a culture of openness. Research suggests that teenagers get most of their information about sexuality from media or peers but that they *want* to get information from their parents.

President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: "As our children grow, they need information taught by parents more directly and plainly about what is and is not appropriate. Parents need to . . . talk to [their children] plainly about sex and the teaching of the gospel regarding chastity. Let this information come from parents in the home in an appropriate way."²

To foster open communication, you can:

- Start when your children are young by calling body parts by their correct names. This teaches children about their wonderful bodies and provides them the language they need to be healthy and informed.

- Let your children know they can ask you any questions, and then try not to overreact or attach shame to their questions or confessions. Celebrate that they are talking to you, show them love and support, and do your best to keep lines of communication open.
- Avoid using metaphors for sexuality. Children need information presented in a clear and honest way. For example, some youth tell of lessons where breaking the law of chastity is compared to chewed gum or food that is passed from person to person around the room and therefore no longer desirable. Though well intentioned, these types of metaphors often promote fear of sexuality or feelings of low or irreparable self-worth, undermining the hope and peace that results from true repentance.

2. When to Talk about Sexuality

Most parents have a single conversation with their children about sexuality. But given the false messages youth are getting from the world today—sometimes on a daily basis—children need more than one talk from their parents.³ Children benefit

most from a proactive approach in which parents anticipate the struggles children will face regarding sexuality and arm them with helpful strategies.

In speaking about potential exposure to pornography, Sister Joy D. Jones, Primary General President, said: “Earlier discussions are better, and children will come forward more readily when they know they are loved and nothing they say or do can change that love. . . .

“Parents, we must start the conversation and not wait for children to come to us. . . . We want children to feel prepared and empowered, not scared. We want to talk with them and not at them.”⁴

To be more intentional, you can:

- Have home evening lessons on topics related to sexuality and let your children teach as they feel ready. Topics might include puberty, body image, the positive aspects of sexuality, the dangers of pornography use, that it is normal to have sexual feelings, and more.
- Help your children come up with specific strategies to resist temptation. For example, if your child is struggling with impure thoughts or behaviors, brainstorm together on what to do when these thoughts come. For example, sing a hymn, think of a scripture, pray, engage in physical exercise, or wear a bracelet that reminds them to choose the right.
- Teach children how to avoid sexual predators and to stay safe. Note: try not to teach about safety (which often produces fear) at the same time you teach about sexual intimacy within marriage; children may project fear onto all aspects of sexuality.





3. Talk about the *Why* of Sexuality

Children often want to know *why* they are expected to do things. Why *should* they keep the law of chastity when some people around them do not? When they understand the reasons behind expectations, they are more likely to internalize shared gospel and family values. Youth who know why they are committing to keep the law of chastity find that this commitment “ceases to [be] a burden and, instead, becomes a joy and a delight.”⁵

If we want our children to keep God’s law of chastity, we need to give them reasons for why it is important to abide by this law. They must be taught that “sexuality is a powerful gift from Heavenly Father and that it should be used within the bounds He has set.”⁶ Understanding how this “powerful gift” develops will help youth make choices in line with their desire to keep God’s law of chastity.

As you discuss sexual development with your child, consider these teachings:

- Sexuality is an inherent part of each child of God. We are created “in the image of God” (Genesis 1:27), which means that our bodies, including our sexual organs, are a divine creation.
- Experiencing sexual feelings and sexual arousal is normal. Children don’t need to act on those feelings and sensations but instead can be mindful of them. This means noticing sexual

Youth who know why they are committing to keep the law of chastity find that this commitment ceases to be a burden.

feelings but not negatively judging them. Research has shown that practicing mindfulness can help us make better choices that are in line with our values and goals, such as keeping the law of chastity.

- Masturbation is often a child’s first experience with sexuality and is done in ignorance. Even young children are prone to self-touching, and how parents respond to these early behaviors can set the stage for how young people feel about themselves and their sexuality. It is important for parents to find a balance

between helping children understand the why behind God's commandment that sexual behavior occur within a marriage relationship, while also not reacting with disgust or anger when children engage in self-touching or youth admit to masturbating.

- If children understand the why behind standards related to relationships and sexuality (including dating, modesty, chastity, etc.), they are more likely to see the wisdom in God's laws and have the motivation to keep them. As you teach these standards, remember that it's important to do so without imposing shame or fear.

Emphasize the Power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ

Just as when our toddlers are first learning how to walk, youth may stumble as they learn to understand and regulate their own sexuality. It is important for us to remember to promote growth instead of guilt and to teach children that Jesus Christ can bless them with grace and power and mercy to strengthen them and help them remain sexually pure and one day enjoy the blessings of sexual intimacy in marriage.

Being a parent is not easy. And our efforts in teaching our children may not always be perfect, but we can do our best to teach our children about the beautiful gift that is sexual intimacy in marriage. If we feel that we fall short, we can do better with the Lord's help. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, "With the gift of the



Atonement of Jesus Christ and the strength of heaven to help us, we *can* improve, and the great thing about the gospel is we get credit for *trying*, even if we don't always succeed."⁷ ■

NOTES

1. David A. Bednar, "We Believe in Being Chaste," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 42.
2. M. Russell Ballard, "Like a Flame Unquenchable," *Ensign*, May 1999, 86.
3. See Dalmacio Flores and Julie Barroso, "21st Century Parent-Child Sex Communication in the United States: A Process Review," *Journal of Sex Research*, vol. 54, no. 4-5 (2017), 532-48.
4. Joy D. Jones, "Addressing Pornography: Protect, Respond, and Heal," *Ensign*, Oct. 2019, 25, 26; *Liahona*, Oct. 2019, 39, 40.
5. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Forget Me Not," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 122.
6. "Sexual Intimacy Is Sacred and Beautiful" (family home evening lesson), ChurchofJesusChrist.org/addressing-pornography/resources.
7. Jeffrey R. Holland, "Tomorrow the Lord Will Do Wonders among You," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2016, 125-26.

Editors' note: If you have teenage children, consider sharing with them the articles on pages 12 and 52 on this topic.

Time Well Spent

By David Dickson

Church Magazines

Because Pele Mika Ah Lam makes the most of her time, she finds happiness daily, she owns a small business, and she can look back without regret.

Island time in the Pacific runs a bit differently than it does in many other parts of the world. Daily tasks are completed by the position of the sun, not the clock. You wake to the sounds of birds and the crashing of waves, not to a shrill alarm.

For Pele Mika Ah Lam of Samoa, there's another important consideration about time that she lives by: "I make the most of it wherever I am."

Learning in and out of Class

Pele grew up in a village where families—including her own—live off the land. Running water and electricity are never a given, and the homes are simple and beautiful. Education is not easy to pay for. "Our whole family helps support each other with education costs," Pele says. "It's the Samoan way."

After working hard and getting top marks in school, Pele was accepted to attend the National University of

Samoa. She chose to study accounting, mathematics, and computing. She also made room in her schedule for institute classes.

Along the way, Pele participated in another activity that would change her life in the near future, though she didn't realize it at the time. For fun, every Friday evening she met with other Church members attending the university to discuss the gospel and learn new skills. These activities varied from week to week with one exception: on the last Friday of each month, they had a standing tradition of learning how to cook a different meal.

"I paid close attention," Pele says. "I didn't want to waste a chance to learn something new."

That decision would yield big dividends in the future.

A Door Closes, a Window Opens

The cost of a university education can be a major obstacle to nearly anyone. For Pele, when her funding

ran out, she had to leave school. She had worked hard, however, and learned all she could while there—including how to cook many different meals.

As a wife and as a mother of young children, she thought hard about how she might use what she had learned to help support her family. Throughout her life, Pele has been taught to believe in God and to work hard.

"I decided to start my own business," she says. "I now run a barbecue and salad stand, cooking food that I learned how to make while going through school!"

Because of her business success, Pele makes enough money to take care of her immediate family, as well as help care for her parents and siblings.

"Our family believes that 'faith without works is dead' [James 2:20]," she says. "We have faith in God and believe that He will help us in every way. But we have to do our part."

Island Time

Pele still lives life on “island time.” She rises and retires with the sun and embraces the simple, peaceful Samoan lifestyle. And she understands and lives the following truth: “Time flies on wings of lightning; we cannot call it back.”¹

Elder Ian S. Ardern of the Seventy has taught: “Time is never for sale; time is a commodity that cannot, try as you may, be bought at any store for any price. Yet when time is wisely

used, its value is immeasurable.”²

Because Pele is trying to make the most of the time she has, God has prospered her and her family, and they have found joy even in the midst of challenges. She has a strong testimony, a successful business, and a bright future.

“We are very blessed,” she says. ■

NOTES

1. “Improve the Shining Moments,” *Hymns*, no. 226.
2. Ian S. Ardern, “A Time to Prepare,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 31.



A FIVE-STEP PLAN FOR TIME MANAGEMENT

If you’re looking for ways to balance your busy schedule, consider the following five steps from *My Foundation for Self-Reliance*:

1. *List tasks.* “Each morning, make a list of tasks to do. Add names of people to serve.”
2. *Pray for guidance.* “Listen. Commit to do your best.”
3. *Number your priorities.* “Put a 1 by the most important, a 2 by the next most important, and so on.”
4. *Set goals and act.* “Listen to the Spirit. Set goals. Work hard. Start with the most important task and work down the list.”
5. *Report.* “Each night, report to Heavenly Father in prayer. Ask questions. Listen. Repent. Feel His love.”¹

NOTE

1. From *My Foundation for Self-Reliance* (2016), 14.



How to Manage Digital Devices and *Get Your Family Back*

By Geoff Steurer

Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

Picture the following scenarios:

- A family sits at a restaurant, waiting for their food, but rather than talk to each other, everyone stares at their smartphones.
- A teenager feels inadequate and alone as she scrolls through the carefully curated performances of her peers on social media.
- A little girl at the park tries to get her father to look up from his phone and pay attention to her.
- A husband keeps checking sports alerts on his smartwatch while his wife is talking to him.
- A young man is constantly texting throughout the home evening lesson.

Each of these examples—and dozens of others you have no doubt experienced—are little tragedies. Smartphones and other digital devices are both a blessing and a curse. They connect us to an amazing world of information. They help us to study scriptures, do family history, and speak with family across vast distances. But when not managed properly, digital devices can also disrupt family relationships and impact our mental, spiritual, and physical health.



Here are seven tips to ensure that digital devices are our servants and not our masters.



PHOTOGRAPH FROM GETTY IMAGES

The Irony of Technology

As a marriage and family therapist, I witness the ever-growing challenge of earnest people competing with screens for the attention of their loved ones. It's a great irony. The very devices that were supposed to help connect us and improve our relationships have, in some cases, made relationships shallower and left people feeling insecure. In fact, many researchers are discovering that rising reports of depression, anxiety, bullying, and suicide have a connection with the epidemic of loneliness, brought on, in large part, by the widespread use of personal electronic devices.¹

In our homes, even though everyone may be physically together, when devices are out, they can instantly create feelings of loneliness and disconnection. If we are to create oneness and connection in our family relationships, we must recognize the splitting of attention that happens when devices infiltrate our family gatherings.

We don't need to overreact and completely eliminate technology from our lives. Instead, we need to put technology in its proper place so that it serves our relationships instead of eroding them.

The Trappings of a Virtual World

Immersing ourselves in our devices minimizes the physical world around us—with all of its sounds, textures, visuals, and countless other sensations—and trades these for a virtual world that doesn't connect us as deeply to our bodies and our environment. As a result, we may miss important physical signals that tell us what we need in order to be healthy. For example, excessive screen time can prevent us from noticing that we're tired, hungry, or stressed.

Such disconnection from the physical world can also undermine our sense of joy. There is a significant difference, for example, between receiving a laughing emoji on a screen and personally experiencing the joyful laugh of a loved one.

The Need for Digital Stewards

Digital devices are engineered to be irresistible and hard to put down. In fact, many software and phone developers intentionally target our human vulnerabilities to keep us checking and scrolling through endless feeds of information.²

This dependency on devices is so common that it's easy to ignore how it's affecting us. Young people, therefore,

need adults who can model the appropriate use of these devices and can educate children about their effects.

As President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught, digital devices “need to be our servants, not our masters.”³

With that in mind, here are seven tips for how to manage our digital devices:

Be like the Savior: give undivided attention.

The Savior showed us what it looks like to truly be with others without distraction. Throughout His ministry, He always focused on the individual (see Mark 5:25–34; 35–42; Luke 19:2–8)—Christ gave His full attention to them all. When He showed the Nephites His wounds, He didn't rush the process. Rather, the people went “forth *one by one* until they had all gone forth” (3 Nephi 11:15; emphasis added).

As we model this practice, we **teach our children how to truly be in one place at a time instead of splitting their attention between devices and those around them.** When you're talking with someone, especially a child or spouse, give them your full attention by putting your phone away.

Sadly, it's become the norm to turn away from those we love to answer a text and attend to someone else's need. This can have a negative effect on our relationships and may send an unintentional message that the person in front of us is less important.

Make a commitment to those in front of you that they have priority over interruptions from your smartphone or device. Look them in the eye. Listen as the Savior would. Focus.



Don't default to texting.

When sharing heartfelt feelings or important thoughts with others, **get as close to an in-person experience as your situation allows.** If face-to-face communication isn't possible, then try a video call so you can see and hear the person. If that's not an option, then make a phone call so you can hear the person's voice.



Delay giving children smartphones and social media accounts.

Delay ownership of smartphones and participation in social media **until children and teens have developed adequate in-person social skills, such as listening, making eye contact, showing empathy, and being aware of others.**

Before children enter the world of digital citizenship, it's important for them to practice good citizenship by respecting and relating to others.

One of the reasons why the average age of pornography exposure is 11 years old⁴ (and, in many cases, younger) is that many children are given smartphones at a young age. Keep this in mind also: even if your children are mature enough for social media accounts, many other people online who will have access to your child's social accounts are not.⁵



Establish family rules and set limits.

Create clear boundaries in your home for when smartphones and devices will be used and then put away.

One strong recommendation: **invite everyone in the family to be deliberate about taking breaks from their devices on a regular basis.** Perhaps you can designate a place to put them, somewhere out of reach where they can't be accessed easily—a basket in the kitchen, for example.

One family decided that devices needed to be plugged in and set aside during and after the evening meal so that family members could focus on spending uninterrupted time together.

When we intentionally set limits on our devices, our family members will begin to feel more connected.



Avoid mindless gaming and scrolling.

It's easy to mindlessly turn to our devices for relaxation, distraction, and fun. Resist the urge. Instead, **put down your device and do something to engage your senses, like going outside.**

In June 2018, President Russell M. Nelson invited the youth of the Church "to disengage from a constant reliance on social media by holding a seven-day fast from social media."⁶

As parents, you can make the same invitation in your home, holding occasional fasts from games, social media, or other digital distractions.

5



Train yourself not to respond immediately.

Consider whether you need to respond immediately to every message and alert. Our devices are training us to believe that every interruption is urgent and critical, thus possibly diverting our attention from what matters most. Try slowing down and delaying your response to messages so you can be more present and aware of those around you. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles observed that some in the Church "neglect eternal relationships for digital distractions, diversions, and detours that have no lasting value."⁷

6

Establish digital-free zones.

Designate sacred spaces where devices are never allowed. For example, one family decided that when they're driving around town, phones and devices aren't allowed in the vehicle so that family members can visit with each other. These kinds of limits allow for sustained attention and connection, which can prevent loneliness in families.

7

RELATIONSHIPS AND DISTRACTION

The modern world is increasingly filled with distractions. Mobile technology such as smartphones can make distraction a nearly constant state. Studies suggest that a distracted mind can create problems at work, at school, and in our relationships and can increase our stress and frustration. Some studies have even suggested that the mere presence of a person's smartphone can drain their thinking capacity.

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once emphasized “the importance of four key relationships: with our God, with our families, with our fellowman, and with ourselves” (“Of Things That Matter Most,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 21). Here are some suggestions for strengthening these relationships by reducing distractions.

Relationship with God

- **Scripture study.** Try doing at least some of your study without your device. The printed page doesn't distract you with notifications or other apps.
- **Prayer.** Make it regular, quiet, and alone. And occasionally make it long.
- **Pondering.** Add pondering time to scripture study and prayer. Add it to solo activities occasionally—for instance, no device when you're exercising or doing housework, no music when you're alone in the car.
- **Worship.** Give proper attention to this vital aspect of your relationship with God. For instance, during the sacrament, either don't have your device with you or turn it off.

Relationship with others

- **Talking and listening.** Never underestimate family dinner. Try making it a sacred space (see numbers 4 and 7 on previous pages). Show interest in others. Seek informal exchanges and deeper conversations. Make most in-person conversations hands-free (no devices). And make eye contact a priority (see number 1).
- **Serving.** If an opportunity to serve someone comes up and your first thought is “But I still have to watch my show,” you may need to work on your priorities. Try going without that entertainment for a week.
- **Playing.** If you're building relationships by having fun together, give it your attention. Remove devices from sight or hearing.

Relationship with yourself

- **Physical and emotional health.** Don't be distracted from self-care (sleep, exercise, nutrition, stress management). For instance, don't bring your device into your bedroom at night. And don't fill time with mindless activities so that the rest of your time feels pressed (see number 5).
- **Protecting feelings of self-worth.** Avoid self-criticism and comparisons with others. For instance, reduce time with social media and be more selective in what or who you follow (see number 4).
- **Getting to know yourself.** Don't let an image of yourself from social media distract you from the true self you desire to become. Spend time with that true self doing things that true self wants to do.

Sanctifying Our Homes

Making our homes a haven from the world requires effort and vigilance, especially with so many digital distractions all around us. For the sake of our family relationships and health, every effort is worth it. ■

NOTES

1. See Jeremy Nobel, “Forging Connection against Loneliness,” American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Sept. 25, 2018, afsp.org.
2. See Avery Hartmans, “These Are the Sneaky Ways Apps like Instagram, Facebook, Tinder Lure You In and Get You ‘Addicted,’” *Business Insider*, Feb. 17, 2018, businessinsider.com.
3. M. Russell Ballard, “Be Still, and Know That I Am God” (Church Educational

- System devotional for young adults, May 4, 2014), broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
4. See Jane Randel and Amy Sánchez, “Parenting in the Digital Age of Pornography,” *HuffPost* blog, Feb. 26, 2017, huffpost.com.
 5. See “Cyberbullying,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2013, 39.
 6. Russell M. Nelson, “Hope of Israel” (worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018), HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
 7. David A. Bednar, “Things as They Really Are,” *Ensign*, June 2010, 19; *Liahona*, June 2010, 25.



The Lord Stood by Me

By Elodie McCormick, Alabama, USA

I hadn't expected my husband's military deployment to last for a whole year, but this experience helped us grow spiritually as a family.

My family and I had been in Texas, USA, for about three months when my mother phoned me one day from her home in England.

"I don't know, Mum," I told her, "but I feel like something's going to happen today, and I don't know if I'm going to like it."

When my husband, Matthias, came home that evening, he said, "I have something to tell you." I knew instantly that he had to go away, but I hadn't expected his military deployment to last for a whole year. We had two weeks to prepare for his departure. I shed a lot of tears during that time.

It was a tough year. Not having my husband with me or my family in England nearby frightened and worried me, but it was also a great experience for me as a new mother with a baby and for us to learn how we could continue to grow spiritually as a family.

We had already established daily habits of family prayer and scripture study. So when Matthias and I had opportunities to talk to each other, normally through Skype, we would

pray and read scriptures together.

As I read the scriptures on my own and with my husband, a verse kept coming to my mind: "Wherefore, be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you" (Doctrine and Covenants 68:6). I then realized that I had always been able to rely on Heavenly Father.

My calling as ward choir director kept my mind focused on the words of the hymns and the scriptures and the promises they offer. Singing and listening to the hymns gave me peace.

When our baby, Noah, got pneumonia, priesthood holders gave him a blessing of health and me a blessing of strength and comfort. I had great ministering sisters who helped me too. I also got together with other wives whose husbands were deployed. They helped me more than I helped them. Our neighbor even helped by mowing our lawn.

I'm thankful for the small and simple things that blessed our family. Heavenly Father always seemed to bless us through someone reaching out to us when we needed help the most. ■

A Promise of Healing and Sealing

Name withheld, Santa Catarina, Brazil

Through faithfulness in the gospel and seeking our ancestors, my mother and I were blessed in ways we couldn't have imagined.

Ever since I was baptized, I have been interested in family history and temple work. I loved the idea of being sealed to my family for eternity, but I didn't think this would ever happen because many of my family members, including my father, struggled with alcohol addiction.

I grew up in that environment, but the good advice of my dear mother helped me decide not to follow that path. She got baptized a year after I did.

When I turned 18, I decided to serve a mission and received a call to serve in Arizona, USA. This was one of the best experiences of my life. When I returned home, I discovered that my father's addiction was totally out of control. I remember

questioning if my service had been of any worth if things were now so bad at home.

During the April 2018 general conference, I heard Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles say, "As you . . . discover, gather, and connect your family . . . you will find healing for that which needs healing."¹

My mother continued to pray, read the scriptures, and seek for inspiration to help my father. Eventually, she convinced him to get help. He entered a treatment home for nine months. We could visit him only once a month. It wasn't easy, especially in the beginning, but month after month my mother and I continued to be faithful in the gospel and to seek for our ancestors. In

doing so, we were greatly blessed in ways we couldn't have imagined.

After my father's treatment, he returned home and has been sober ever since. He met with the missionaries but was not yet ready to commit to the gospel. My mother suggested that we go to the temple grounds and feel the Spirit there.

A short time later, the missionaries felt inspired to stop by our home and visit my father. He shared with them his desire to be baptized. That evening, my father and mother shared the great news with me.

The Lord had fulfilled His promise. That which needed healing *was* healed. My father was healed from his addiction, and my doubts were healed with renewed faith. Our family is now preparing to be sealed. ■

NOTE

1. Dale G. Renlund, "Family History and Temple Work: Sealing and Healing," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2018, 49.

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHANIE HOCK





Why Are We Here?

By Gregorio Rivera, Elqui Province, Chile

We quit our jobs, sold everything, and said goodbye to family and friends to move to a place we had never been before.

I worked days, and my wife, Elen, worked nights. We hardly saw each other. We weren't holding home evening or family prayer. We went to sacrament meeting, but we lacked commitment to the gospel.

We began to feel emptiness that came from focusing on the things of the world instead of the things of the Lord. We felt that Heavenly Father wanted more from us.

So we went to the Santiago Chile Temple for guidance on how we could improve. We both received the prompting that we needed to move with our little daughters from Santiago to the northern coastal area of Coquimbo.

We had never been there before, and we knew nothing about the area. But we quit our jobs, sold everything, and said goodbye to family, friends, and my university studies.

In Coquimbo, we didn't know anyone, and we didn't have any money. I found a job, but it barely paid the rent. We asked, "Why are we here?"

Elen wondered if there was something she could do to help pay the bills. One day she sewed a new cover for one of our old chairs. "I'm going

to put it up for sale and see if someone buys it," she said. Someone *did* buy it. Encouraged, Elen learned more about reupholstering furniture. She started advertising and began receiving work.

In 2016, I was called as bishop of our new ward. With my job, my resumed university studies, and my calling, once again I hardly saw my family.

"This isn't working," Elen said. "Why don't you work with me? I'll teach you how. You'll be home, and you'll also have more flexibility for your calling."

I worried about quitting my job, but Elen suggested that we pray to Heavenly Father and say: "Here's our business. We're going to do it together. Please illuminate for us how we can make it work while Gregorio serves as bishop."

Heavenly Father answered. Now, after years of hardly seeing each other, we're adjusting to *always* being together. Sometimes Elen jokingly says, "Don't you have some bishopric interviews to do? Come back in four hours!"

Here in Coquimbo, we have learned to have faith and live the gospel as a family, and we have been blessed. We moved to a city we did not know to serve people we had not met, and we have seen miracles we did not expect. ■

Ministering with Chicken Pot Pies

By Jacquie Fleming, Alberta, Canada

My friends helped me feel my Heavenly Father's love when I needed to feel it the most.

When my mom died unexpectedly at age 61, I felt completely blindsided. She was my source of love, gentleness, support, strength, and laughter. I felt that I had been robbed of my mother and that my three children had been robbed of their grandmother. I even felt anger toward Heavenly Father. How could He do this to us?

For a while, I would wake up in the middle of the night unable to fall back asleep. One morning, I woke up at 3:00 a.m. Hoping to distract myself from life without my mother, I looked on my phone and found a cooking video on my newsfeed. It was comfort food in all its glory: chicken pot pie. I thought how amazing it would be to have a chicken pot pie, but I didn't feel up to preparing any food for my family other than pouring milk into a bowl of cereal. For now, I would have to do without any comfort food, or so I thought.

Within one day of each other, two friends brought me chicken pot pies. I broke down and cried. I was incredibly touched by their kindness. I knew this wasn't a coincidence. It reaffirmed to me that God was mindful of me, that He loved me, and that He cared about my

seemingly insignificant desire for a chicken pot pie even when I had been angry with Him. I needed this reminder so much.

I'm grateful for those friends who brought me chicken pot pies. They ministered to me in ways they couldn't have imagined. They helped me feel my Heavenly Father's love when I needed to feel it the most.

This experience taught me the importance of recognizing and following through on promptings from the Holy Ghost. They very well could be the answer to a prayer by someone who is struggling.

We shouldn't let our insecurities or doubts get in the way of ministering to others. May we always strive to be an instrument in the Lord's hands and share His love with others. ■





Alma 39–42

JULY 27–AUGUST 2

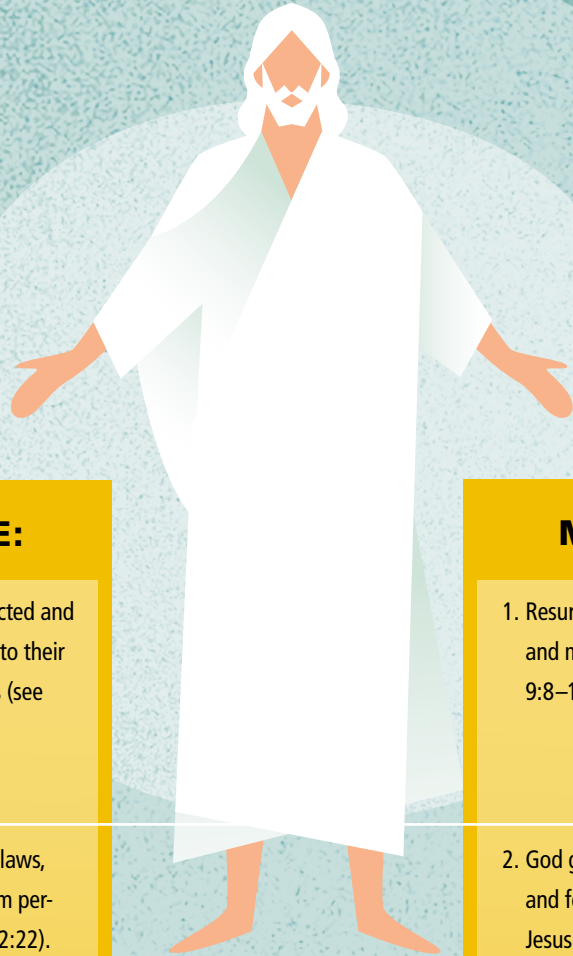
It might seem like justice and mercy are at odds with each other, but both work together in God's plan.



DISCUSSION

What do the words *justice* and *mercy* mean to you? Why are justice and mercy both necessary in God's eternal plan of happiness? How have you experienced the mercy of Jesus Christ in your life?

How is God both just and merciful?



JUSTICE:

1. All will be resurrected and judged according to their works and desires (see Alma 41:2–3).
2. God has given us laws, and He obeys them perfectly (see Alma 42:22).
3. We are not compelled to repent, but we will face the consequences of our deeds if we do not repent (see Alma 42:27).

MERCY:

1. Resurrection is both just and merciful (see 2 Nephi 9:8–15).
2. God grants us repentance and forgiveness through Jesus Christ and His Atonement (see Alma 42:22–23).
3. We can choose to come unto Christ to be redeemed (see Alma 42:27).

Jesus Christ “atone-
eth for the sins of the
world, to bring about
the plan of mercy, to
appease the demands
of justice, that God
might be a perfect, just
God, and a merciful
God also” (Alma 42:15).



Alma 43–52

AUGUST 3–9

Captain Moroni and Amalickiah focused their lives on different things. While “Amalickiah had . . . been obtaining power by fraud and deceit, Moroni . . . had been preparing the minds of the people to be faithful unto the Lord their God” (Alma 48:7).

What can we learn from the differences between Moroni and Amalickiah?

DISCUSSION

Moroni’s focus was “inspired by a better cause” (Alma 43:45). Where do you place the focus in *your* life?

What other examples can you find in the Book of Mormon of people defending righteous causes? How can their examples help you?



Where is your focus?

MORONI:

1. Was “appointed by the chief judges and the voice of the people” (Alma 46:34).
2. Made his beliefs known “with a loud voice” and invited others to do good (see Alma 46:19–20). His heart swelled “with thanksgiving to his God” (Alma 48:12).
3. Swore an oath to defend his people, rights, country, and religion but did not glory in bloodshed (see Alma 48:13, 16).
4. Found joy in liberty (see Alma 48:11), and his heart gloried in “preserving his people” (Alma 48:16).

AMALICKIAH:

1. Sought to dethrone the king of the Lamanites and make himself king (see Alma 47:8).
2. Was a “subtle man to do evil” and secretly “laid [his] plan in his heart” (Alma 47:4). He also cursed God (see Alma 49:27).
3. Stirred the Lamanites to anger to cause a war and swore an oath to drink Moroni’s blood (see Alma 47:1; 49:27).
4. Fought to place others in bondage (see Alma 49:26) and “did care not for the blood of his people” (Alma 49:10).





Alma 53–63

AUGUST 10–16

How can youth build up the kingdom of God?

Helaman was inspired by the powerful faith of his stripling sons. Consider how their actions gave them spiritual protection (see Alma 57:25–27) and how following their example can help you build up the kingdom of God.

DISCUSSION

How can you defend the gospel and the teachings of Christ in your own community? How can you help others do the same?

“Like Helaman’s 2,000 stripling warriors, you also are the spirit sons [and daughters] of God, and you too can be endowed with power to build up and defend His kingdom.”

President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Greatest Generation of Missionaries,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2002, 47.

Choose Whom to Follow

These youth chose their leader—the prophet Helaman (see Alma 53:19). How can you choose the prophet as your leader?

Be True at All Times

These youth “were true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted” (Alma 53:20). How can you be truer to your responsibilities?

Trust in the Teachings of Righteous Parents

These youth “had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them” (Alma 56:47). How can you likewise teach your children to have faith?

Exercise Faith

These youth were few in number and had little battle experience. Nevertheless, they had faith: “God is with us, and he will not suffer that we should fall; . . . let us go forth” (Alma 56:46). How can you “go forth” in faith?





Helaman 1–6

AUGUST 17–23

Helaman gave his sons the names Nephi and Lehi so that they would remember the good works of the Nephi and Lehi who came before them.

In Helaman chapter 5, Helaman uses the word *remember* 11 times.

DISCUSSION

The Book of Mormon includes over 200 references to remembering. As you read, consider looking for the things we are counseled to remember. Most importantly, we should remember that redemption comes through the Lord Jesus Christ. What can you do to better remember the Savior?

Nephi and Lehi “did remember [Helaman’s] words; and therefore they went forth, keeping the commandments of God” (Helaman 5:14).

Do you remember to remember?

Helaman counseled his sons to remember:

► That Christ would come to redeem people from their sins (see Helaman 5:9–11).

► To look to the righteous examples of their ancestors (see Helaman 5:6).

► To build their foundation on Jesus Christ (see Helaman 5:12).

► To “keep the commandments of God” (Helaman 5:6).

► That it is only through the Atonement of Jesus Christ that we can be saved (see Helaman 5:9).



Area Presidency Assignments

The First Presidency has announced the following Area Presidency assignments, to be effective August 1, 2020.

Africa Central



Matthew L. Carpenter
First Counselor



Joseph W. Sitati
President



Thierry K. Mutombo
Second Counselor

Africa South



Edward Dube
First Counselor



S. Mark Palmer
President



Ciro Schmeil
Second Counselor

Africa West



Larry S. Kacher
First Counselor



Hugo E. Martinez
President



Jörg Klebingat
Second Counselor

Asia



Peter F. Meurs
First Counselor



David F. Evans
President



David P. Homer
Second Counselor

Asia North



L. Todd Budge
First Counselor



Takashi Wada
President



James R. Rasband
Second Counselor

Brazil



Joaquin E. Costa
First Counselor



Adilson de Paula Parrella
President



Joni L. Koch
Second Counselor

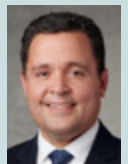
Caribbean



Eduardo Gavarret
First Counselor



Jose L. Alonso
President



Jorge M. Alvarado
Second Counselor

Central America



Taylor G. Godoy
First Counselor



Brian K. Taylor
President



Alan R. Walker
Second Counselor

Europe



Massimo De Feo
First Counselor



Gary B. Sabin
President



Erich W. Kopischke
Second Counselor

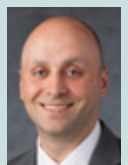
Europe East



Hans T. Boom
First Counselor



Christoffel Golden
President



Kyrlo Pokhylo*
Second Counselor

Mexico



John C.
Pingree Jr.
First
Counselor



Rafael E.
Pino
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Second
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Middle East/Africa North



Randy D.
Funk
First
Counselor



Anthony D.
Perkins
President



Jeffrey H.
Singer*
Second
Counselor

Administered from Church
headquarters

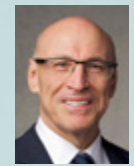
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Chi Hong
(Sam)
Wong
First
Counselor



S. Gifford
Nielsen
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Arnulfo
Valenzuela
Second
Counselor

North America Northeast



W. Mark
Bassett
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Randall K.
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McCune
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Vern P.
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Martino
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Aidukaitis
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González
Second
Counselor

* Area Seventy

Young Adults

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Digital Only

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By Haley S.

Bridling Your Passions: How to Reconcile Sexual Thoughts and Feelings with the Lord's Expectation

By *Liahona* staff and Family Services

How the Savior's Healing Power Applies to Repenting from Sexual Sin

By Richard Ostler

Find these articles and more:

- At Liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org
- In **YA Weekly** (under the Young Adults section in the Gospel Library)

Learning to See Sexuality as a Sacred Gift

As members of the Church, we're taught that sexual intimacy within marriage is a wonderful part of the gospel plan. It can be a sacred, beautiful, joyful part of our lives that leads to greater unity with our spouse and God. But what about sexual feelings before marriage? Our sexual natures don't begin at marriage—**God has given us sexual feelings** that are a healthy and important aspect of being human. Yet sometimes our misunderstandings about those sexual feelings and nature cause us to feel bad, ashamed, or sinful.

Some of us weren't taught about the **positive aspects of sexuality**—only the negative consequences of violating the law of chastity. Or maybe we weren't taught anything about sexual purity at all. And with so much of what we learn about sexuality coming from media, those skewed messages, combined with a lack of understanding about God's view of sexuality, can contribute to unhealthy relationships, pornography use, and abusing others' agency, as in sexual assault. So **how can we learn to see sexuality as a sacred gift**, an essential part of our God-given nature? And how can we manage our sexuality in harmony with its ultimate purpose in God's eternal plan?

With these questions in mind, we've put together this month's section to help you **increase your understanding of God's view** of appropriate sexuality. We hope that with this positive view, you will feel more determined to live the law of chastity, **find purpose and hope** in your individual circumstances, be prepared to have a strong, fulfilling marriage, and invite the Savior's peace into your life. Through your efforts to keep God's commandments regarding sexuality, your "confidence [shall] wax strong in the presence of God" (Doctrine and Covenants 121:45).

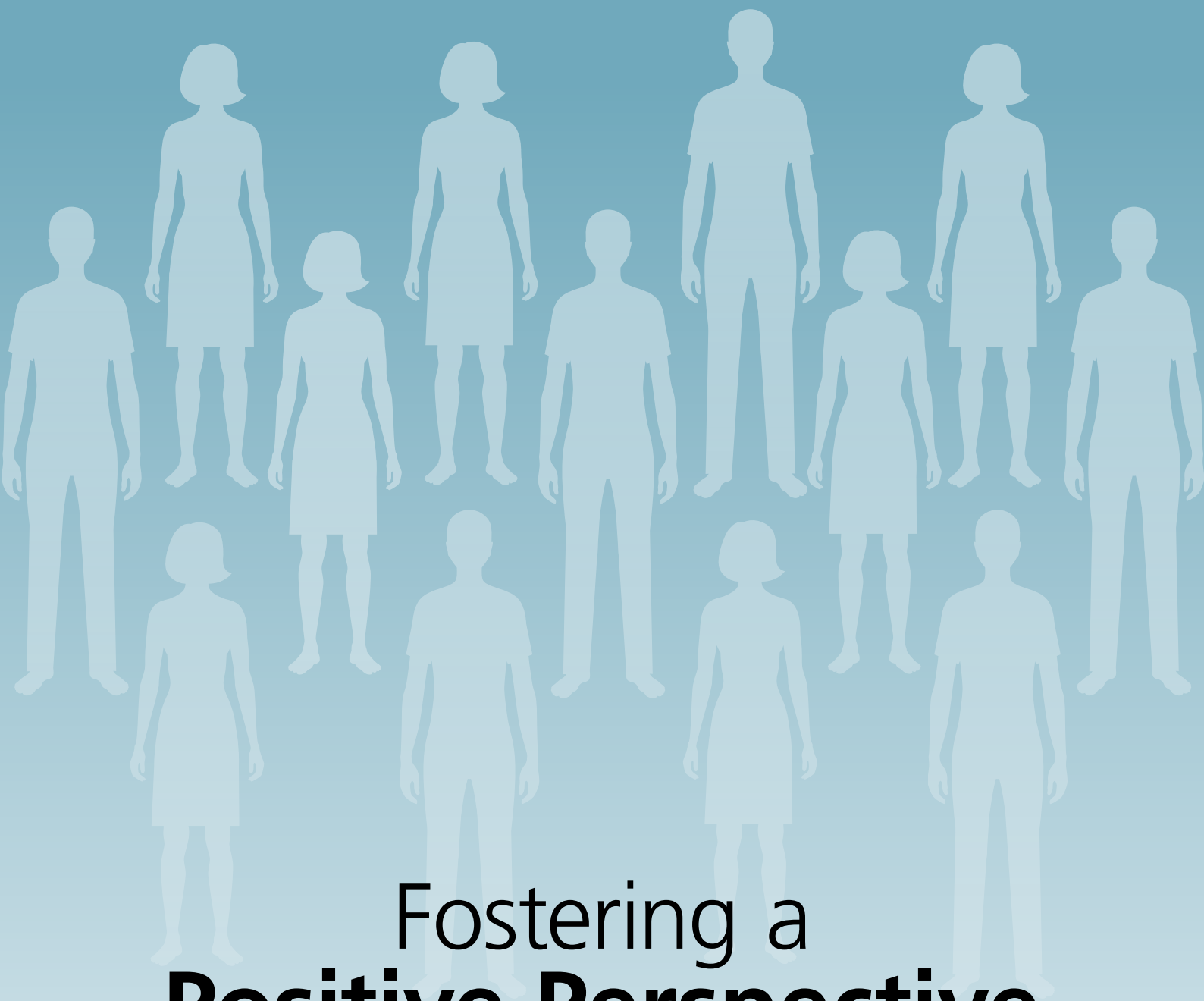
All our best,

Liahona young adult section staff

Share Your Story

Do you have an experience to share? Or do you want to see articles about certain topics? If so, we want to hear from you! You can submit your articles or your feedback at Liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.





Fostering a **Positive Perspective of Sexuality**

God has blessed us with divine, appropriate sexual feelings for a reason. As we better understand those feelings as single members of the Church, we will find greater peace and hope.

By Liahona staff

Editors' note: This article is part of a series about having a positive view of sexuality, sexual intimacy, and the law of chastity in the August 2020 Liahona. The term sexuality means different things to different people, but in this context, we are talking specifically about our sexual feelings and identity.

So much of the world today seems to be very confused regarding a healthy, positive understanding of sexuality.¹ And let's be honest, in some ways, some of us young adult members of the Church are too. So let's clear some things up.

First off, we should know where we as Latter-day Saints stand on our view of sexuality. Many years ago, Elder Parley P. Pratt (1807–57) taught: “Our natural affections are planted in us by the Spirit of God, for a wise purpose; and they are the very main-springs of life and happiness—they are the cement of all virtuous and heavenly society—they are the essence of charity, or love; . . .

“There is not a more pure and holy principle in existence. . . .

“The fact is, God . . . planted in [our] bosoms those affections which are calculated to promote [our] happiness and union.”²

And President John Taylor (1808–87) also explained: “We bring it [a natural desire] into the world with us, but that, like everything else, has to be sanctified. . . . A proper exercise of our functions leads to life, happiness, and exaltation in this world and the world to come.”³

Simply put: God created us to be able to have sexual feelings. It's part of who we are. And it can be a good, wonderful, joyful part of life—as long as we learn to use and channel them in ways He would approve of. As we manage those feelings in appropriate ways throughout our lives, the blessings we receive are incredible.

Through this gift, we have the potential to help fulfill Heavenly Father's plan and become like our heavenly parents.⁴ Sadly, in our world today, Satan has led so many to have a distorted view of appropriate, God-given sexuality—He wants us to misuse or misunderstand it and its sacred nature. He sometimes makes us confused about the difference between sacred and secret, causing us to feel ashamed of having appropriate sexual feelings, to let curiosity lead to things like pornography, or to use our own or others' bodies in ways that are outside the bounds He has set. But in reality, sexuality—used in the ways God intended—is a divine gift. If we have negative feelings about our sexuality, we just might need to understand it better.

How can I cultivate a positive view of sexuality?

So if our view of sexuality is distorted, how can we instead view our God-given innate sexuality in a positive light and learn to understand and channel our feelings properly, as we strive to become like the Savior? How can we be comfortable with who we are and accept the God-given sexual feelings we were created with? Here are some suggestions that can help:

1

Understand that everyone is both a spiritual and a physical being

You might think of sexuality as a purely physical thing, but it also has a lot to do with our minds and thoughts. Our thoughts affect our actions, and the way we use our body affects our spiritual selves as well. President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015) taught, “Our spirit and our body are combined in such a way that our body becomes an instrument of our mind and the foundation of our character.”⁵

When you express it within the bounds of the law of chastity, our innate sexuality isn’t an impediment to spirituality. If you do have a skewed idea of sexuality as a negative thing, that is likely to carry over into your marriage. But Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “Sexual union [within marriage] is . . . a union not only of a man and a woman but very much the union of that man and woman with God. . . . *You will never be more like God at any other time in this life than when you are expressing that particular power.*”⁶ How could understanding that change your current perspective about sexuality or sexual intimacy—even while you’re single?

2

Learn about your body

If you haven’t already, learn about human anatomy. The more you understand the natural process of your body’s development, the more you’ll understand that appropriate sexual feelings are a normal part of life. Learning about human anatomy, calling the body parts by their name, and understanding their sexual and physical

functions helps to decrease the taboo nature of these parts. At the same time, we should also “eliminate degrading, vulgar, and sexually explicit words, jokes, and themes from [our] conversations.”⁷ As body parts and their purposes are understood, we become less susceptible to seeing them solely in a sexual context.

President Russell M. Nelson taught: “Each organ of your body is a wondrous gift from God”⁸—and obviously that includes sexual organs. They were created for a wise purpose, and it’s up to us to learn to employ them in the ways the Lord would want.

3

Don’t be afraid or ashamed

Learning more about your body will help you understand how sexual feelings are a normal aspect of our bodies. And while we are all trying to overcome the “natural man” in this life (see Mosiah 3:19), simply having appropriate sexual feelings isn’t something to be ashamed of. It is only a sin when you act on them inappropriately or entertain inappropriate or lustful thoughts. We don’t feel ashamed or guilty for feeling hungry! Just maybe when we gorge on our favorite food in response to our hunger or start obsessing over hunger. Allow yourself to recognize that appropriate sexual feelings and thoughts are part of our God-given nature and serve a useful purpose in the right place and time.

If you experience same-sex attraction, you might feel scared or ashamed of your feelings, but God doesn’t want you to feel this way. We can live a fulfilling life within the bounds that He has set for our benefit. We each have a unique journey in mortality, and if we will love Him and keep His commandments, there is no circumstance that Heavenly Father cannot turn to our eternal good (see Romans 8:28; John 14:15; Doctrine and Covenants 90:24). With His help, we can learn and grow and become like Him.

4

Create meaningful connections

Physical feelings are only part of sexuality. One of the real needs behind appropriate sexual feelings is connection. As humans, we crave closeness. Connecting with others through deep friendship, bonding, appropriate touch, love, and affection can help you see others as they truly are and express sexuality appropriately while still keeping the law of chastity.

Elder Marlin K. Jensen, emeritus General Authority Seventy, said: “The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that ‘friendship is one of the grand fundamental principles of [our religion].’ That thought ought to inspire and motivate all of us because I feel that friendship is a fundamental need of our world. I think in all of us there is a profound longing for friendship, a deep yearning for the satisfaction and security that close and lasting relationships can give.”⁹

5

Think about your own body as divine (because it is!)

Our bodies are amazing blessings from God. And yet so many of us often fall into the trap of criticizing our bodies. If we could remember how much bodies meant to us before we had them (and how much they’ll mean to us after we die [see Doctrine and Covenants 138:17, 50]), then we might feel more gratitude and less contempt for these amazing gifts.

President Nelson taught: “Your physical body is a magnificent creation of God. It is His temple as well as yours and must be treated with reverence. . . . A study of your body attests to its divine design.”¹⁰ And knowing how divine our bodies truly are will influence our actions for the better. President Nelson also explained: “When we truly know our divine nature, . . . we will focus our eyes on sights, our ears on sounds, and our minds on thoughts that are a credit to our physical creation as a temple of God. In daily prayer, we

will gratefully acknowledge Him as our Creator and thank Him for the magnificence of our own physical temple. We will care for it and cherish it as our own personal gift from God.”¹¹

Don’t forget that this is a lifelong journey

Understanding and cultivating a positive, healthy sense of appropriate sexuality isn’t something you start working on after marriage or something that you master overnight. It’s a lifelong journey—one that will bless you in many ways in your mortal and eternal life. And if your journey has included ups and downs, know that the healing and sustaining power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ is available to all who reach for Him (see Mosiah 4:1–3, 10–13).

Ultimately, whatever our circumstances or experiences, as we follow the example of our Savior, God will fulfill all His promised blessings to us, and we will realize that we each have a part to play in His plan (see Doctrine and Covenants 59:23). With His help, we will succeed in all our efforts to achieve a positive view of sexuality. ■

For three additional suggestions on cultivating a positive view of sexuality—including using media that portrays healthy relationships, treating everyone as children of God, and remembering your true identity—read the digital version of this article at liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

NOTES

1. The Apostle Paul saw that people today would be “led away with divers lusts” (2 Timothy 3:6).
2. *Writings of Parley Parker Pratt* (1952), 52–53.
3. John Taylor, *The Gospel Kingdom*, sel. G. Homer Durham (1943), 61.
4. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Apostasy and Restoration,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 84; see also “Sexual Purity,” in *For the Strength of Youth* (booklet, 2011), 35; Dale G. Renlund and Ruth Lybbert Renlund, “The Divine Purposes of Sexual Intimacy,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2020, x–x; *Liahona*, Aug. 2020, 12–17.
5. Boyd K. Packer, “The Instrument of Your Mind and the Foundation of Your Character,” *Brigham Young University 2002–2003 Speeches* (2003), 2; see also M. Russell Ballard, “Giving Our Spirits Control over Our Bodies,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2019, 106–9.
6. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Of Souls, Symbols, and Sacraments” (Brigham Young University devotional, Jan. 12, 1988), 8, speeches.byu.edu; emphasis in original.
7. *Chastity* (missionary lesson pamphlet, 2007), 11.
8. Russell M. Nelson, “Your Body: A Magnificent Gift to Cherish,” *New Era*, Aug. 2019, 4; *Liahona*, Aug. 2019, 52.
9. Marlin K. Jensen, “Friendship: A Gospel Principle,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 64.
10. Russell M. Nelson, “Your Body: A Magnificent Gift to Cherish,” *New Era*, 4; *Liahona*, 52.
11. Russell M. Nelson, “Your Body: A Magnificent Gift to Cherish,” *New Era*, 6; *Liahona*, 54.

How I Learned to Understand God's View of Sexuality

Growing up, I didn't know how to handle sexual feelings, which led me down the wrong paths, but learning truths about sexuality and chastity changed my life for the better.

By Emma T.

I sank into my chair in shame as the teacher introduced the lesson on chastity. "Now, I know you girls don't have trouble with the law of chastity . . .," she started off. Little did she—or anyone else—know that it was something I had struggled with as a young woman.

Lessons in church made me feel that sexual feelings were only appropriate within marriage and that sexual feelings outside of marriage were bad. I felt ashamed, weak, and alone, which led me to resent the whole topic completely.

Growing up in the Church, I used to think that talking about sex—even in appropriate ways—or acknowledging sexual thoughts and feelings was taboo or wrong unless you were married. My thoughts were skewed to think that any curiosity or question about sexuality or even chastity should be repressed because it didn't follow God's plan. And because I thought my questions were too shameful to discuss with anyone, I looked for answers from sources that did not reflect sexuality the way Heavenly Father intends.

Stuck in Shame

I struggled with my feelings and behaviors for years. I knew they were wrong, but I didn't know who I could turn to for help. I carried the weight of sins and shame with me every day, but I still tried to do everything else right. I seemed to be stuck in an "in-between zone"—with half of me in the world and the other half in the gospel.

I wanted more than anything to put my whole self in the gospel. So I studied my scriptures, I prayed, I participated in Church activities, and I fulfilled my callings. The gospel seemed to be the only thing that brought me relief.

As I gradually learned more and came closer to the Savior, my desire to fully live the law of chastity grew stronger. After a lot of pondering and praying, I finally decided to talk with my bishop about my struggles.

Feeling the Savior's Healing Power

As I left my bishop's office, that weight I had carried on my shoulders for so many years seemed to disappear. I cried with relief. I already felt the Savior's healing power working in my life. Meetings with my bishop helped me, through the repentance process, to understand that my feelings were normal and that I wasn't alone in struggling with chastity. I learned there are others—like me—who have suffered in silence because of shame, fear, and misunderstanding.

My bishop helped me in the repentance process itself, but a friend of mine also made a big difference in how I felt about my challenge. He was a great example to me.



The weight I had carried on my shoulders for so many years seemed to disappear. I already felt the Savior's healing power.

One day he shared his past struggles with pornography. I was stunned—I never would have guessed we had similar struggles. I wrote him a letter about my experience in repenting for the same challenges and how helpful it was to know that I was not alone. At church on Sunday, he hugged me and told me he was proud of me for working with the bishop and that I would never be alone. He helped me feel the Savior's love more strongly.

Since then, I have been able to empathize with and encourage friends who've had similar struggles to help them understand the law of chastity more fully.

Ultimately, knowing that I wasn't alone, feeling love and understanding from my bishop and the Savior, and learning about the eternal importance of chastity helped me heal.

I know now that I had been so wrong. Both chastity *and* appropriate sexuality are part of God's plan of happiness. Sexual feelings are a normal part of mortality and can be wonderful when we learn to act on them appropriately.

Looking back, I feel sad that I had never felt safe enough to discuss the law of chastity with anybody before I talked to my bishop. I should have known that there's no shame in having questions about chastity or sexuality and that it's important to talk about them respectfully with the right people.

Eternal Truths Can Guide You

Because of my experiences, I can assure anyone who may be struggling with the law of chastity that your heart can be changed. There is hope,

healing, and eternal truths that can guide you. I've learned that the way the world views sexuality compared to how Heavenly Father views it is drastically different.

I'm thankful for the lessons I've learned. I now have a stronger testimony of the Lord's law of chastity, the importance of sexuality in our lives, and most importantly, the Savior's love and healing power. ■

Editors' note: This article is part of a series about having a positive view of sexuality, sexual intimacy, and the law of chastity in the August 2020 Liahona. The term sexuality means different things to different people, but in this context, we are talking specifically about our sexual feelings and identity.



Until recently,

football, school, and church had always been things that I dealt with separately and tried to balance. After the football season, we were having player meetings with my football coach. He talked to me about leadership and how I could be a better leader. He said something interesting I never expected.

He said, “So I know you’re planning on serving a mission. You’re religious, and you’re OK with talking about God. I want you to talk about God with the other players. That’s why I coach—to draw people closer to God. I want to see people’s lives change. I think you’re one of the best players on the team to do this. When you have a chance, why don’t you talk to someone about God? Some people may reject it, but it may change someone’s life. You never know.”

I had never really connected sports and school and religion. But this conversation connected them for me and got me excited and more ready to share the gospel with others. It allowed me to realize that you can be the same person in football and school and at early-morning seminary in someone’s home and still be successful. Now that I’ve connected them it has made things easier.

This has helped me prepare for a mission. I’m getting more used to talking to people about God, sharing the gospel, and bearing my testimony.

JOSEPH S., 17, Louisiana, USA

YOUTH

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PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL MORRIS



Talking to Your Parents about Sex

Yes, it can be awkward. But your parents are a better source than the internet or your friends.

By Derek Willis Hagey, PhD

Family Services

and Denya Palmer

Welfare and Self-Reliance Services

It's OK to have questions about sexuality. And it's OK to talk to your parents about those questions. You might be surprised about how much they can relate to you and your questions and experiences.

When it comes to sex, what you'll encounter on the internet, in media, and from friends and classmates may be confusing—in terms of both information and morality. Your parents can be the best source of trustworthy and reliable answers about sexuality. They want what's best for you. Chances are, they'll be happy you want to talk to them about this.¹

If you and your parents have never talked about sex, here are some tips:

Spiritual and Mental Preparation



- **Pray.** Ask Heavenly Father to help you know what to say to bring up the topic with your parents.
- **Be brave.** Whether or not you've made a mistake, don't hesitate to ask your parents to help you. They care about you and want the best for you.
- **Remember that your parents were once your age.** They had to navigate growing up too. They will be able to understand and relate to your experience.
- **Think positively about how your parents might react.** Think of a time when they helped you in the past. Imagine the conversation going well.



Practical Preparation

- **Decide which parent you want to talk to.** While some youth find it easy to talk to both parents together, some are more comfortable talking to one parent alone first. This is normal, especially with a topic like sexuality.
- **Schedule a time to talk.** Ask your parents to set aside a time to have a conversation. This gives you both time to prepare.
- **Make a list of things you want your parents to know and questions you have.** Having a list of thoughts or concerns can help you remember what you want to talk about. And if there is something you don't cover, ask them to have another conversation.
- **Practice starting the conversation.** Maybe you want to start by asking a question. Or maybe you want to start by asking your parents to just listen until you're ready for them to respond. (See the "Conversation Starters" sidebar.)
- **Talk with your parents about other topics in ordinary situations.** Practice opening up about your normal day-to-day life and activities. You can do this anytime you are together, such as at meal-times or bedtime.

Conversation Starters

Here are some things you can say to start a conversation:

- "I have some questions. It's kind of awkward to talk about, but can we talk about sex?"
- "How did you learn about sex when you were my age?"
- "I heard/saw something that confused me the other day. Can we talk about it?"
- "Could we schedule a time to talk?"
- "Can I talk to you about something? I think I made a mistake, and I want help fixing it."



After You've Started Talking



- **Talk about the law of chastity.** It can be helpful to ask your parents about their understanding of the law of chastity. If you have broken the law of chastity, your parents can be a source of support as you repent and connect with the Savior. Ask your parents about their experience with finding joy through repentance.
- **Be patient with them.** Your parents might feel a little uncomfortable talking with you about sexuality at first too. But they want to help you, and it will get easier as you continue to talk.
- **Don't be afraid to have frequent conversations with your parents.** As time goes on, you might have more questions. This doesn't have to be a one-time thing.

You Can Do This

At first it might be awkward to talk with your parents or another trusted adult. Remember, your heavenly parents love you and want you to prepare to develop a healthy relationship as an adult. Part of your preparation includes understanding healthy, appropriate sexuality and learning how to communicate about it now. Heavenly Father can help you talk to your parents about sex and other difficult topics as you reach out to Him. ■

NOTE

1. There may be valid reasons why you feel you can't talk to either of your parents. In this case, try talking to another trusted adult such as a Church leader.

For more about sexuality and how it fits within God's plan, see page 42.



By Elder
Richard J. Maynes
Of the Seventy

A Foundation for Your Future

During your teenage years, you are developing many goals you would like to accomplish in your life. These goals probably include a mission, education, temple marriage, successful careers, and, of course, your safe return to your Heavenly Father's presence in the celestial kingdom.

One of the great challenges you will face in reaching these goals is successfully connecting them to your everyday life. This can be difficult because your time is jammed so full of worldly stuff. You may be involved with both school and activities such as music, dance, sports, or various clubs. Many of you may work a job as well. Mixed in with this hectic schedule are weekend activities such as games, dances, ward activities, and parties. Not only that, but everywhere you go you're bombarded with temptation from peers, social media, movies, video games, and music. Wow! What an adventure!

The real trick in balancing all these things is to keep the eternal big picture in mind. For example: How will your activity this Friday night affect what's going to happen 2, 5, or 10 years from now? You might think that Friday night doesn't have much to do with 2 years from now, but it could, depending on where you are and what you're doing. If you want to reach your potential in the future and become the person the Lord wants you to be, you had better keep the eternal big picture in mind and work on it today.

Your Foundation in an Upside-Down World

The prophet Isaiah saw our day and warned that it would be a day turned upside down. He prophesied: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

"Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!" (Isaiah 5:20–21).

As you grow up in this upside-down world, you have quite a challenge

confronting the various pressures of modern-day life. How will you make it through your teenage years spiritually prepared for your future?

It is important for you to recognize that the foundation of your future, both temporally and spiritually, is being built today. If your foundation is fractured with sin and goes unrepaired, then the structure of your life will be built upon a weakened foundation. Your future will be less secure and certainly more stressful.

One of the great purposes of the gospel of Jesus Christ is to teach us of our eternal



As you grow up in this upside-down world, you have quite a challenge.



The foundation of your future is being built today.

potential. One purpose of the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ is to help us reach that potential. We are taught, "It is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation." Our Savior, Jesus Christ, "is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall" (Helaman 5:12).

Small Daily Acts Make a Big Difference

I have yet to meet a businessperson, educator, artist, or athlete who has attained a high level of excellence who has not successfully connected the vision of their future to their everyday life. A goal or

vision that is not connected to everyday life by daily action will most likely become an unrealized dream.

For example: Suppose you have a test coming up in geometry. One of your goals is to get a good grade in that class, so how do you go about reaching that goal? Do you wait until the last minute and cram the night before the test? This approach is filled with risk. Instead of truly understanding the material and being totally prepared and confident about the subject, you'll walk into the classroom a little nervous, hoping the teacher will ask only questions you happen to know the answers to. (I'm sure I'm not the only one who has experienced this uneasy feeling!)





Or do you set aside a little time every day to calmly study the subject in-depth? This approach will give you the necessary time to properly understand the material, and you'll have plenty of time to ask the teacher for help if confusion arises. This will result in a deeper understanding of the material and increased self-confidence going into the test.

To achieve any goal—especially celestial goals—continual daily dedication is the answer. Can you protect yourself against the pressures and evils of the world by just spending two hours at church on Sunday? Not likely. It is very difficult to cram for a mission, and it is equally difficult to cram for a temple marriage. Don't take the risk.

You can't cram for a mission or a temple marriage.

Be wise. Just as in your studies, a focused daily effort is the only sure way to come out successful. Prepare yourself daily. Study the scriptures. Communicate with your Heavenly Father in prayer. Attend seminary. Keep yourself clean and prepared. As you do so, you will be at peace, your conscience will be clean, your self-confidence high, and you will know in your heart that your future will be bright and wonderful.

Carry On with the Lord's Help

The Lord wants you to succeed, and He will be with you. He will help you and support and sustain you in your time of need if you are true to His plan. If you stay close to Him on a daily basis, He will stay close to you, and you will reap untold blessings in every aspect of your life, especially the most important—the spiritual.

It will ultimately be your love of the Lord that will help you commit and then stay true to your celestial goals. I know that the Lord lives and that His desire and hope for us all is a celestial future. ■

Adapted from an October 1997 general conference address.

How do you know that Heavenly Father has forgiven you?



"When we choose to repent, we choose to change! We allow the Savior to transform us into the best version of ourselves. We choose to grow spiritually and receive joy—the joy of redemption in Him."

President Russell M. Nelson, "We Can Do Better and Be Better," April 2019 general conference



Feeling the Spirit

I know I've been forgiven whenever I am able to feel the Spirit. Especially as a missionary, it's always

important to have the Spirit in our lives. If we're living righteously, we'll always have the Spirit with us, and He'll help us know our standing with God.

Elder Bakker, age 23, Brazil Vitória Mission



Reassurance That Christ Is with Me

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus Christ endured all of the pains and

sins of the world so we could be forgiven of our sins and one day be worthy to enter the celestial kingdom. I feel forgiven when I feel a reassurance that Christ is with me and is touching me spiritually.

Alex H., age 15, Idaho, USA

Responses may be edited for length or clarity. Published responses are intended for help and perspective, not as official pronouncements of Church doctrine.



Love and Happiness

I love the gift of repentance because I often feel an overwhelming sense of guilt and heartache whenever I

make a mistake. When I take the time to kneel down and ask my Heavenly Father for forgiveness with sincere intent, I am overcome with a strong feeling of love, peace, and happiness! I no longer feel alone, and that is how I know Heavenly Father has forgiven me.

Brynlee H., age 17, Utah, USA

Peace in My Heart

Feeling peace in my heart is how I recognize I've been forgiven. I will always remember that I've done something wrong, but this helps me learn not to do it again. The Lord has made us a wonderful promise: "Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more" (Doctrine and Covenants 58:42).

David E., age 19, Chihuahua, Mexico

What Do You Think?

"How can I use the gospel to help me overcome depression?"

Submit your answer and, if desired, a high-resolution photograph by September 15, 2020, at liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org (click "Submit an Article or Feedback").



How can I gain a deeper testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith's First Vision?

This year, 2020, is the bicentennial of Joseph Smith's First Vision. To deepen your testimony of this important event, you might:

- Read again Joseph Smith's account of the First Vision in Joseph Smith—History 1:1–26.
- Ponder questions such as "How would my life be different if my knowledge gained from the Book of Mormon were suddenly taken away?" or "How have the events that followed the First Vision made a difference for me and my loved ones?" (see Russell M. Nelson, "Closing Remarks," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2019, 122).
- Read about Joseph Smith's other reports of the First Vision (see "First Vision Accounts," Gospel Topics, topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
- Study the new proclamation on the Restoration and have its message written in your heart (see Russell M. Nelson, "Hear Him," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 91–92).
- Study talks from the April 2020 general conference, which commemorated the 200th anniversary of the First Vision.
- Bear testimony of the First Vision to someone.
- Pray for help in deepening your testimony of the First Vision. Through the Spirit, Heavenly Father will give you personalized counsel.

ELITE ATHLETES and the Gospel

Four elite athletes who are members of the Church talk about how the gospel has helped them not only in their sport but also in their lives.

Casey Patterson: Beach Volleyball

I've never forgotten this line from a conference talk: "Hard work . . . involves going after it 'with all your heart, might, mind and strength' (Doctrine and Covenants 4:2). That alone is the difference between the average and the excellent" (F. David Stanley, "The Principle of Work," April 1993 general conference).

In my sport I focus on being resilient and having a positive attitude. It's easy to look at the kid who can jump higher than you or perform better, but getting a good grasp of your attitude is what really matters. Working hard is the main thing that controls your destiny. It's important to compare yourself to yourself—nobody else.



About Casey:

- Has been playing volleyball for nearly 25 years.
- Has three younger sisters.
- Represents USA.
- Interesting fact: His mom wouldn't let him grow a mohawk until he'd served a mission and gotten married.

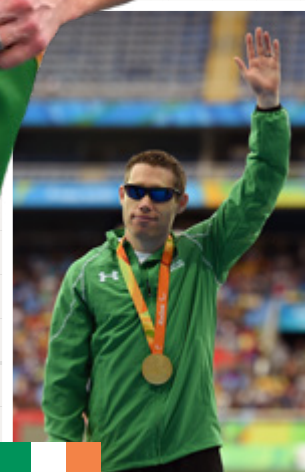
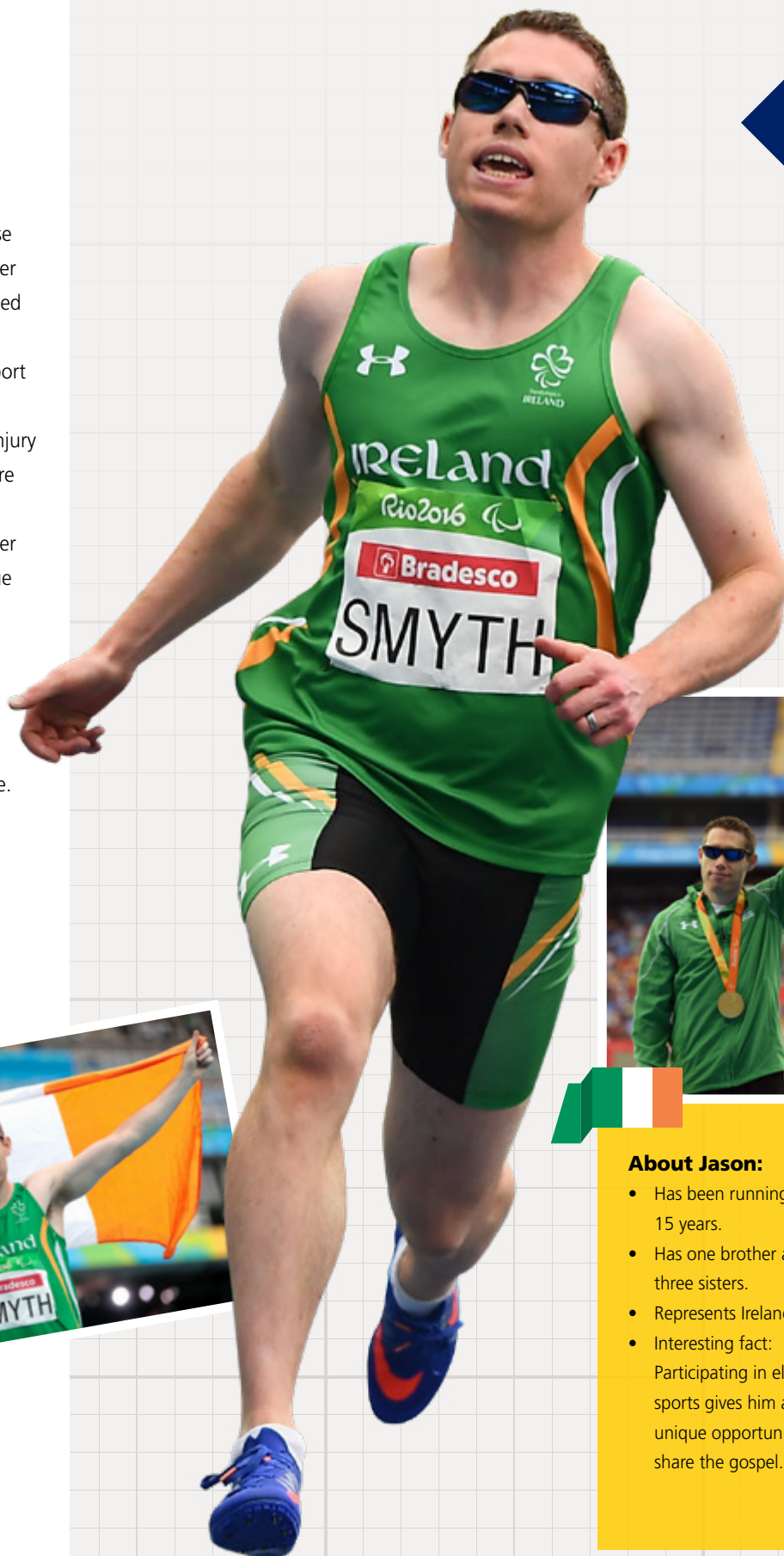


Jason Smyth:

Track and Field

I was diagnosed with an eye disease when I was eight years old, and over the years my vision has been reduced to less than 10 percent. But I have had many blessings through the sport of running and competing in the Paralympics. A few years ago, an injury resulted in surgery, and I wasn't sure I would be able to compete again. But I was blessed by Heavenly Father to heal well and be able to continue competing.

I know that Heavenly Father loves me and wants what is best for me, and that gives me comfort and reassurance that what happens is what's best for me.



About Jason:

- Has been running for 15 years.
- Has one brother and three sisters.
- Represents Ireland.
- Interesting fact: Participating in elite sports gives him a unique opportunity to share the gospel.

Mary Lake: Volleyball

Growing up, a lot of girls struggle with the adversary targeting their self-worth. The world places an emphasis on what we look like, and if you're an athlete, you're being watched a lot. I felt a lot of anxiety playing volleyball at Brigham Young University. Lots of eyes were on me, and it brought up insecurities. I had been praying to get through the doubts that came with those insecurities. It wasn't an immediate answer, but I know that it was those prayers and that time with Heavenly Father that helped me overcome those.

The Spirit reminded me that I am now a different person than I was four years ago. Looking back, I can see times when Heavenly Father's hand gave me experiences and impressions that I have so much more worth than I thought.

I'm so much more than athletics. My mom says I could quit everything that other people label me as, but I could still be a wonderful person and a wonderful daughter. My family treats me like I'm human and loves me for things that aren't athletics. That has allowed me to enjoy my sport more since my self-worth



About Mary:

- Has been playing volleyball since age 7.
- Youngest of six siblings—three sisters and two brothers.
- Represents USA.
- Interesting fact: Loves to crunch numbers and studied accounting at Brigham Young University.



isn't really tied up in how I perform. Volleyball is only a certain number of years of my life, but who I am is infinite.

Younger girls often come to me and talk to me about volleyball. I get a glimpse of who they are and how Heavenly Father feels about them. I just want them to understand that they don't have to be a college athlete or do anything extraordinary to have great value and be loved. My main message to them is to ask Heavenly Father about their worth and realize that it's not connected to any one thing they do.





Jackson Payne: Gymnastics

I had a great chance to qualify for the London Olympics in 2012, but in the most important competition, I fell off the apparatus. My chance at the Olympics was gone. I was half-way around the world, and my dreams were shattered.

Shortly after that failure, I decided I wanted to go on a mission. I might not have gone if I had made it into the Olympics, but my mission was one miracle after another. I was so grateful for that opportunity.

The gospel has helped me make right decisions, especially at times when it's difficult to keep my standards. It shapes who I am and all the values that I have.

About Jackson:

- Has been doing gymnastics for about 22 years.
- Fifth of six siblings—three older brothers, an older sister, and a younger sister.
- Represents Canada.
- Interesting fact: Got to shake the hand of President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) at the dedication of the Edmonton Alberta Temple.

How to Avoid Deception

By Elder Gary E. Stevenson

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

During a visit with Great-Uncle Grover years ago, our two young boys wanted to go outside and play. Uncle Grover said to them, “Be careful—there are a lot of skunks out there.” The boys soon went outside to play.

On our way home, I asked, “Did you see a skunk?” One of them replied, “No, we didn’t see any skunks, but we did see a black kitty cat with a white stripe on its back!”

The boys were unaware that they had seen a skunk. This is a story of mistaken identity—presuming the real thing to be something else. Many today grapple with this same issue on a much larger scale.

Satan, the father of lies and the great deceiver, would have us question things as they really are and either ignore eternal truths or replace them with something that appears more pleasing. He has spent millennia practicing the ability to persuade God’s children to believe that *good is evil* and *evil is good*.

The Lord has provided a way for us to resist challenges and temptations, many of which come as a direct result of the deceitful influences of the adversary and his attacks.

The way is simple. God communed with prophets in past ages and gave them commandments

designed to lead His children to happiness in this life and glory in the next. God continues to give commandments to our living prophet today.

Obedience to commandments given to our prophet is a key not only in avoiding the influence of the deceiver but also in experiencing lasting joy and happiness.

However, the adversary seeks to trick you. He disguises the destructive consequences of illicit drugs or drinking and instead suggests that it will bring pleasure. He immerses us in the various negative elements that can exist in social media, including debilitating comparisons and idealized reality. In addition, he camouflages other dark, harmful content found online—such as pornography, blatant attacks on others through cyberbullying, and misinformation to cause doubt and fear in our hearts and minds.

May we recognize Satan’s deceptions for what they are. We must continue to be faithful and vigilant, for so is the only way to discern truth and to hear the voice of the Lord through His servants. As we obey the Lord’s commandments, we will always be led in the right way and will not be deceived. ■

From an October 2019 general conference address.

PEOPLE FROM THE BOOK OF MORMON

Captain Moroni

Didn't like violence but **fought to protect** his people.



Helped **end a rebellion**
(see Alma 62).

Mormon said that if everyone were like Moroni, the **powers of hell would be shaken forever**
(see Alma 48:17).



Became **chief captain** over all the Nephite armies when he was 25 (see Alma 43:17).

Created the title of liberty **in memory of God, freedom, and family**
(see Alma 46:12).



POSTERS

SAVING YOU IS THE PLAN

We hope that the poster included with this issue reminds you of God's love. You can find other versions, each showing a different person with the Savior, in the digital edition of this issue at liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org or in the Gospel Library app.



YOUNG ADULTS

**LIVING THE LAW
OF CHASTITY**

12, 42

YOUTH

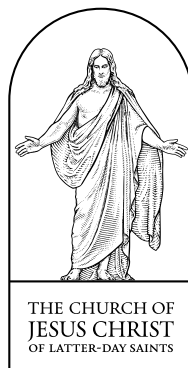
**TALKING TO
YOUR PARENTS
ABOUT SEX**

52

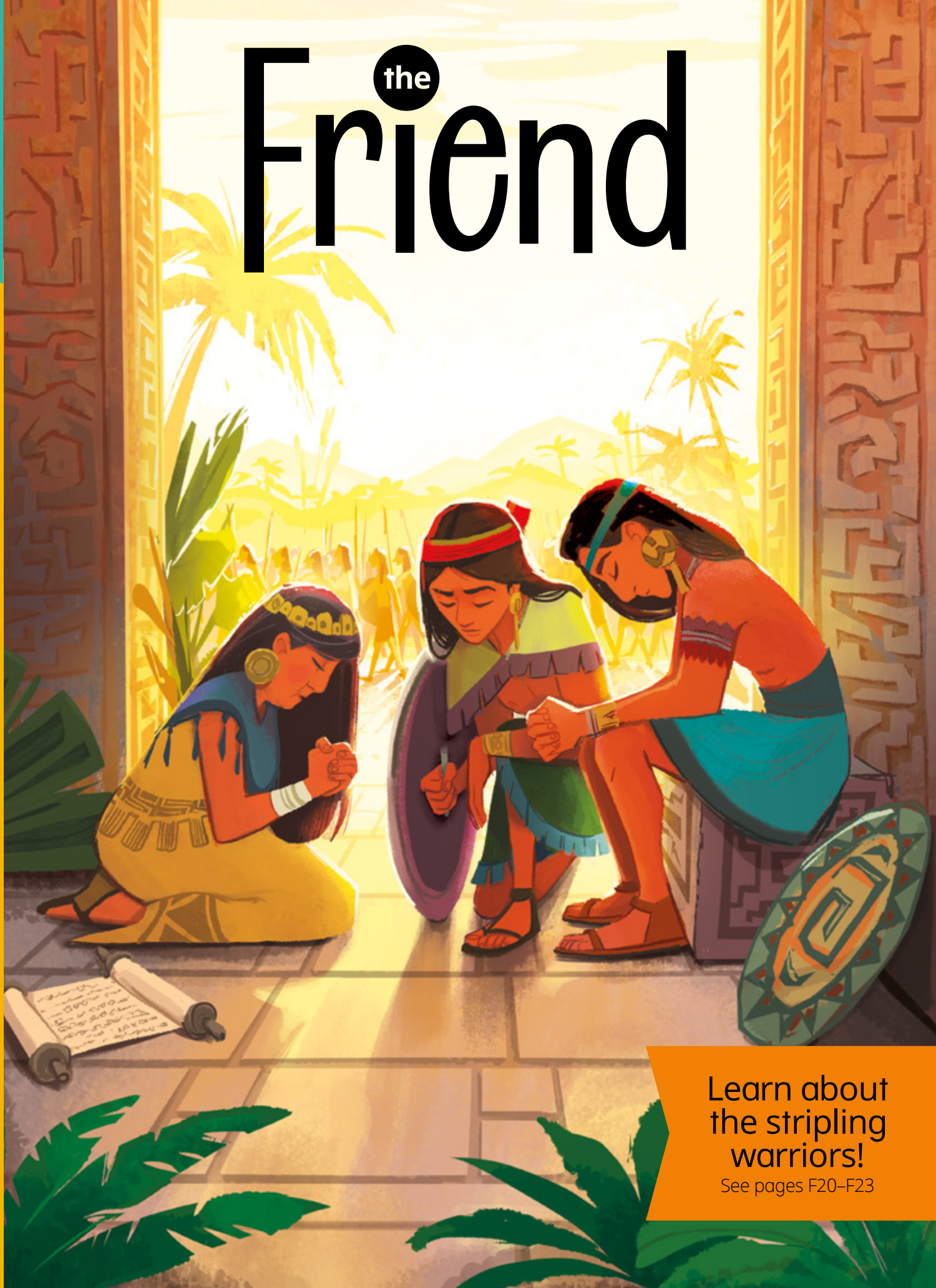
CHILDREN

**FAMILY HISTORY
ACTIVITY**

F16



the Friend



Learn about
the stripling
warriors!

See pages F20-F23



By President
Russell M.
Nelson

Happiness and Obedience

You are a child of God. God gives us commandments to bless us and bring us joy. Sometimes people pick which commandments they will keep and which ones they won't. Trying to obey *all* of God's commandments will:



Bless you with light and joy.



Help you be free from
harmful habits.



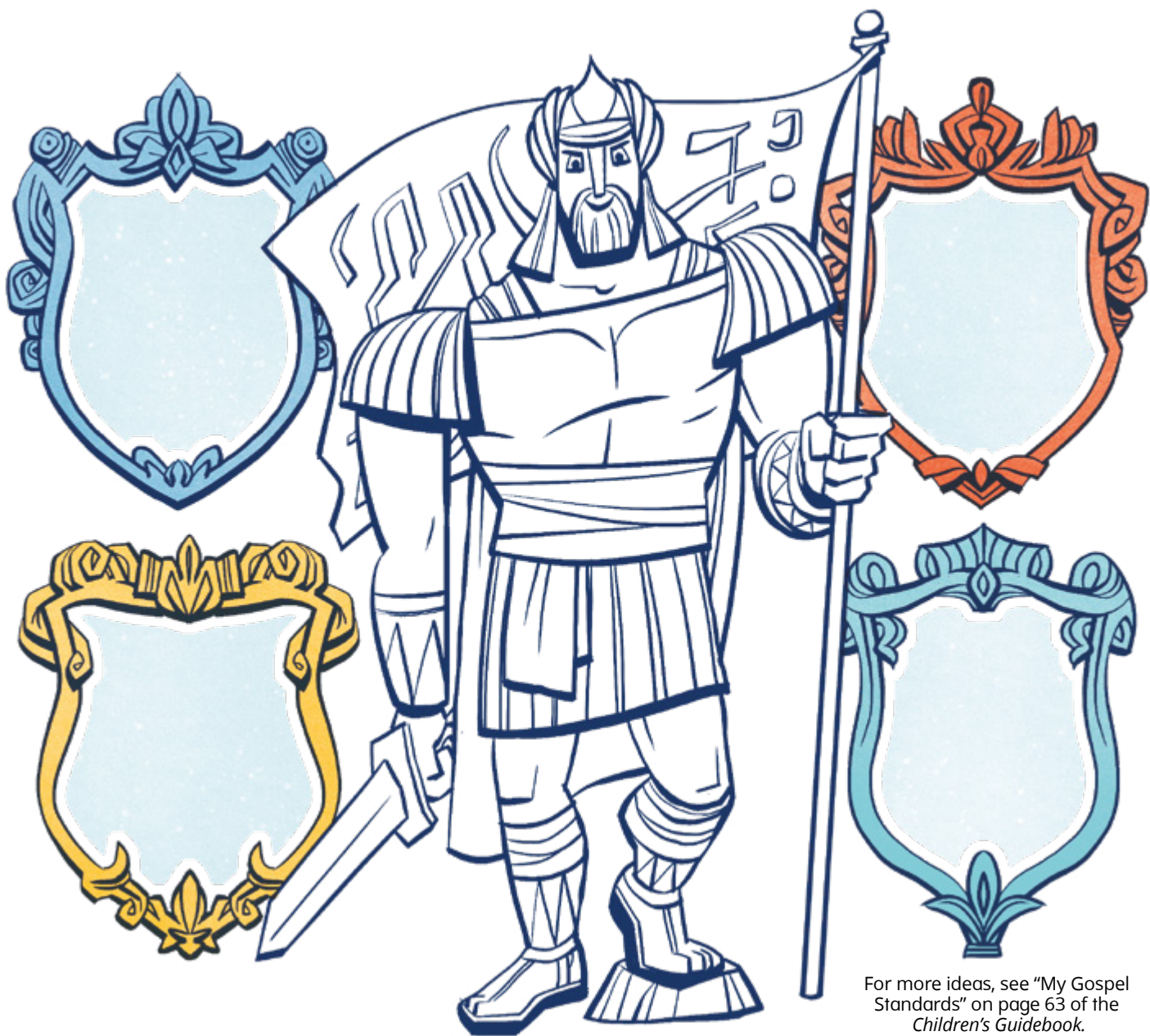
Protect your body.



Protect your spirit.

Remember, God and His angels are always there to help you. ●

Adapted from "Face the Future with Faith," Ensign or Liahona, May 2011, 34–36.



For more ideas, see "My Gospel Standards" on page 63 of the *Children's Guidebook*.

OUR GOSPEL SHIELDS

Captain Moroni gave the Nephites shields to help keep them safe. On each shield, write a gospel standard from the list below that can help you stay safe and strong.

🛡️ Listen to the Holy Ghost.

🛡️ Dress modestly.

🛡️ Be honest.

🛡️ Repent when you make a mistake.

🛡️ Listen to good music.

🛡️ Treat people kindly.

🛡️ Don't swear or use crude words.

🛡️ Watch good things.

🛡️ Keep the Sabbath day holy.

🛡️ Use the names of Heavenly Father and Jesus reverently.



The Mooncake Festival

By Lori Fuller Sosa

Church Magazines
(Based on a true story)

"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you"
(John 14:18).

"Don't run too far ahead!" Dad called. "It's getting dark, and I don't want you to fall."

Vincent stopped and turned around. "But you're walking so slowly. I want to get to the festival before all the mooncakes are gone!"

"They won't run out of mooncakes," Dad said as he and Mom caught up. "At least, not until you get there!"

Vincent could hear drums beating as they got close to the park. Strings of colorful lanterns hung from the trees, lighting up the dark night. Families were eating on blankets, getting ready to watch the full moon together.

Mom found an empty spot on the grass and laid down their blanket. She handed Vincent some coins to buy food.

"Thanks!" Vincent couldn't wait to go exploring. He counted his coins as he walked. Twenty ringgits! That was enough for a mooncake. But which kind did he want? Ham? Egg yolk? Durian? Finally he picked one full of black sesame paste. He wandered from stall to stall





as he ate, staring at all the different foods. Stacks of chicken on skewers. Giant pots of spicy broth and noodles. Maybe he could get shaved ice with ice cream with his last coins!

Pretty soon he'd wandered into an area that didn't have as many lanterns. The darkness gave him an idea.

I wonder how far I could walk with my eyes closed? He shut his eyes and took a step. Then another. Then caught his foot on something. He was falling!

Ouch! His chin hit something sharp. It was a big metal drain cover! He reached up and touched his chin. He was bleeding.

"Dad? Mom?" he called out. He hurried back toward the lanterns, and someone helped him find his parents.

"We were getting worried!" Mom said. Then she saw his face. "We need to go to the hospital."

Pretty soon Vincent was sitting with Mom and Dad in the hospital waiting room. He was so scared. Was he going to be OK?



He folded his arms tight and thought about Jesus. He and his family had been baptized a few months ago. The missionaries had said that Jesus could help him feel comfort.

Jesus Christ will help me. Jesus Christ will help me, he thought over and over again. And soon he did feel a little calmer. It felt like the Holy Ghost

was by his side.

Dad squeezed his hand.

"Everything will be OK," Mom said.

Vincent nodded. He knew she was right.

When the doctor came, she stitched up his chin. It hurt, but not too much. She told Vincent that he would probably have a scar. But that was fine with him. Whenever he saw it, he would remember mooncakes, the festival, and a time he felt comforted by Jesus and the Holy Ghost. ●

This story took place in Malaysia. See the next article to learn more about this country!



Hello from Malaysia!



Hi!
We're Margo and
Paolo.
We're visiting
Malaysia!

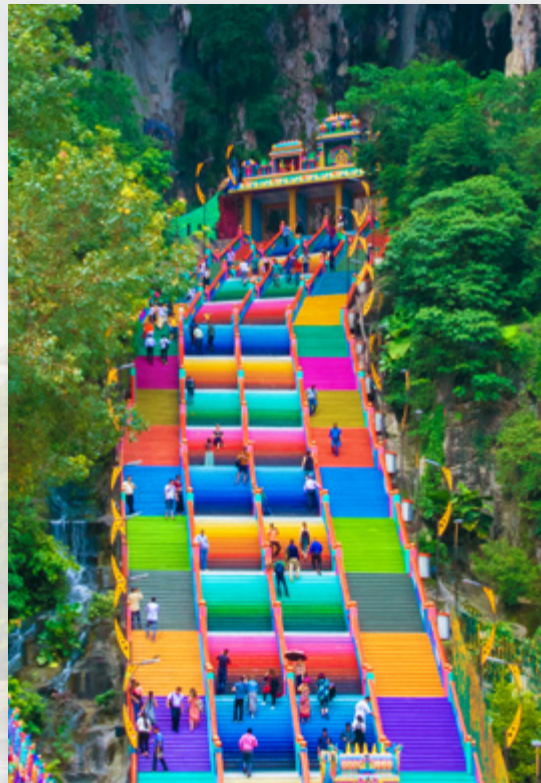
Malaysia is a beautiful country in Southeast Asia. There are about 10,000 members of the Church and 33 branches in Malaysia. The Church there is small but strong!



Keluarga means "family" in Malay. This family likes to play together at the park.



Durian is the strongest-smelling fruit in the world! Many people in Malaysia love this creamy fruit. It's used to make candy, ice cream, and other treats.



In Malaysia, people believe in many different religions including Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity. These colorful steps lead up to the Batu Caves. A famous Hindu temple is inside!





Families in Malaysia like to go out to eat together. People can buy street food all day and night.



These Primary children are sitting in front of a Church sign in Malay and Chinese. People in Malaysia speak many languages. At church, members help translate so everyone can understand.



More than half of Malaysia is covered in tropical forests. It's home to amazing animals like the Malayan tiger and the proboscis monkey.

Meet some of our friends from Malaysia!



God wants us to be kind and to keep the commandments.

Anika C., age 7, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



My favorite article of faith is the fourth: "We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Leif C., age 8, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**Are you from Malaysia?
Write to us! We'd love to hear from you.**



Thanks for exploring Malaysia with us! See you next time!

Choosing the Channel

What if Brooke didn't want to be Camille's friend anymore?



By Shannon Tuttle Liechty

(Based on a true story)

"God will protect you; then do what is right!"
(Hymns, no. 237).

"I saw the funniest show yesterday. You should check it out. Then maybe we could watch it together sometime!" Brooke said.

Camille loved chatting with her best friend while they walked home from school together. She loved how much they had in common.

"Sounds great!" Camille waved goodbye and walked in her front door.

After Camille finished her homework, she turned on the TV and found the right show. It would be so fun to talk about it with Brooke tomorrow!

The show *was* funny. The characters did silly things and told jokes. Camille laughed a lot. But not everything they said was funny.

They said some words that made Camille feel like there were frogs hopping in her stomach. They weren't good words.

What should I do? she wondered. Camille knew these words were not nice.

But she wanted to know how the show ended. What would she say if Brooke asked her about it tomorrow?

With a sigh, Camille turned off the TV.

After Mom got home, Camille helped her set the table for dinner. "How was school?" Mom asked.

Camille put out the forks and spoons. "It was really good! Except . . . Brooke told me about a show to watch. I started watching it, but it had bad words in it. I didn't feel good about it, so I turned it off."

"It sounds like you made a very good choice."

"But Brooke wants to watch it together. We're best friends! We like the same music, the same ice cream, the same books . . ."

Mom set a dish of pasta on the table. "True, but that doesn't mean you have to do *all* of the same things. Especially if it's something you don't feel good about. It's OK to make different choices than a friend does."

"What do you mean?" Camille asked.

"Well, we choose to avoid bad words so that we can feel the Holy Ghost," Mom explained. "But not everyone has the same standards as we do. That doesn't make them bad people."

Camille was still worried about what would happen when Brooke asked her about the show. They talked about everything! What if Brooke thought she was being a baby? Or worse, what if she didn't want to be friends anymore?

Camille said a prayer before going to sleep. *Heavenly Father, please help me talk to Brooke tomorrow. Please help me be brave.* Camille climbed into bed and hoped that things would be OK at school.

"Camille!" Brooke yelled across the playground. She ran through the grass to meet

Camille. "What'd you think of the show? Wasn't it funny?"

Camille took a deep breath. "I actually didn't watch much of it."

Brooke looked confused. "Why not?"

Camille thought for a second. Should she just say she'd been busy? What was Brooke going to say? "Well . . . I didn't watch it because they said words I didn't like. I didn't feel good watching it."

"Oh," Brooke said quietly. Then she said, "That's OK. We don't have to watch it together. We can find a show we both like or do something else together."

"OK." Camille smiled. Then the two friends walked to class together, talking and laughing the whole time. ●

The author lives in Utah, USA.

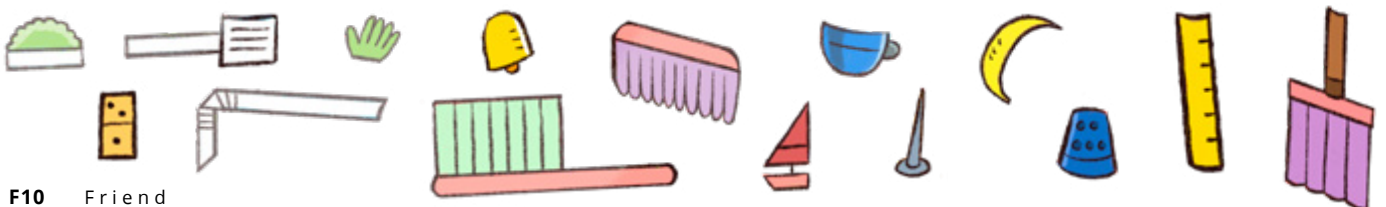


You can choose the right even if others don't. Heavenly Father will help you be strong.

Find It!

Abina loves bringing friends to the library! She helps them find good books to read.

Find 5 red books and 5 blue books. Then find the other objects.



When I build my
foundation on
Jesus Christ,

I can
stand
strong!

(See Helaman 5:12.)



A STRONG Foundation

By Haley Yancey

Helaman taught that we need to build our foundation on Jesus Christ (see Helaman 5:12). That means doing things that will bring us closer to Him. When we do, we will be able to withstand hard things in life.

Reading the scriptures
(see John 5:39)

Praying
(see Doctrine and Covenants 10:5)

Paying tithing
(see Malachi 3:10)

Going to church
(see Moroni 6:5–6)

Being baptized
(see 2 Nephi 31:5)

Following the prophet
(see Doctrine and Covenants 124:45)

Repenting
(see Acts 3:19)

Living the Word of Wisdom
(see Doctrine and Covenants 89:18–20)



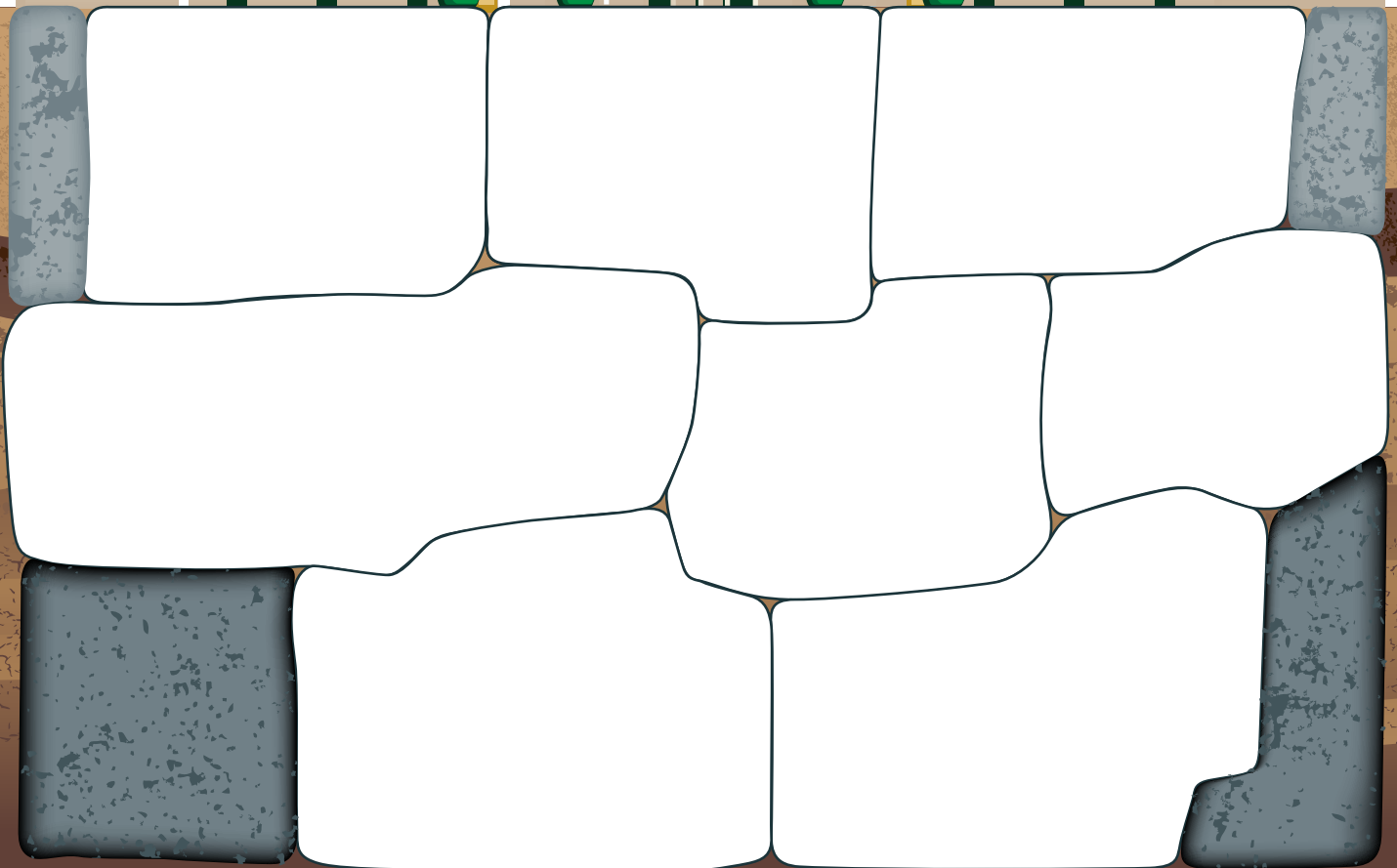
1. Cut out the rocks on this page.
2. Choose a rock and read the scripture on it. How does doing that thing make you strong and bring you closer to Christ?
3. Put the rock under the temple to build a strong foundation. Keep playing until all the rocks are in place.

The author lives in Utah, USA.



Bonus! Can you guess what country this temple is in? Hint: It is in the city of Madrid.

Answer: Spain



By David Dickson
Church Magazines
(Based on a true story)

Donovan aimed his slingshot at the empty soup can on the stump.

He stretched back the slingshot's rubber tubing.

"What are you doing?" his little sister, Dana, asked.

"Watch this!" he said.

Thwack!

The rubber snapped back into place as Donovan let go, sending the small rock flying. Some leaves in a

nearby tree rustled. But the tin can didn't move. Donovan stuffed the slingshot into his back pocket. He had missed. Again!

Dana tilted her head to the side. "What am I supposed to see?"

"Nothing," Donovan said. "Come on. Let's go home." They started heading back to the house.

Donovan kicked a stick out of his way. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't seem to use Dad's slingshot



The Best Slingshot in Jamaica

right. And he *loved* that thing! He always liked using it when Dad was out of town working, like now. It helped him feel close to Dad when he couldn't see him.

He pulled the slingshot from his pocket and spun it slowly in his hand. The rough bark had become smooth a long time ago. Dad had made the slingshot out of a strong tree branch and used it for years before giving it to Donovan.

Dad had pointed at the soup can that day. "When you focus, amazing things can happen." Donovan still remembered what happened next. Dad had aimed the slingshot and hit the soup can. In one try! He made it look easy. Donovan really missed him.

He was still thinking about Dad when he fell asleep that night.

The next morning, Donovan carried his slingshot to his favorite patch of trees to try again.

"Focus . . ." Donovan said as he stared at the can on the stump. He placed another small stone in the slingshot and pulled back.

Dad keeps trying, even when things don't always work out, Donovan thought.

Donovan tried to stop thinking about all the times he had missed before. He closed one eye, the way Dad taught him. He *really* focused. Donovan didn't look at anything else but the red soup can.

Taking a deep breath, he let go.

Thwack!

CLUNK!

Donovan blinked in surprise as the can sailed off the stump. "I did it!" he said. "Yes!"

Later that night, Donovan sat next to Mom after dinner. He held up the slingshot.

"I finally hit the can today," he said, grinning.

"Well done!" Mom said.

"You know, I think this slingshot is my favorite thing in the whole world," Donovan said.

"Oh?" Mom asked.

"Yup. Because it helps me think about Dad and feel close to him."

Mom smiled. "I think he'll be happy to know you feel that way. And guess what? Dad will be home in only three days. You can show him your new skills."

Donovan could hardly wait! "That gives me an idea," he said.

He ran to find Dana. He could teach her to use the slingshot the same way Dad had taught him!

"Hey, Dana," he said. "Wanna learn how to use the best slingshot in Jamaica?" ●

When
you focus,
amazing things
can happen.



What special things help you feel close to someone in your family?

Family History in Five Senses

Did you read about Donovan's slingshot on page F14? What are some things that help you feel close to your family? Write or draw pictures about them below.



Touch

Find an object you can hold that's important to you or your family. Draw a picture of it here.



Sight

Think of a special memory and draw it here. Now you can remember that time whenever you look at this page!



Sound

Listen to a family member tell a story or share their testimony. Write it here.



Smell

What is your favorite thing to smell? Are there any smells that remind you of your family? Write about them here.



Taste

What food does your family like to eat together? Draw a picture or write down a recipe here.

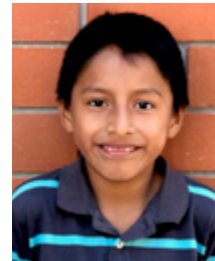


Show and Tell



I lost my brother's jacket when my family went on a walk. We prayed that Heavenly Father would help us find it. We felt that we should take the same walk again. We found his jacket! This helped me realize that everything in my life is important to Heavenly Father and He is always ready to help me.

Timothy M., age 8, Kyiv Oblast, Ukraine



The Articles of Faith inspire me to be a better boy, and

I try to do what is right to be a good missionary.

Jonathan M., age 11, Sololá, Guatemala



These Primary children in **Cebu, Philippines**, are learning that when they strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ, they are moving forward along the covenant path.



We listened to Jesus's parable of the sower and then planted sunflower seeds. It's not very hot or sunny where we live, so we were excited when the seeds pushed through the soil. The plants got taller and taller until they bloomed, just like the seeds in Jesus's story!

Magnus K., Islay S., Louis S., Sylvie K., Greta K., and Sibyl S., ages 7, 9, 6, 1, 5, and 4, Renfrewshire, Scotland



Samuel S., age 11, Minas Gerais, Brazil



Growing with Good Goals

Children around the world are using the Children's Guidebook to try new things and grow like Jesus did!



Jessica B., age 10, lives in Greater Accra, Ghana.

She set a goal to make new friends and share the gospel with them. She puts a copy of the *Friend* in her schoolbag and reads the magazine at school. She shares it with her classmates and talks to them about the gospel. "It makes me feel happy," Jessica says.



Prophet M., age 12, lives in Greater Accra, Ghana.

After learning to play the piano, he set a goal to teach others to play too! He invited people he knew to take piano classes taught by him and his friends. "Now we have more than 50 students who are taking lessons," Prophet says. Eight of those students have been baptized!





Danielle P., age 8, from Cebu, Philippines, wanted to give food to people without homes. “I want to feed them so they can be happy and sleep with a full stomach,” she says. When her family has extra food from their business, they drive around and give it to people who are hungry.

Peter G., age 9, from Ohio, USA, had trouble reading. He needed to pass an important reading test to go on to the next grade in school. So he set a goal to read with his mom and sisters every day for 20 minutes. “I asked Heavenly Father to help me,” Peter says. Later, when he had to take the test, he passed!



You can watch videos about some of these kids at childrenandyouth.ChurchofJesusChrist.org! What goals are you working on?

The Stripling Warriors



The Book of Mormon tells about some young men who had to go to battle to protect their people and their families. They are called the stripling warriors. The word “stripling” means “young.”



These young soldiers had never been in a battle before. But they had a good captain to lead them. And they remembered what their mothers had taught them.

Their mothers had taught them to trust God. So the young men asked God to help them. They obeyed their captain. Then they fought bravely.



They won the battle! Some of them were hurt. But all of them lived. It was a miracle!



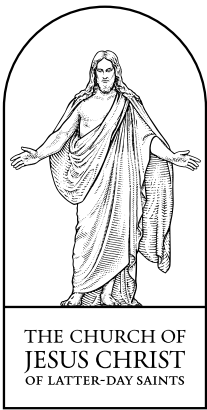
I can listen to the good things my parents and leaders teach. God will help me stand up for what is right. ●

Read about this story in Alma 56–57.

The Stripling Warriors Were Brave



How does Heavenly Father help you be brave?



Dear Parents,

This month's magazine talks about people who did hard things. Camille stayed away from bad media, even when her friend didn't agree (page F8). The stripling warriors protected their families, even when it was scary (page F20). God will help us do hard things too. Every time your children read about someone being brave, they could draw a star on the page. And remember that God loves us!

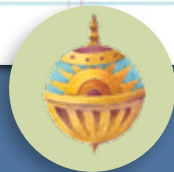
Be brave,
The *Friend*

HOW TO SEND YOUR CHILD'S ARTWORK OR EXPERIENCE TO THE *LIAHONA*

Go to liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org and click on "submit an article or feedback." Or email it to us at liahona@ChurchofJesusChrist.org along with your child's name, age, city of residence, and this permission statement: "I, [insert your name], give permission to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to use my child's submission in the Church magazines, on Church websites and social media platforms, and possibly in other Church materials." We can't wait to hear from you!

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Find the Liahona hidden inside!

ON THE *FRIEND* COVER
Illustration by Melissa Manwill

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