

AUGUST 2021

Liahona

Pointing Us All to Jesus Christ



HOW PRIESTHOOD PREPARES US

Insights from President Oaks, 6

PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Six guiding principles, 20



Riga, Latvia

Riga, the national capital of Latvia, is a port just upriver from the mouth of the Daugava River. The first branch of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Latvia was organized in Riga in 1993. Today, Riga is the headquarters of the Baltic Mission. The Church in Latvia has:



1,272 members



5 congregations



1 mission

Time Together

Something as simple as a stroll through town can provide wholesome recreation. "There is no substitute for spending time together," says Aleksandr Samigullin of Riga, who enjoys being with his wife, Svetlana, and their children.





"All they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord."

DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS 84:35



THE GOVERNMENT SHALL BE UPON HIS SHOULDER, BY J. KIRK RICHARDS

The Power of the Priesthood

“The Savior had divine power and authority, and He shared it,” writes President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency (see his article on page 6). President Oaks teaches how the priesthood authority in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints differs from that of other churches and then explains, “The ordinances of salvation and exaltation are fundamental in God’s great plan for His children.”

President Oaks concludes by inviting us to look for “the great day of the Lord to come” (Doctrine and Covenants 45:39). He asks, “If we knew that we would meet the Lord tomorrow—through our death or through His coming—what would we do today?”

Other articles that will help your *Come, Follow Me* study of the Doctrine and Covenants are on pages 26–33.

Another important theme in this issue is mental health and emotional resiliency. We can better face our trials as we support each other through hard times and learn to choose mindsets that help us endure well. Several articles are intended to teach us how to do just that (see pages 12, 16, 18, and 20).

Let us know if you find these and other articles in the issue helpful and inspiring. You can reach us by emailing liahona@ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

Sincerely,

Ryan Carr

Liahona Assistant Managing Editor



How we stand is even more important than where we stand. We must always live in and according to the full light of the Lord Jesus Christ.

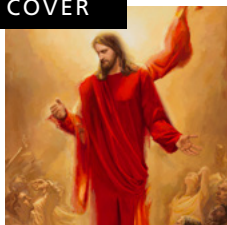
—Elder Matthew S. Holland, page 28

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Official magazine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

August 2021
Vol. 45 No. 8
Liahona 17472

COVER



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How Can I Progress on the Covenant Path While I'm Single?
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Why I Keep the Word of Wisdom When I'm Repeatedly Faced with Temptation
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What Infertility and Being Single Taught Me about God's Eternal Promises
By Lara Deppe

What We've Learned as Caregivers to Loved Ones with Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease
By Stephen Dunham and Lily Sparks Dunham

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AUTHORITY, ORDINANCES, & PREPARATION

The ordinances of salvation and exaltation are fundamental in God's great plan for, and preparation of, His children.

The scriptures are rich in references to the Second Coming, an event eagerly awaited by the righteous and dreaded or denied by the wicked. “Let the cry go forth among all people,” the Lord warned at the outset of the Restoration. “Behold and lo, the Bridegroom cometh. . . . Prepare yourselves for the great day of the Lord” (Doctrine and Covenants 133:10; see also 34:6).

Preparing to Meet God

We are living in the prophesied time “when peace shall be taken from the earth” (Doctrine and Covenants 1:35), when “all things shall be in commotion; and . . . men’s hearts shall fail them” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:91). We are surrounded by challenges on all sides, but with faith in God, we trust in the blessings He has promised those who keep His commandments and prepare.

As part of our preparation to meet Him, the Lord has commanded, “Stand ye in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come; for behold, it cometh quickly” (Doctrine and Covenants 87:8). What are those “holy places”? Surely they include the temple, attended by those who keep their covenants faithfully. Surely they include places of service by faithful missionaries and others called by priesthood authority. As we stand in holy places, we exercise and are subject to priesthood authority and we seek the ordinances required for exaltation and eternal life.



**By President
Dallin H. Oaks**
First Counselor
in the First
Presidency

Priesthood Authority in the Restored Church

Thirty years ago, I had an experience with how priesthood authority in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints differs from other kinds of authority. The wife of a prominent Protestant minister came to my office. For many years she and her husband had served the Lord with great diligence in a Christian ministry. Now she wanted to join the restored Church, but she had a reservation.

She came to ask me why she had to be baptized when she had already been baptized a Christian by her minister husband, who had baptized many people in his congregation. She asked, “Are you telling me that my husband didn’t have any authority to baptize all those people he baptized?”

The Spirit came to my aid, as we pray for in these situations.

“No, I am sure your husband had authority for those baptisms,” I replied. “He had all the authority his church, his congregation, and the laws of the land could give him. He used that

*The signs of the
Second Coming are all
around us and seem to be
increasing in frequency
and intensity.*

authority in baptizing, performing marriages, employing persons for the physical needs of his church building, and appointing persons to participate in its worship services. We don't question that authority, but we want you to know of a different kind of authority: the power God delegates to mortals."

I explained that what causes us to require baptism for persons converted to the restored Church of Jesus Christ is the need for baptism by the divine authority Jesus gave to Peter and the other Apostles. With that authority, He told them whatsoever they bound on earth would be bound in heaven (see Matthew 16:19; 18:18). In other words, it would be valid and effective beyond the veil of death to satisfy the requirements of heaven. I testified to her that this authority has been restored and now exists only in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Sometime later, both this woman and her husband were baptized. I have known them for many years as faithful members.

The importance of authority is evident in many scriptural accounts of our Savior's earthly ministry. We read that the people He taught "were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matthew 7:28–29; see also Mark 1:22; Luke 4:32). In a synagogue they were "amazed" that "with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him" (Mark 1:27; see also Luke 4:36). Jesus told the questioning scribes "that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (Mark 2:10; see also Luke 5:24).

Later, the chief priests and elders asked Him by what authority He acted (see Matthew 21:23–27; Mark 11:27–33). They did not meet His requirement for an answer. But what He later said and did reveals His answer. When He called His Apostles, He "ordained" them (John 15:16), "that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils" (Mark 3:14–15; see also Matthew 10:1; Luke 9:1; Acts 8:18–19). When He called the Seventy, He gave them "power" (Luke 10:19).

The Savior had divine power and authority, and He shared it. As John the Baptist said, the Father "hath given all things into his hand" (John 3:35).

The Role of Ordinances

The most familiar examples of the exercise of priesthood authority involve ordinances. Ordinances and priesthood are inseparable. An ordinance is a sacred act of eternal significance, done with priesthood authority. It accompanies the making of covenants and the promising of blessings. Ordinances of the restored Church of Jesus Christ include baptism, the partaking of the sacrament (the most frequent ordinance in the Church), and the ordinances of the temple, including marriages for time and all eternity and the gift of what we call the endowment, which consists of knowledge, covenants, and promised blessings.

The requirement of ordinances is God-given and has eternal effect. "There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated" (Doctrine and Covenants 130:20). And "all who will have a blessing at [the Lord's] hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing, and the conditions thereof, as were instituted from before the foundation of the world" (Doctrine and Covenants 132:5).

The ordinances of salvation and exaltation are fundamental in God's great plan for His children. Jesus taught that salvation in the kingdom of God comes from being "born of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:5). Exaltation (eternal life, "the kind and quality of life that Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son live"¹) comes from the higher covenants and ordinances of the temple (see Doctrine and Covenants 14:7; 84:38; 88:107; 132:16–17, 20–21). Our prophet, President Russell M. Nelson, has taught: "This life is the time to prepare for salvation and exaltation. In God's eternal plan, salvation is an individual matter; exaltation is a family matter."²

Preparing to Meet the Lord

In modern revelation, we are told that he who fears the Lord will “be looking forth for the great day of the Lord to come, even for the signs of the coming of the Son of Man” (Doctrine and Covenants 45:39). In the final period before the end of His mortal ministry, Jesus spoke of His Second Coming. He described the tribulations that would come first and the importance—withstanding those tribulations—of being “ready” (Matthew 24:44). Then He declared, “Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing” (Matthew 24:46; see also Luke 12:37, 43).

President Nelson has taught, “We are just building up to the climax of this last dispensation—when the Savior’s Second Coming becomes a reality.”³ The signs of that Second Coming are all around us and seem to be increasing in frequency and intensity. Worldwide, we are experiencing or learning of earthquakes, famines, typhoons, floods, pestilences, and armed conflicts. But not all these signs are threatening. A positive sign of the times is the prophesied gathering of Israel, which President Nelson has declared “is the most important thing taking place on earth today.”⁴

As this gathering proceeds, we are establishing stakes “for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth” (Doctrine and Covenants 115:6). We are also accelerating the building of temples, where the faithful can gather in their own homelands to make the covenants that allow them to be eligible for eternal life (see Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–22; 131:1–3).

As the Book of Mormon teaches, “This life is the time for men to prepare to meet God” (Alma 34:32). Are we preparing?



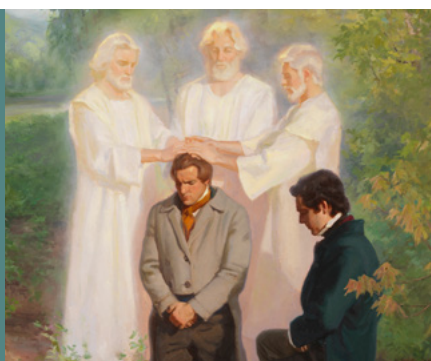
What if the day of His coming were tomorrow? If we knew that we would meet the Lord tomorrow—through our death or through His coming—what would we do today? What confessions would we make? What practices would we discontinue? What forgiveness would we extend? What ordinances would we seek? What additional things would we do to fulfill our covenants? If we could do those things then, why not now? If our lamps of preparation are drawn down, let us start immediately to replenish them. ■

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Four Gifts from the Savior,” *Ensign*, Dec. 2019, 15.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “Salvation and Exaltation,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2008, 10.
3. Russell M. Nelson, “The Future of the Church: Preparing the World for the Savior’s Second Coming,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2020, 14.
4. Russell M. Nelson, “Hope of Israel” (worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018), HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

The Priesthood Is God's Power

*God blesses us through the power of the priesthood.
Priesthood blessings are available to everyone.*



The priesthood is the power of God. He uses this power to bless all of His children and to help them return to live with Him. God has given priesthood power to His children on earth. With this power, priesthood leaders can lead the Church, and priesthood holders can perform sacred ordinances, like baptism, that help us come closer to God. Every man and woman who worthily receives priesthood ordinances and keeps the covenants (sacred promises) has access to the power of God.

Priesthood Power Was Given to Joseph Smith

When Jesus Christ was on the earth, He led His Church with priesthood power. He also gave this power to His Apostles. In the centuries after they died, many members fell away from the Church. They incorrectly changed the gospel and the way the Church worked. The priesthood of God was no longer on the earth. In 1829, Jesus sent John the Baptist and the Apostles Peter, James, and John to give Joseph Smith the priesthood. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only organization on earth with this authority from God.

Keys of the Priesthood

Priesthood keys are the authority to direct the use of the priesthood, such as giving permission to perform ordinances. Jesus Christ holds all the keys of the priesthood. The President of the Church is the only person on earth who can use priesthood keys to direct the whole Church. Under his direction, others can use certain keys to do God's work. Leaders such as bishops and stake presidents use priesthood keys to lead in their wards and stakes. Because callings to serve come from leaders with priesthood keys, men and women who serve in callings exercise priesthood authority as they do their duties.



Melchizedek Priesthood and Aaronic Priesthood

The priesthood has two parts: the Melchizedek Priesthood and the Aaronic Priesthood. Through the Melchizedek Priesthood, Church leaders direct all the spiritual work of the Church, such as missionary and temple work. The Aaronic Priesthood functions under the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood. It is used to perform ordinances such as baptism and the sacrament.

Blessings of the Priesthood

Through covenants and ordinances, God makes priesthood blessings available to all of His children. These blessings include baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, the sacrament, and temple ordinances. Men and women who are endowed in the temple receive a gift of God's priesthood power through their covenants. We can also receive priesthood blessings of healing, comfort, and guidance.

What Do the Scriptures Say about the Priesthood?

The priesthood that existed in ancient days is the same that exists now (see Moses 6:7).

Priesthood keys help make sure that we accomplish the Lord's work in an orderly way (see Doctrine and Covenants 42:11).

Men who hold the priesthood can use it "only upon the principles of righteousness" (Doctrine and Covenants 121:36).

Some of the duties of those who hold the priesthood are described in Doctrine and Covenants 20:38–67. ■

WORDS TO REMEMBER

We hope you have enjoyed learning about the priesthood. Here are some other important gospel terms that you can learn about in this issue:

Exaltation: To live with Heavenly Father and our families forever in the celestial kingdom (see page 7).

Ordinance: A sacred act done by the authority of the priesthood, such as baptism, confirmation, the sacrament, and temple ordinances (see pages 8, 26).

Second Coming: When Jesus Christ comes to the earth in glory (see page 7).



Strive to Be

A PATTERN FOR GROWTH AND MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

The pattern of growth outlined in the Children and Youth program can help all of us as we strive to become more like the Savior.

By Sheldon Martin

Manager of Special Programs, Priesthood and Family Department

Real growth occurs when we strive to grow in a variety of areas. We learn that “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:52). We know little about this period of the Master’s life, but from this verse we learn that He “increased”—He grew—intellectually, physically, spiritually, and socially. Many studies suggest that striving to grow in a variety of areas in our life supports healthy emotional and mental wellness.¹

Growth and eternal potential are themes of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Our potential to become like Heavenly Father is central to the gospel and helps us feel love, hope, and gratitude.²

President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, taught: “The Final Judgment is not just an evaluation of a sum total of good and evil acts—what we have *done*. It is an acknowledgment of the final effect of our acts and thoughts—what we have *become*. It is not enough for anyone just to go through the motions. The commandments, ordinances, and covenants of the gospel are not a list of deposits required to be made in some heavenly account. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a plan that shows us how to become what our Heavenly Father desires us to become.”³

A Pattern for Growth

Children and youth have been invited to follow the pattern of discovering what they need to work on, planning how they will do it,

acting on their plan in faith, and reflecting on what they have learned.⁴ This pattern can help all of us as we strive to grow and become more like the Savior.

For example, Alma taught that “if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you” (Alma 32:27). As we nurture that desire, it grows into what Amulek called “faith unto repentance” (Alma 34:16). The desire of which Alma speaks and the faith of which Amulek testifies do not remain stagnant. Our desire and faith in Jesus Christ lead us to truly repent. And this repentance process leads us to grow continually.

President Russell M. Nelson explained: “Nothing is more liberating, more ennobling, or more crucial to our individual progression than is a regular, daily focus on repentance. Repentance is not an event; it is a process. It is the key to happiness and peace of mind. When coupled with faith, repentance opens our access to the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.”⁵

Growth Requires Commitment

Just as repentance requires continuous work and commitment, real growth occurs when we strive to offer our “whole souls” (Omni 1:26) in a variety of areas. We each have spiritual gifts that can be used to build the kingdom of God. In our pursuit of becoming “a new creature” (2 Corinthians 5:17), we are invited to serve the Lord with all our “heart, might, mind and strength” (Doctrine and Covenants 4:2). As we strive to grow in a variety of areas, we build resilience and strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ, which will help us meet life’s challenges.

Children and youth—and all of us—who set simple, short-term goals to grow spiritually, socially, physically, and intellectually can experience greater emotional and mental wellness. These principles are beyond self-help concepts; they are a healthy approach to striving to become disciples of Jesus Christ so that “when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure” (Moroni 7:48).

Growth Requires Patience and Diligence

As we strive to grow and move forward, we should remember that “it is not requisite that [we] should run faster than [we have] strength” (Mosiah 4:27). We strive to be diligent, and when we fall, we strive to rise again (see Doctrine and Covenants 117:13). Personal growth requires patience. When Jesus healed a blind man, the blind man first saw “men as trees, walking.” Jesus “put his hands again upon his eyes, . . . and he was restored, and saw every man clearly” (Mark 8:24–25). Healing and growth—whether physical, emotional, or mental—can come in stages and may not happen quickly.

Growth Requires Us to Use All Resources Available to Us

There is not a simple cure-all for emotional and mental wellness. We will experience stress and turmoil because we live in a fallen world with a fallen body. Additionally, many contributing factors may lead to a diagnosis of mental illness. Regardless of our mental and emotional well-being, focusing on growth is healthier than obsessing about our shortcomings. Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “The Church is not an automobile showroom—a place to put ourselves on display so that others can admire our spirituality, capacity, or prosperity. It is more like a service center, where vehicles in need of repair come for maintenance and rehabilitation.”⁶

Increasing our spirituality is an important part of mental and emotional well-being, but there is often more we can do, and the Lord expects us to use all of the tools He has put at our disposal. There has sometimes been a stigma attached to using additional resources as we work to improve our mental and emotional wellness, but Church leaders have taught that these resources can be vital.



Sister Reyna I. Aburto, Second Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, taught: “Like any part of the body, the brain is subject to illnesses, trauma, and chemical imbalances. When our minds are suffering, it is appropriate to seek help from God, from those around us, and from medical and mental health professionals.”⁷

We have a responsibility to “do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed” (Doctrine and Covenants 123:17). We may not see His hand in the way we expect or desire, but those who trust in Him can see it.

The Savior’s Example of Growth

The greatest example of growth is our Savior, Jesus Christ. The scriptures teach that “he received not of the fulness at the first, but received grace for grace;

“And he received not of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness;

“And thus he was called the Son of God, because he received not of the fulness at the first” (Doctrine and Covenants 93:12–14).

As we strive to grow and progress, we too can receive “grace for grace.” When life becomes overwhelming, we may think that God has abandoned us. However, we can find peace and comfort in the truth that God the Father and our Savior, Jesus Christ, are aware of us and know how to help us through our trials. Believing in Jesus Christ does not mean that mortal challenges will cease to exist, but we do believe that the Lord can give us strength to meet our challenges as we strive to be more like Him.⁸ ■

NOTES

1. See Dale E. Bredesen, “Reversal of Cognitive Decline: A Novel Therapeutic Program,” *Aging*, Sept. 2014, aging-us.com.
2. See Gospel Topics, “Becoming Like God,” topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
3. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Challenge to Become,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 32.
4. See *Personal Development: Youth Guidebook* (2019), 7.
5. Russell M. Nelson, “We Can Do Better and Be Better,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 67.
6. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “On Being Genuine,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 83.
7. Reyna I. Aburto, “Thru Cloud and Sunshine, Lord, Abide with Me!” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2019, 57; see also Jeffrey R. Holland, “Like a Broken Vessel,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 41.
8. See “Receive the Savior’s Divine Empathy,” mentalhealth.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

HOW CAN I STRIVE TO GROW?

The following ideas may be helpful as you strive to focus on growth in your life:

- Set goals that are simple, measurable, and focus on real growth. For example, instead of setting up an elaborate scripture study plan for the next six months, you might choose to begin by reading the scripture of the day on the Gospel Living app.
- Validate and highlight any movement you make toward growth. Even small steps are worth celebrating. The point is to keep moving and keep striving.
- Don’t dwell on mistakes or failures. You aren’t perfect, and you aren’t expected to be perfect yet. Acknowledge that you can do better, set another goal, and then work toward it.
- Exercise faith in Jesus Christ. He knows how to help you, and you will feel His love as you strive to become more like Him.



How Do I Support a Child Who Is Feeling Depressed?

When your child is feeling discouraged, how can you help?

By **Heather Nelson**, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, and
Derek Willis Hagey, Family Services

Everyone feels sad or discouraged at times. As a parent, you may see changes in your child's behavior without fully understanding the reason why. Here are some things to watch for and ways to help your child.

SPOTTING POTENTIAL CONCERNS

If your child is more angry or sad for more than two weeks, you may wonder if he or she is experiencing depression. Depression may look different for children and youth than it does for adults. When your child is feeling down or depressed, symptoms may include:

- Significant changes in behavior.
- Grades in school drastically dropping, like going from A's to F's.
- Changes in friend groups, often moving to friends who are not positive.
- Boredom.
- Loss of interest in activities.
- Changes in sleeping habits, including too much or too little sleep.
- Trouble focusing.
- Fatigue.
- Not caring about the future.
- Complaining of aches and pains with no physical source.
- Comments or thoughts about death or suicide.
- Changes in eating.



When a child becomes depressed, parents may feel like it's their fault or that they've done something wrong. Remember that depression doesn't always start because of what someone did, and it can't be stopped by telling the child to stop feeling depressed. Depression in children often comes from feeling overwhelmed. As a parent, do your best to remain calm and focus on listening and validating. You can emotionally coach your child and patiently guide him or her to develop coping skills to help manage strong emotions.

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD

Build a stronger parent-child bond

If you notice some of the symptoms listed earlier, help your child feel supported and loved. Look for ways to improve the bond with your child. This can help your child to better cope with stressful situations. Some ways to develop the parent-child bond include:



- One-on-one time.
- Talking and listening.
- Reassuring your child things will get better.
- Offering praise.
- Pointing out strengths.
- Expressions of love.
- Serving your child.

Seek support from others

Although you are responsible to help your child, don't try to go it alone. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: "If you had appendicitis, God would expect you to seek a priesthood blessing *and* get the best medical care available. So too with emotional disorders. Our Father in Heaven expects us to use *all* of the marvelous gifts He has provided in this glorious dispensation."¹

Seek help from Heavenly Father through prayer, as well as support from family and friends, Church leaders (including Aaronic Priesthood or Young Women leaders), and potentially a trained mental health

professional.² If you decide to seek professional help, choose a therapist who has experience working with children and can understand the concerns you have for your child. It's important for you to engage in treatment with your child and, in many cases, attend therapy with him or her.

Your child's doctor is another resource you can turn to for help. The doctor can prescribe medicine when it is needed to manage the symptoms of depression.

Add structure to life

It's important for your child to have structure. If your child knows what to expect and when, he or she will feel more stable and will be more capable of adapting. Here are some ways to add structure to your child's day or week:

- Decide on a regular bedtime.
- Get up at the same time every day.
- Share the schedule for the day with them.
- Limit screen time.
- Be physically active—going for a family walk is great.
- Engage in spiritual growth together, including regular gospel study and family prayer.
- Eat meals together as a family every day.

Encourage your child to join in family activities like playing a game or watching a movie together. It can also be helpful to model self-care and teach your child ways that he or she can take time for self-care. You may choose to exercise or do mindfulness activities together with your child or as a family.

Remember there can be a genetic link with depression, and so your own struggles may cause you to feel discouraged as you address your child's depression. If you have symptoms of depression, it is important to manage those symptoms and seek professional help if you begin to feel overwhelmed. If you aren't caring for yourself, you will find it more difficult to support your child in his or her struggles. ■

NOTES

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, "Like a Broken Vessel," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 41.
2. Justin K. McPheters and Rebecca M. Taylor, "Is Therapy Right for Me?" (digital only) *Ensign*, Feb. 2020.

Ministering with Mental Health in Mind

We can share the Savior's love with those who live with mental and emotional health challenges.

A young mother found herself struggling with depression. She worked with doctors to get her medication just right, but the process took time. One day was especially difficult, and she made an urgent appointment with her doctor. They decided together she should be admitted to the hospital.

Ward members came together to make visits, care for her children, and provide help with meals. During the weeks and months afterward, the

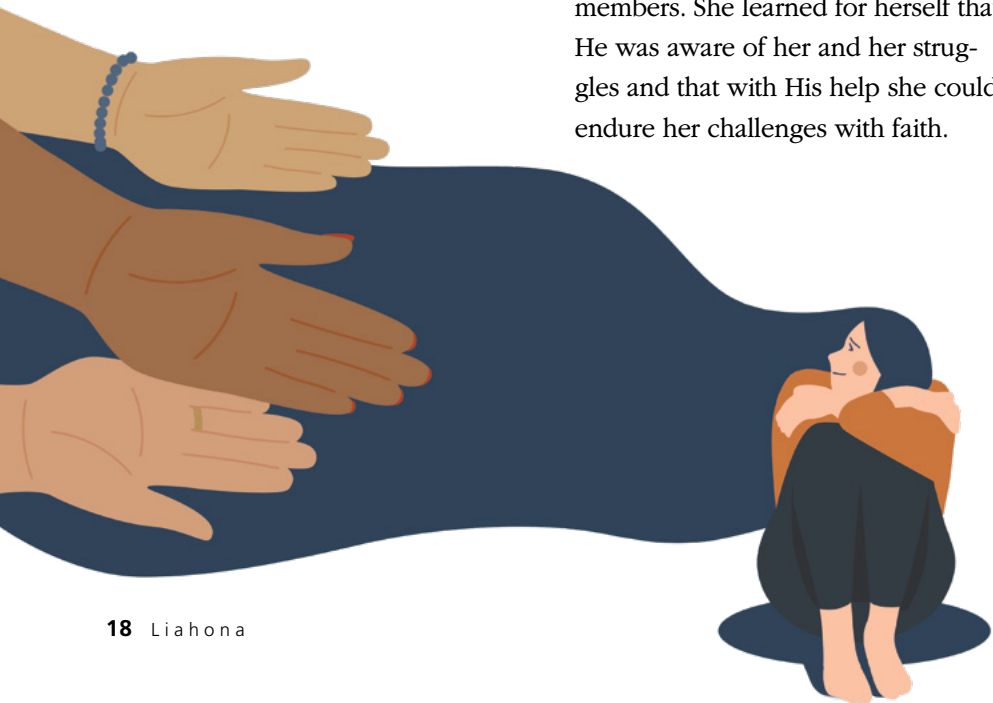
woman's depression made reaching out for help difficult, so ward members learned to take the initiative in offering support.

Later, the sister related that help came at inspired moments, just when it was most needed. She mentioned that one of the most valuable things that came from that time was knowing that her sisters and brothers cared about her and were there to support her. She felt the love of the Savior through the service of her ward members. She learned for herself that He was aware of her and her struggles and that with His help she could endure her challenges with faith.

Ideas for Ministering

Mental and emotional health issues are common, even if an emergency hospitalization isn't going to be necessary for many. These challenges are likely to be found among members in every ward or branch. They can affect people of all nationalities and all walks of life.

As you minister, you will likely encounter someone with social or emotional difficulties. When you do, please consider the advice that President Henry B. Eyring, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, received: "When you meet someone, treat them as if they were in serious trouble, and you will be right more than half the time."¹ A mental, social, or emotional issue can be one reason someone may be struggling.





Here are some ideas of how to minister:

1. **Listen to learn.** Allow the person to share as much or as little information as he or she is comfortable communicating. You are supporting him or her by just listening; you may receive inspiration about ways to provide comfort. (For more ideas, see “Five Things Good Listeners Do,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, June 2018, 6–9.)
2. **Demonstrate compassion.** Try to begin and end every interaction with a sincere expression of love and care for the person. (For more ideas, see “Reach Out in Compassion,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, July 2018, 6–9.)
3. **Provide support.** Recovery from social or emotional difficulties is not simple and not easy. At times, he or she may wish for space or may ask for help. Provide support in the time and way the person is able to accept it. (For more ideas, see “Developing the Empathy to Minister,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Feb. 2019, 8–11.)
4. **Counsel with leaders.** You are not alone. Seek support from leaders and others. With permission, share the struggling person’s needs and possible ways others may be of service. (For more ideas, see “Getting Help to Help Others,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Oct. 2018, 6–9.)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Website for finding a suicide helpline in your country: befrienders.org.
- *Emotional Resilience for Self-Reliance* (2020), ChurchofJesusChrist.org/self-reliance.
- “Seek to mourn with those who mourn,” [mentalhealth.Church ofJesusChrist.org](https://mentalhealth.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
- “I am not a mental health professional, but I want to help. What can I do?” [mentalhealth.Church ofJesusChrist.org](https://mentalhealth.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
- “How can I better understand what to avoid saying or doing?” [mentalhealth.ChurchofJesusChrist .org](https://mentalhealth.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
- “How can I help individuals, including those working through mental health challenges, feel welcomed and included at church?” [mentalhealth.Churchof JesusChrist.org](https://mentalhealth.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

MORE ON MINISTERING

The articles at left can be found at ministering.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

Note: If the person to whom you are ministering is a danger to self or others, it may be necessary to involve appropriate authorities to help. ■

NOTE

1. Henry B. Eyring, “In the Strength of the Lord,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2004, 16.

Building a Spiritual and Temporal Refuge

The pandemic and related shortages, shutdowns, and economic upheaval caused many of us to wonder, How can I be better prepared for the future?

By Merrilee Browne Boyack

We have been counseled to build a refuge for our families both physically and spiritually. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, “As disciples of the Savior, we are commanded to ‘*prepare every needful thing*’ [Doctrine and Covenants 88:119; emphasis added].” He further taught: “We also are promised that ‘if ye are prepared ye shall not fear’ [Doctrine and Covenants 38:30]. . . . Repeated admonitions to prepare have been proclaimed by leaders of the Church for decades.”¹

In order to prepare, we can turn to guidance from the Lord. President Russell M. Nelson stated:

“For decades, the Lord’s prophets have urged us to store food, water, and financial reserves for a time of need. . . . I urge you to take steps to be temporally prepared. But I am even more concerned about your spiritual and emotional preparation.”²

We know that the last days will not be for the faint of heart. The world will experience

even more upheaval, and the faithful will be tested. President Nelson said: “Of course, we can store our own reserves of food, water, and savings. But equally crucial is our need to fill our personal *spiritual* storehouses with faith, truth, and testimony.”³


It will be critical that each of us be prepared not only temporally and physically for what is to come but also spiritually. These have striking parallels in our preparations.



Water and Living Water

Physically, one of our key needs is to have fresh drinking water stored. For many people, droughts, contaminated water sources, and other water-related problems have caused grave concern. Where possible, it is good to have a supply of water that can last at least a few days until access to drinkable water is restored. (Individuals need about four liters per day for drinking and sanitation.)

Spiritually, we also need a regular supply of the living



water from our Savior, Jesus Christ (see John 4:10). It was telling that the main message given by our prophet when the pandemic struck was to *hear Him*—to hear Jesus Christ through His Spirit and His teachings. President Nelson said:

“In the past several weeks, most of us have experienced disruptions in our personal lives. Earthquakes, fires, floods, plagues, and their aftermaths have disrupted routines and caused shortages of food, staples, and savings. . . .

“As we seek to be disciples of Jesus Christ, our efforts to *hear Him* need to be ever more intentional. It takes conscious and consistent effort to fill our daily lives with His words, His teachings, His truths. . . .

“I renew my plea for you to do *whatever* it takes to increase your spiritual capacity to receive personal revelation.

“Doing so will help you know how to move ahead with your life, what to do during times of crisis, and how to discern and avoid the temptations and the deceptions of the adversary.”⁴

The prophet has repeatedly asked us to increase our ability to receive revelation. It is critical for each of us to

make a deep spiritual effort to access the living water every day so we can hear, receive, and act on personal revelation.



Food and Spiritual Nourishment

Having an adequate supply of food is also crucial to survive in an emergency. Whether the situation be job loss, natural disasters, or other crises, food storage can help us weather trials. Prophets have encouraged us to put aside food as we are able. Starting with a few weeks' supply can be an important first step in building enough food storage to provide for our families in times of need.

We must also be prepared by making spiritual nourishment a part of our everyday life. President Nelson taught: “Our ultimate quest in life is to prepare to meet our Maker. We do this by striving daily to become more like our Savior, Jesus Christ. And we do *that* as we repent daily and receive His cleansing, healing, and strengthening power. Then we can feel enduring peace and joy, even during turbulent times.”⁵

The parable of the ten virgins teaches this principle clearly. President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the

First Presidency, provided the following perspective:

“The arithmetic of this parable is chilling. The ten virgins obviously represent members of Christ’s Church, for all were invited to the wedding feast and all knew what was required to be admitted when the bridegroom came. But only half were ready when he came. . . .

“ . . . As the Book of Mormon teaches, ‘this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God’ (Alma 34:32). . . . Are we preparing?”⁶ We cannot wait until the Lord comes to nourish ourselves spiritually.



Communication and Prayer

In a crisis, communication is a critical need. During power outages or other disasters, cell phone towers quickly become overwhelmed, and the ability to communicate is seriously impacted. Having a communication plan for family and ward members is an important preparation. How will we reach our family members if our phones don’t work or if we can’t reach them physically? Having a plan in place will help family members know what to do to be able to communicate.

Our Father in Heaven has established His communication plan by encouraging regular prayer. What an honor it is to talk to our Heavenly Father whenever and wherever we want! “Be faithful,” the Savior tells us, “praying always, having your lamps trimmed and burning, and oil with you, that you may be ready at the coming of the Bridegroom” (Doctrine and Covenants 33:17).

Through our efforts to pray with sincerity, we will become comfortable talking with and receiving guidance from our Father in Heaven, and that will provide a critical connection to guide us and our families in times of need.



Shelter and Standing in Holy Places

Most of us were asked to “shelter in place” during the pandemic. We learned firsthand that having safe shelter with adequate supplies is crucial to being prepared. It is also wise to seek out alternate shelters in case our homes become unsafe due to natural disasters or other circumstances that require us to leave.

Similarly, we are encouraged to “shelter” in the gospel. President Oaks taught:



“Are we following the Lord’s command, ‘Stand ye in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come; for behold, it cometh quickly?’ (D&C 87:8). What are those ‘holy places’? Surely they include the temple and its covenants faithfully kept. Surely they include a home where children are treasured and parents are respected. Surely the holy places include our posts of duty assigned by priesthood authority, including missions and callings faithfully fulfilled.”⁷

Members of the Church felt the loss when we were not able to meet together as congregations or to serve in the temple. But we also learned how critical it was to establish our homes as holy places. Attending Church meetings, serving in the temple, and having our homes be sanctuaries of faith will strengthen us and our families as we prepare for the Second Coming.



First Aid and Repentance

Good first-aid supplies and skills are essential in being temporally prepared. The whole world was looking for good masks and medical supplies during the pandemic. Storing medicine and medical supplies is an important part of being prepared for the natural disasters and other trials that will come.

Similarly, spiritual first aid is essential. The Lord has provided a way for us to be healed. Repentance offers us the opportunity to make things right in our behavior and to have the balm of Jesus Christ and His Atonement

cleanse us. Elder Hans T. Boom of the Seventy stated, “Some of us are wounded, but the first-aid kit of the Lord has bandages big enough to cover all of our wounds.”⁸

Regular repentance will help refine us in preparation for what is to come. As we consistently repent, we will become stronger, better, and more in tune with the Lord. President Nelson taught:

“When Jesus asks you and me to ‘repent,’ He is inviting us to change our mind, our knowledge, our spirit. . . .

“Nothing is more liberating, more ennobling, or more crucial to our individual progression than is a regular, daily focus on repentance. . . . When coupled with faith, repentance opens our access to the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.”⁹



Mental Strength and Testimony

Many people struggled with mental health during the pandemic. Part of our preparation includes having practices in place to promote good mental health. Many of us were tested as the trials extended and grew over time. Church leaders have encouraged us to make mental health and strength part of our preparedness.

Spiritually, we must focus on strengthening our testimonies so they will withstand the trials that will come to all the faithful. President Russell M. Nelson stated: “Our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, will perform some of His mightiest works between now and when He comes

again. We will see miraculous indications that God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, preside over this Church in majesty and glory. But in coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost.”¹⁰

As the Savior taught, each of us must build our spiritual house upon the rock—which means living in obedience to His teachings—so that we will have a firm foundation (see 3 Nephi 14:24–25). This will be necessary to survive the spiritual buffetings that are sure to come.

As we work to prepare ourselves and the world for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, we must prepare our families temporally for what has been foretold concerning those days. Natural disasters, societal upheavals, and political unrest all await us as foretold by our prophets. These events will require careful preparation to physically protect ourselves and our families.

Likewise, we must protect ourselves and

our families from the evils that would destroy us. Relying on personal revelation; practicing regular habits of spiritual nourishment, including prayer and repentance; and standing in holy places will help us build testimonies that are strong and immovable.

Then we may rest assured in the Lord’s promise that if we are prepared—both temporally and spiritually—we need not fear (see Doctrine and Covenants 38:30). ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. David A. Bednar, “We Will Prove Them Herewith,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2020, 9.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “Embrace the Future with Faith,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2020, 74.
3. Russell M. Nelson, “Opening Message,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 6.
4. Russell M. Nelson, “Hear Him,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 88, 89, 90.
5. Russell M. Nelson, “Opening Message,” 6.
6. Dallin H. Oaks, “Preparation for the Second Coming,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2004, 8.
7. Dallin H. Oaks, “Preparation for the Second Coming,” 10.
8. Hans T. Boom, “Knowing, Loving, and Growing,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2019, 105.
9. Russell M. Nelson, “We Can Do Better and Be Better,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 67.
10. Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 96.



From Sewing Society to Relief Society

By Patricia Lemmon Spilsbury

Church History Department

What could Margaret Cook, a single sister of limited means, do to help contribute to the building of the Nauvoo Temple?

In Nauvoo during the early 1840s, the Saints were poor and goods were scarce. Of necessity, they were all involved in building homes and businesses. Yet their primary interest was in building the Nauvoo Temple.

Church leaders frequently called upon Saints in the area and abroad to assist with labor and materials. In the Church newspaper *Times and Seasons*, the Saints were taught that “the Temple is to be built by tithing and consecration, and everyone is at liberty to consecrate all they find in their hearts so to do . . . , whether it be money or whatever he may be blessed with.” Church leaders also urged the Saints to donate “bedding, socks, mittens, shoes, clothing of every description, and store goods . . . for the comfort of the laborers this winter.”¹



On March 1, 1842, Margaret Cook visited Sarah Kimball to do some sewing for her. They discussed the recent appeals for support of the temple laborers. Margaret’s means were meager, but her sewing skill could be useful to those needing clothing. If fabric could be made available, Margaret said she “would be pleased to contribute needlework.”² Sarah said she would provide the material, and as they continued conversing, they wondered if others might want to help as well. They spoke with friends about organizing a sewing society.

This conversation, prompted by Margaret and Sarah acting on inspira- tion, led to further interactions with

others, including the Prophet Joseph Smith. In response, the Lord told His prophet that He had “something better” for the women and inspired Joseph to organize them under “the pattern of the priesthood.”³ This laid the revelatory foundation of what we know today as Relief Society, one of the world’s oldest and largest women’s service organizations. ■

Continue reading in this issue in the Gospel Library to learn how Sarah and Margaret’s simple conversation led to the Prophet Joseph Smith organizing the Relief Society.

NOTES

1. “Baptism for the Dead,” *Times and Seasons*, Dec. 15, 1841, 626, 627; spelling modernized.
2. Recollection of Sarah M. Kimball, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 11.
3. See *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 12.



Receiving Godly Power

Activity

Materials needed: pencil, a piece of paper with two columns labeled "Name" and "Plan for next or needful ordinance."²

Instructions: List each family member and consider what will help them prepare for their next ordinance (including the sacrament). For example, parents might have a child approaching baptismal age, or teens might have an older sibling preparing to receive temple ordinances. You could complete this activity together for home evening and create specific plans to help each other move along the covenant path.

“In the ordinances [of the Melchizedek Priesthood], the power of godliness is manifest” (Doctrine and Covenants 84:20).

How to Progress on the Covenant Path

The priesthood ordinances we receive are more than a checklist. President Tad R. Callister, former Sunday School General President, taught that “each unleashes a godly power” in our lives.¹

Discussion

How has participating in ordinances brought power into your life? How can you help members of your family prepare to receive their next ordinance?



Blessings

By receiving the power of priesthood ordinances, we can become more like Jesus Christ. The gift of the Holy Ghost will enlighten our minds and soften our hearts to think and feel more like Him.³ And connecting more fully with the power of God will help your family overcome even the most difficult trials.⁴

NOTES

1. Tad R. Callister, “The Atonement of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 87.
2. See description of Elder David A. Bednar’s suggestion in Gary E. Stevenson, “Your Four Minutes,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 86.
3. See Tad R. Callister, “The Atonement of Jesus Christ,” 87.
4. See Neil L. Andersen, “Trial of Your Faith,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 40.



Knowing How and What We Worship

In Doctrine and Covenants section 93, God reveals certain truths about Jesus Christ so we can “know how to worship, and know what [we] worship” (verse 19). This life presents us with many distractions to our true worship of our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

“Whatever thing a man sets his heart and his trust in most is his god,” wrote President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) to Church members in 1976; “and if his god doesn’t also happen to be the true and living God of Israel, that man is laboring in idolatry.”

Following is a brief excerpt from President Kimball’s still-applicable message:

NOTE

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 146, 151–52.

“One young man, when called on a mission, replied that he didn’t have much talent for that kind of thing. What he was good at was keeping his powerful new automobile in top condition. . . .

“All along, his father had been content with saying, ‘He likes to do things with his hands. That’s good enough for him.’

“Good enough for a son of God? This young man didn’t realize that the power of his automobile is infinitesimally small in comparison with the power of the sea, or of the sun; and there are many suns, all controlled by law and by

priesthood, ultimately—a priesthood power that he could have been developing in the service of the Lord. He settled for a pitiful god, a composite of steel and rubber and shiny chrome. . . .

“Our assignment is affirmative: to forsake the things of the world as ends in themselves; to leave off idolatry and press forward in faith. . . .

“. . . When a person begins to catch a vision of the true work, when he begins to see something of eternity in its true perspective, the blessings begin to far outweigh the cost of leaving ‘the world’ behind.”¹





**By Elder
Matthew S.
Holland**

Of the Seventy

*In revelation,
Joseph foresaw
the American
Civil War and
other calamities
but also received
divine guidance
about how to be
at peace.*

Prophecy of War

Prescription for Peace


Years ago, at the end of one particularly uplifting and fun-filled day of celebrating Christmas with my family, one of my children looked up at me and asked, “How long until Christmas comes again?”

Even though it is August, many of us, of any age, can easily imagine and anticipate the kinds of things we might be doing and enjoying this coming December 25th.

Despite the real possibility of worldwide weariness over the lingering threat of COVID-19, economic challenges, and political and cultural divisiveness, chances are that most of us will set such things aside and be utterly engaged in a festive and spiritual celebration of the birth of our Savior. But in our current climate, we may sympathize with what was on Joseph Smith’s mind on December 25, 1832.

Concerns Led to Revelation

As the year was ending, the Prophet was alarmed by the increasing “appearances of troubles among the nations” (Doctrine and Covenants 87, section heading). In particular, he noted a global pandemic of cholera and the threat of the “immediate dissolution” of the United States. In his words, the state of South Carolina, disagreeing with the direction and policies of the federal government, “passed ordinances, declaring their state a free and independent nation.”¹

A man with light brown hair, wearing a green long-sleeved shirt, is seated at a wooden desk. He is looking down at a small, dark book he is holding in his hands. The desk is cluttered with papers and a quill pen. In the background, there is a window with sheer curtains and a shelf with various items, including a glass jar and a wooden bowl. The lighting is soft and warm, suggesting an indoor setting during the day.

On December 25, 1832, these concerns opened Joseph's heart and mind to a most remarkable revelation, known today as section 87 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The revelation foretold key aspects of America's Civil War almost 30 years before it began. It also gave clear, spiritual direction for all calamitous times.

Observant or Prophetic?

The revelation began with a warning: soon the United States would be plagued with war, starting with "the rebellion of South Carolina" (verse 1). In the ensuing conflict, "the Southern States shall be divided against the Northern States" (verse 3).

If this were the extent of the prophecy, it might be said that Joseph Smith was just observant, not prophetic. In 1832 it already appeared that South Carolina was in rebellion and that war might be on the way.

But there is so much more to this prophecy and the events surrounding it.

Joseph was told that:

- This conflict would precede war being "poured out upon all nations" (verse 3). Less than 50 years from the end of the Civil War, the first of two world wars began.
- All these conflicts would "eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls" (verse 1). To this day, more American lives were lost in the Civil War than all other U.S. wars combined.² U.S. president Abraham

Lincoln himself noted in his second inaugural address, "Neither party expected for the war, the magnitude, or the duration, which it has already attained."³ And, however bloody the Civil War was, its death toll pales in comparison to that of the two world wars that followed, where the combined estimates of casualties range anywhere from 70 million to 160 million lives.⁴

- The South would “call on . . . Great Britain” for support (verse 3), and “after many days, slaves [would] rise up against their masters” and be “marshaled . . . for war” (verse 4). Both of these things happened.⁵

Subject to Ridicule

After the 1832 crisis with South Carolina subsided, and before the Civil War began in 1861, Joseph was hardly considered “observant.” He and others who held to the revelation were ridiculed.

Elder Orson Pratt (1811–1881) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said that from the time he was 19 years old, he preached this prophecy all across the upper United States. Generally, his teaching was regarded as “the height of nonsense,” and he was “laughed . . . to scorn.” He specifically noted reaction in Kansas, where many were certain that if war came, it would surely start there, where pro- and anti-slavery forces were often in intense and sometimes bloody conflict.

But Elder Pratt declared, “Behold and lo! in process of time [these events] came to pass [as Joseph had prophesied], again establishing the divinity of this work, and giving another proof that God is in this work, and is performing that which He spoke.”⁶

Section 87—a detailed, unerring, 30-year-in-advance description of the key events of the Civil War and the nature of the world wars (among others) that would soon follow—is a powerful witness to the inspired nature and prophetic calling of Joseph Smith. Yet it offers even more.

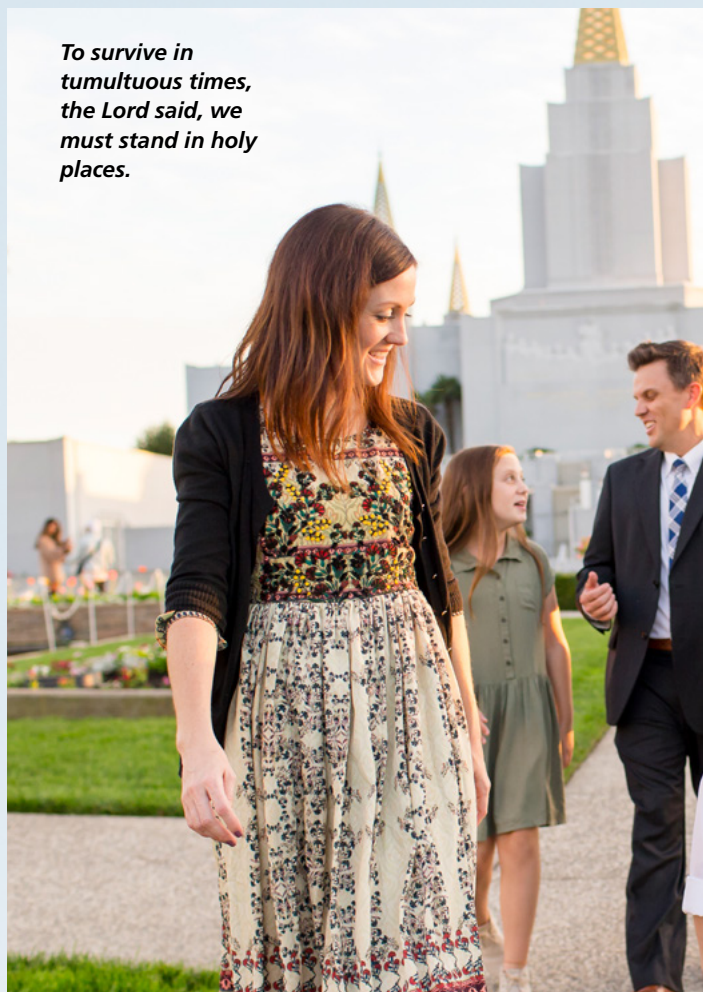
Stand in Holy Places

In addition to the wars that would plague the earth in the latter days, Joseph was also told of famines, plagues, earthquakes, thunder, and vivid lightning that “the inhabitants of the earth” will experience until there is “a full end of all nations” (verse 6). To survive all of this, the Lord gives one, crystal-clear command: “Stand ye in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come” (verse 8).

As Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles recently explained: “When we stand in holy places—our righteous homes, our dedicated chapels, the consecrated temples—we feel the Spirit of the Lord with us. We find answers to questions that trouble us or the peace to simply set them aside. That is the Spirit in action. These sacred places in the kingdom of God on earth call for our reverence, our respect for others, our best selves in living the gospel, and our hopes to lay aside our fears and seek the healing power of Jesus Christ through His Atonement.”⁷

But, as Elder Rasband suggests, even in these tangible places of holiness, *how* we stand is even more important than *where* we stand. We must always live in and according to the full light of the Lord Jesus Christ. As

***To survive in
tumultuous times,
the Lord said, we
must stand in holy
places.***



we remain immovable in doing so, we will be standing in a holy place wherever we are physically and whatever dangers surround us.

A Place of Safety

In Kelsey, Texas, in 1942, at the height of World War II, a group of Latter-day Saints approached President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973), who was at the time a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. They asked, “Is now the day for us to come up to Zion, . . . where we can be protected from our enemies?”

President Lee took the question seriously. After pondering, studying, and praying for some time, he concluded: “I know now that the place of safety in this world is not in any given place; it doesn’t make so much difference where we live; but the all-important

thing is how we live, and I have found that security can come to Israel only when [we] keep the commandments, when [we] live so that [we] can enjoy the companionship, the direction, the comfort, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit of the Lord, when [we] are willing to listen to these men whom God has set here to preside as His mouthpieces, and when we obey the counsels of the Church.”⁸

A Guide to Peace

Section 87 proved remarkably prescient. Such prophecy should help build our faith in Christ and His chosen servants. We need such faith more than ever because this revelation is also a sobering reminder about the likely challenges still ahead.

As the world continues to hear of “wars and rumors of wars” (Doctrine and Covenants 45:26) and an array of natural and human disasters, we should all be grateful that on a festive December 25 in 1832, a thoughtful and inspired prophet of God took time to listen to and carefully record the warning words and saving command of Jesus Christ Himself. Of such a precious Christmas gift we might say, “In this there is safety; in this there is peace.”⁹ ■

NOTES

1. See Joseph Smith, “History, 1838–1856, volume A-1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834],” 244, josephsmithpapers.org; capitalization and punctuation standardized. For a fuller discussion of the historical context of this revelation, see Scott C. Esplin, “‘Have We Not Had a Prophet Among Us?’: Joseph Smith’s Civil War Prophecy,” in *Civil War Saints*, ed. Kenneth L. Alford (2012), 41–59. See also Daniel H. Ludlow’s useful selection of related documents in *A Companion to Your Study of the Doctrine and Covenants* (1978), 1:444–49; 2:277–78.
2. See American Battlefield Trust, “Civil War Casualties,” battlefields.org; Guy Gugliotta, “New Estimate Raises Civil War Death Toll,” *New York Times*, April 2, 2012, nytimes.com.
3. Abraham Lincoln, second inaugural address, Library of Congress, loc.gov/item/mal4361300.
4. See Encyclopaedia Britannica, “World War II: Costs of the War,” Britannica.com.
5. For a detailed analysis of Britain and the war, see Amanda Foreman, *A World on Fire: Britain’s Crucial Role in the American Civil War* (2010). For information about slaves who fought, see National Archives, “Black Soldiers in the U.S. Military during the Civil War,” archives.gov/education/lessons/blacks-civil-war.
6. See Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 18:224; 13:135.
7. Ronald A. Rasband, “Be Not Troubled,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 19.
8. Harold B. Lee, in Conference Report, Apr. 1943, 129.
9. “Keep the Commandments,” *Hymns*, no. 303.





“This is the light of Christ. As also he is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which it was made” (Doctrine and Covenants 88: 7).

The Light of Christ

By J. Ward Moody, PhD


Retired Professor of Astronomy, Brigham Young University

Doctrine and Covenants 88:7–10 speaks of how truth “shineth” and is the Light of Christ. It says that He is in or is the light of the sun, moon, and stars and is the power thereof by which they and the earth were made.

Light is one of the most profound and essential entities in all of nature. It transports energy, warmth, and information across the cold emptiness of space in a way that science is still trying to comprehend. We know of only two things it could possibly be: a stream of particles called “photons” or an energetic wave in a continuous “field” traversing space. Despite significant efforts spanning hundreds of years, we still cannot say which of these it is, for it seems to be both at once.

Of course, our lack of understanding does not keep us from benefiting from light. Light from the sun warms and energizes the earth, making life possible. We live our daily lives only because we can see, and we can see only because light flows into the immensity of space from all things that glow or reflect. Light allows us to know and learn when it touches our eyes. Because of light, we can act, progress, and grow. Take away light and all would be an icy, unedifying desolation. People in places devoid of light can only stumble in darkness.

Small wonder, then, that truth that shineth is equated with the Light of Christ. Truth and with it charity, peace, righteousness, and all good things flow from the Savior to us. Just as physical light gives us understanding



of physical things when it touches our eyes, the Light of Christ gives us understanding of spiritual things when it touches our hearts. Because the universe is filled with the Light of Christ, we can spiritually learn, progress, and grow. Take away the Light of Christ and all would be a meaningless, unedifying desolation. People devoid of this light stumble in the icy darkness of error, having no guidance.

These verses of scripture say that Christ is light and the power by which the bodies in the heavens were made. Astronomers will say that forces from gravity, heat, and atomic interactions created the stars, sun, earth, and moon and gave them the natures they have. This is true, but to paraphrase Nobel laureate Richard Feynman, we in science describe how these creative forces work without really knowing why they are what they are. Asking why is asking what the purpose of forces really is. These scriptures tell us that Christ, and with Him the work and glory of God in bringing to pass the immortality and eternal

life of man (see Moses 1:39), is in the very purpose and reason for having a physical universe in the first place.

Physical light serves as a symbol for the spiritual Light of Christ. We learn from Doctrine and Covenants 88:11 that there may be a greater connection than just a metaphor. This scripture says, “And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings.” This seems to suggest that physical light and spiritual light are different manifestations of the same thing. Perhaps the essence of light is difficult for science to understand because scientific inquiry alone does not give a complete picture. It may be that an understanding of light must enfold the very nature of Jesus Christ Himself to be complete. When we at last understand the processes through which God enlightens us, then and only then will we understand the nature of physical light as well, and with it the nature of His universe. ■

Teaching about the Priesthood and Preparedness

Dear Parents,

Topics for this month include the priesthood, mental health, and spiritual and temporal preparedness. Use this section to get ideas on how you can use this issue to help you recognize specific struggles your children may be facing and to help you teach the gospel of Jesus Christ in your home.



COME, FOLLOW ME FAMILY FUN

Organize Yourself

Doctrine and Covenants 88

Our homes can follow this pattern: “Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:119).

Organize means to arrange things in order or to prepare an activity or event.

Organize your family in different ways:

- Have them stand in line from oldest to youngest.
- Have them stand in alphabetical order, according to their first name.
- Have them line up according to the month of their birth.

Discussion: How does the Savior want us to organize ourselves (1) in our household jobs, (2) in our spiritual study, (3) in our worship at church and in the temple?

What goals can your family set to create a “house of God”?

Submitted by Lisa Thomas

GOSPEL DISCUSSIONS

Priesthood

As you teach your children about the priesthood and priesthood ordinances, use “Gospel Basics” on page 10 in addition to President Dallin H. Oaks’s article on page 6. Discuss with your children the importance of the priesthood and how the Lord blesses our lives through it.



Mental Health

The article “How Do I Support a Child Who Is Feeling Depressed?” on page 16 talks about some ways you can recognize symptoms of depression in your child and suggests some healthy coping mechanisms. Use this article along with the articles on pages 12 and 18 to help your children deal with mental health challenges.

Spiritual and Temporal Refuge

The article on page 20 can help your family develop an emergency-preparedness plan if you haven’t done so already. More important, it also teaches some of the parallels for our spiritual preparedness.

Come, Follow Me Study Helps

See page 26 for articles to support your family’s study of the Doctrine and Covenants this month.

IN THIS MONTH'S FOR THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH MAGAZINE

Goal Setting

Does your teen struggle to make and keep goals? Follow the principles in this article to teach them how to break down their goals into manageable pieces.

"Mental Illnesses: How You Can Help!"

In this article, three youth share their struggles with anxiety, depression, and eating disorders. Learn with your teen about how to better help and understand these individuals—and what to do if you have a mental illness.

"Young Women and the Priesthood"

Read words from Church leaders to teach your family about young women's relationship with priesthood power and authority.



IN THIS MONTH'S FRIEND MAGAZINE

"Taking Care of Me!"

Use this activity to teach your children about taking care of themselves by living the Word of Wisdom and nourishing their spiritual and emotional health.

Scripture Study Help

Find family-friendly activities for each week of *Come, Follow Me* this month.

"Peace through Priesthood Power"

Read a message about priesthood blessings from Elder Steven R. Bangerter of the Seventy. Also look for a page in the For Older Kids section about why the priesthood is important for both girls and boys.

Join the Helping Hands Team

Read about a boy in Poland who helps people in his community. Then do this month's helping hands activity!

"Still Hearing Dad's Song"

Leah is upset when her friend says her dad won't go to heaven because he died by suicide. Read this digital-only story to help you have a conversation with your child about suicide and grief.

Goals for the Young at Heart

By Christy Monson

When the Church began the new Children and Youth program, I heard our children and grandchildren discuss their plans for goals and lessons. I'm almost 80, but I wanted to be part of this great testimony-building opportunity.

My children and grandchildren live all over the country, so we can't all meet in person. Instead, we decided to hold a monthly online meeting. One of the grandchildren would give a lesson and lead a gospel discussion. Afterward, everyone would share their goals and their progress in achieving them. Of course, some goals were personal, and we respected each person's privacy.

As I talked with my grandchildren about their goals, I began to think about my own goals. What did I want to accomplish?

Here's a list of the goals I came up with, following the subjects and patterns used in the Children and Youth program. I like to call them my goals for the young at heart.

Intellectual. Our stake Relief Society presidency asked the sisters to memorize "The Living Christ."¹ It's long, but I knew I could still memorize that much material, and it seemed like a worthwhile goal.

Spiritual. As I serve in the temple, at times I stand for an hour or more at a stairwell and direct patrons to the dressing room. I like to keep my mind busy, so I decided to memorize the old seminary Scripture Mastery verses for the Book of Mormon. When the temples closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, I continued with this goal anyway. Memorizing gives my mind something to do and fills me with the Spirit.

Physical. Our grandchildren's physical goals were based on dancing, volleyball, and surfing, among others. None of those worked for me, so I chose to walk a few miles a day. I find that I'm more alert when I exercise. It's good for my mind and my body.

Social. I love keeping in touch with my children and grandchildren. We used to talk on the phone (and still do), but texting is the new way to

*As I learned about
the new Children
and Youth program,
I wanted to be
part of it.*





PHOTO ILLUSTRATION AND SONAR WAVE IMAGES FROM GETTY IMAGES

communicate now. The kids taught me about emojis and short little videos.

Several of the grandchildren included learning to cook as a goal. When they came to town, we cooked together. For those who live farther away, we do a video call with each other to discuss recipes and cook in “real time.”

I also love calling the sisters I minister to. During the time of social distancing brought on by the pandemic, chatting on the phone has been a wonderful means of keeping in touch. Sometimes I go to their homes and leave prepackaged treats on their doorsteps with a note expressing my love for them.

Growing in the Gospel

What a blessing the Children and Youth program has been for me and my family during the pandemic. Even though I’m home alone day after day, I have my goals. The grandkids continue to develop their talents and grow in the gospel, and I am able to support them. We look forward to our online family meetings and times of sharing.

And thanks to the inspiration that came while helping my grandchildren work on their goals, my focus is now more clearly set on my goals, both short-term and eternal. I work and pray every day to “let God prevail” in my life and the lives of my family members.² ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles,” ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
2. See Russel M. Nelson, “Let God Prevail,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2020, 92–95.

LEARN AND GROW

“Heavenly Father invites us everywhere to feel His love, to learn and grow through education, honorable work, self-reliant service, and patterns of goodness and happiness we find in His restored Church.”

Elder Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “All Nations, Kindreds, and Tongues,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2020, 40.

**Gregorio
Gutiérrez
Fernández**
Santa Cruz, Bolivia

*My wife and I have
physical challenges,
but because of our
faith, the Lord blesses
and strengthens us.
He healed me of my
sickness.*

DISCOVER MORE

Read Gregorio's story at
[ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/82138](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/82138).

Are You Two Sisters?

By Kerry Owen, Utah, USA

The young boy's question caught me by surprise and taught me an important lesson.

My friend Laurie Wharemate Keung is Maori. I am of English descent. We have contrasting skin tones, eye color, hair color, and height. We couldn't look more different. Yet one day while Laurie and I were serving children at a low-income school, a young Maori boy surprised us with a question.

"Are you two sisters?" he asked.

I chuckled, thinking his question was insincere. The boy, however, asked me again, "Are you two sisters?"

Realizing that he was sincere, I paused for a moment and wondered, "Could this boy not see the clear differences in our appearance and race?" Perhaps he did but thought it made no difference. He eagerly awaited my answer.

I told him we were not sisters, which disappointed him. But I added that we often felt like sisters as we served together. He seemed satisfied with that answer and ran off to his table.

This boy's sincere question left an indelible mark on me. Why? Because his question spoke a truth to me—that



family isn't limited to genetics or appearance. My husband and I have been blessed to adopt two of our children. We love them, and love and service are an essential part of families.

After all, we are all children of our "one God and Father" (Ephesians 4:6).

I concluded that this boy must have been watching Laurie and me interacting. Maybe as he saw us helping or hugging each other, he assumed we were sisters. His question reminded me that children are always watching adults and forming opinions by what we say and do and how we treat each other.

If this boy could assume we were sisters, then surely children across the world can assume we are *all* brothers and sisters if only we love and serve one another.

Our differences allowed Laurie and me to bring diverse strengths and perspectives to our charity work, making it more effective. Rather than let our differences divide us, we used them to do good and in turn form a close friendship. The young boy's question can be a lesson for all of God's children. ■

Winning a Debate

Name withheld

I learned that God's love for us is not based on our schooling, employment, or ability to win a debate.

One day while I was having a heated online discussion about politics, my opinions were mocked because of the type of education I had received in college.

I enjoy a good debate, but the personal attack was unwarranted. The comments hurt because they appeared to call into question my personal worth. What made it worse was that the person who made the remarks was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

On reflection, however, I began to see that I too had made cheap personal comments in order to win an argument. I realized that this type of behavior was common in the society around me.

I came to learn that failing to recognize dignity in others can cause serious damage, especially in the Church. The prophet Alma preached powerfully against “envyings, and strife, and malice, and persecutions, and pride” in the Church (Alma 4:9). He saw that such behavior was “a great stumbling-block” to the progress of the Church (see Alma 4:10).

The encounter made me reflect on my worth in God's eyes. Studying

further, I found a quote by Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He taught that Heavenly Father “loves us because He is filled with an infinite measure of holy, pure, and indescribable love. We are important to God not because of our résumé but because we are His children.”¹

I learned that God's love for us does not depend on our schooling, employment, or ability to win a debate. God loves us purely, infinitely, and freely because He is our Father and we are His children.

Feeling God's immense love dissolved my enmity. I realized that while it is OK to disagree with others, simply arguing with one another accomplishes nothing but hurt and damage.

If Jesus Christ was willing to lay down His life, I know that we can learn to lay down our pride, look past the vanity of the world, and value each other as God does. In His eyes, the way we treat each other says more about us than whether we win an online debate. ■

NOTE

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Love of God,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 22–23.





Tennis Shoes in the Temple

By Brian Zimmerman, Utah, USA

Would others judge me the way I had unfairly judged another?

During a priesthood meeting, I noticed a quorum member wearing jeans and tennis shoes. I wondered, “Why would he come to church in casual clothing? Is he being rebellious? Is he hard-hearted? Does he not feel the Spirit in his life?”

If he truly had a vibrant testimony, certainly he would show more respect for sacred meetings and places.

A week later while my wife and I visited our daughter, we wanted to go to the temple with her. As I opened my suitcase, I was shocked to discover that I had forgotten my dress shoes! Because our temple session was starting soon, I didn’t have time to buy a new pair. So I decided to wear my tennis shoes.

As I was putting on my shoes, I

immediately remembered the priesthood meeting. Here I was, preparing to go to one of the most sacred places on earth dressed in tennis shoes. I wondered what others might think. Would they judge me as being rebellious and hard-hearted or lacking the Spirit or a vibrant testimony?

I was ashamed of my previous quick, unfair judgment. Who was I to question someone’s testimony because of his clothing? I knew nothing of his circumstances.

The Savior focused on the spiritual progress of all His Father’s children. As He reminded Samuel, “The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

A person’s clothing, appearance, race, or gender should make no difference. We are all brothers and sisters. The fact that this brother was attending church should have been the center of my focus.

We should always try to wear our best clothes when we go to church or the temple.¹ However, we shouldn’t judge others on what they are wearing, because we never know their circumstances.

All those around us truly have divine potential. We should offer Christlike love to all of our brothers and sisters no matter their outward appearance, even if they wear tennis shoes in the temple! ■

NOTE

1. See *General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 38.8.17, ChurchofJesusChrist.org.



Strengthening My Relationship with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ

Building a stronger relationship with Them always seemed abstract to me, until I tried something new.

By Chakell Wardleigh Herbert

Church Magazines

The older I get, the more I realize how much I rely on relationships—relationships with friends, family, and even the delivery people who never fail to bring me my latest online order (bless them).

And for years, I knew that the frequent counsel from our Church leaders to build relationships with Heavenly Father and the Savior was true and important.¹

But I just couldn't figure out how to actually do that.

Earthly relationships with my friends and family involve having conversations, sharing inside jokes, and spending time together. So the thought of having a personal relationship with my Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, who aren't physically present, always seemed so abstract to me.

However, as I was pondering, I realized that everyone's relationship with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ is personal and unique. So what if I applied some practical approaches that have helped me develop strong relationships with my loved ones here on earth to my relationship with Them?

That idea was the spark I needed.

I decided to put this idea to the test and to reevaluate my relationship with Them after 10 days.

10 Ways to Strengthen Relationships

As I was pondering ways to come closer to Heavenly Father and the Savior, I researched 10 basic relationship tips that are often given by professionals and combined them with prophetic counsel to give them a spiritual focus.

Here are the 10 tips:

1. Communicate honestly, out loud, and with real intent through prayer.²
2. Be a good listener.³
3. Show Them appreciation.⁴
4. Make sacrifices for Them.⁵
5. Learn about Them.⁶
6. Spend quality time with Them.⁷
7. Serve together.⁸
8. Show Them trust and commitment.⁹
9. Admit when you're wrong.¹⁰
10. Learn how They show you love.¹¹

To start out, I chose to learn about my Heavenly Father and the Savior (#5), to spend quality time with Them (#6), and to learn how They offered me love (#10).

1. Learning about Them

To learn more about Them, I focused on studying Their character traits. I studied “The Living Christ,” stories of miracles in the Book of Mormon, and general conference talks. I also watched the Church’s Bible and Book of Mormon videos to get a visual of the Savior’s attributes and how He taught and interacted with others.

One attribute of the Savior I studied was His willingness to do the will of the Father (see 3 Nephi 11:11). I can’t fathom someone being willing to suffer and die for all the mistakes, sorrow, sins, and pain that everyone will ever face when this individual did no wrong. And yet, someone was willing.

He was.

I have always had faith in Him, but pondering His love and willingness to give up His life for me deepened my faith, my gratitude, and my own willingness to follow Him. And His courage inspired me to move forward with faith and hope, even while sometimes facing anxiety and fear of the unknown.

And then I turned to Heavenly Father’s character.

I’ve dealt with perfectionism for most of my life, and I used to imagine Him as an angry figure when I disappointed Him with my weaknesses and mistakes.

But as I have studied more of His nature, I’ve learned that He is not a merciless being (see Alma 32:22). He is patient and kind and loving (see 2 Peter 3:9). He is always willing to forgive me (see Mosiah 26:29–31). He is my biggest supporter (see 2 Nephi 26:24).

And I realized that He really *is* my Father and I am His divine child. He loves me completely (see John 3:16–17) and simply wants me to return.

Learning about the nature of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ changed my whole perception of how They feel about

me and how present They actually are in my life. And I realized that They are not strangers to me—I’ve known Them since the beginning, and They have always known me too.

2. Spending Time with Them

Just as I might set aside time to visit a friend, I made time to spend with Heavenly Father and the Savior every day. I said heartfelt prayers out loud and took time to listen. I played and pondered my favorite hymns. I meditated. And because temples were closed (due to COVID-19), I would go on peaceful walks.

I usually have a podcast or audiobook sounding in my ear when I go walking. But during these walks, I disconnected from the world. I chose to listen for Them. Doing this helped me connect with the Spirit and recognize and ponder the intricate details of the world and my purpose.

I realized how much thought Heavenly Father and the Savior put into Their creations—including me.

I felt a lot of spiritual power come from that quality quiet time with my Heavenly Father and Savior. I recognized more of my blessings, I found greater gratitude for life overall, I received more assurance in my decisions, and I could feel Their quiet strength sustaining me.

Just as with any other relationship, prioritizing quality time brought us much closer.

3. Recognizing How They Show Me Love

We all best receive love in certain ways.¹² I thought about how other people have shown me love and what has affected me the most over the years, and I realized that I’ve always felt most loved through the meaningful words of others.

And when I realized this, I also realized that for me, the most profound answers to prayer or the greatest comfort from Heavenly Father or the Savior has *always* been through words, whether those words came from someone who was prompted to talk to me, through truths in the scriptures,

through books, or through beautiful quotes from prophets and apostles. Words have always filled my soul and given me comfort more than anything else.

I also thought of how They offer me love through other means, like through my loved ones, through strangers, and even through pleasant “coincidences” and mercies. I was moved to tears when I recognized just how They show me love in so many ways, but especially in the way I receive it best. They truly know us and how to reach us personally and effectively.

We too can show Them love in the best ways we know how—by sharing the gospel, following Them, and serving others.

If you need help figuring out how They show you love, ask Heavenly Father for help in recognizing it. He will show you.¹³

Building Real Relationships

This experience gave me a glimpse at how much spiritual strength I can gain by prioritizing my relationship with Heavenly Father and the Savior.

And I plan to keep on utilizing these relationship tips. I now truly see my relationship with Them as real, powerful, precious, and eternal. They aren’t intangible, as I once thought.

They are with us. They are in the details. They stand ready to shower us with strength, comfort, wisdom, guidance, and peace, especially when we make time and room for Them in our lives.

Try out your own methods to grow closer to Them and see what happens! I can testify that as we prioritize these vital relationships and follow Them, we will be able to access the Savior’s healing influence, move forward with faith (see Philippians 4:13), and find greater confidence and joy.

I know I have. ■

NOTES

1. See James E. Faust, “A Personal Relationship with the Savior,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1976, 58–59.
2. See “How I #HearHim: Elder Jeffrey R. Holland” (video), [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/media](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/media).
3. See Russell M. Nelson, “Hear Him,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 88–92.
4. See Thomas S. Monson, “The Divine Gift of Gratitude,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 87–90.
5. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Sacrifice,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 19–22.
6. See Russell M. Nelson, “Prophets, Leadership, and Divine Law” (worldwide devotional for young adults, Jan. 8, 2017), [broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
7. See M. Russell Ballard, “How I Hear Him in Still and Quiet Moments,” blog post, July 17, 2020, [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
8. See Cristina B. Franco, “The Joy of Unselfish Service,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 55–57.
9. See Russell M. Nelson, “Let God Prevail,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2020, 92–95.
10. See Russell M. Nelson, “We Can Do Better and Be Better,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 67–69.
11. See Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Love of God,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 21–24.
12. See Gary Chapman, *The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts* (2010).
13. See Sheri L. Dew, *Worth the Wrestle* (2017), 8, 9, 41.

Finding Spiritual Support after Joining the Church Alone

By Marcus Grant

I had never felt so distant from my parents, but Heavenly Father sent angels to strengthen me.

For me, joining the Church by myself, without the reassuring testimonies of my friends and family, was challenging and lonely.

Finding the Church was a long-awaited answer to my prayers to better understand my Savior and live my life as He did. But I came from a devout family actively involved in a Baptist church, and my decision to become a Latter-day Saint was misunderstood and aggressively rejected.

My parents wanted what they thought was best for me and believed that my leaving our family's religious upbringing would destroy my faith.

Things became even more difficult when my father passed away from cancer just before I was baptized. Coping with the loss of my loving father while also having to choose between God's will and my family's will was almost unbearable.

I felt like I was being pushed to my limit.

Heavenly Father's Angels

When Jesus Christ was suffering in Gethsemane, God sent an angel to strengthen Him (see Luke 22:43). I believe that angel was sent to Christ's aid as an expression of Heavenly Father's unfailing love. Likewise, He sent angels to strengthen me.

Among these angels were Sister Neff and Sister Smallcomb, the missionaries who first taught me. They had the testimony and intellect to guide me through my intense questions. And the more of Christ's love I witnessed through them, the more I grew to love the gospel.

Years after my baptism, I spoke with Sister Smallcomb and thanked her for still being willing to address my questions. I also expressed that I hoped I wasn't bothering her.

"Marcus," she said, laughing, "you can send me questions about the gospel for the rest of forever."

It was so comforting to know that I had someone I could turn to for answers. In a way, Sister Neff and Sister Smallcomb were my mentors in the gospel, helping to guide me along my path of conversion and helping me understand what it means to be a member of the Church.

But they wouldn't be the only ones to guide me.

Finding Other Mentors

I used to love having spiritual discussions with my family. But when I joined the Church, those

conversations—at least for a season—became impossible to have. Spiritual discussions with my family left me feeling drained rather than invigorated.

Living the gospel without my family was not a trial I could endure by myself. Gratefully, my Heavenly Father and the faithful bishop in my young single adult ward were there to help.

No matter what I discussed with my bishop, I always grew spiritually. I felt the support and love I needed.

Maybe your spiritual needs aren't filled through a bishop. But an institute teacher, a mission president, a senior missionary couple, a ministering brother or sister, a friend, and so many others can be there to support you.

How do we seek those mentors in our lives? One of the most important steps is doing your best to continue living the gospel. And you can trust that a perfect Heavenly Father can (and *will*) guide many Christlike people to help you.

You can also find a mentor by placing yourself in positive situations. Carrying out a ministering assignment, magnifying a calling, offering meals to missionaries and joining them for lessons, attending institute, and bearing your testimony are all ways to create opportunities to develop good relationships.

Trusting in Heavenly Father

Throughout my journey, whenever I felt alone, Heavenly Father continued to send angels my way to comfort and strengthen me.

I realized that I was never truly in a position where I didn't have support. Heavenly Father always led me to help, especially when things were tense at home. All I had to do was keep my faith in Him and keep my spiritual eyes and ears open for His guidance and blessings. I solemnly testify that the Savior's words are true:

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

I lovingly encourage you to keep yourself involved in the gospel as you pray for Heavenly Father to guide you to the beneficial relationships and mentors that will help you stay on the covenant path and return to Him. ■

The author lives in Virginia, USA.



MORE FOR YOU!

You can find more articles specifically for young adults in the digital version of the August *Liahona* in the Gospel Library (at ChurchofJesusChrist.org or in the mobile app).

This month, you'll find more articles about the power of relationships, how to increase your capacity for positive communication, and keys to building a strong foundation in marriage.

DIGITAL ARTICLES

Kindness: Something the Whole World Needs

By Eric B. Murdock, Church Magazines

The Blessings of Connecting with Ancestors

By Marianna Bártfai, Western Transdanubia, Hungary

4 Ways to Access the Power of Positive Communication

By Margaret Willes, Church Magazines

How Do I Honor My Father and Mother as a Young Adult?

By Emily Abel, Utah, USA

3 Insights into Building a Firm Foundation in Marriage

By Natalie Clay, Utah, USA

Improving My Relationship with My In-Laws—and Myself

Name withheld

Living in Harmony with Our Roommates

By Emily Taylor and Tyler Martin, Utah, USA

3 Steps to Better Communication for Stronger Relationships

By Molly Holt, Church Magazines



YA WEEKLY

You can also find new articles each week in YA Weekly, located in the Young Adults section of the Gospel Library (at ChurchofJesusChrist.org or in the mobile app).

From the Mission Field

3 Tips for Learning the Language of the Spirit

By Sebastián Hernández Cárdenas, Atlántico, Colombia

Life Skills

Do You Want to *Finally* Reach Your Goals? Here Are 7 Tips on Self-Discipline

By Chakell Wardleigh Herbert, Church Magazines

Don't Miss This Devotional

Simple Math for Drawing Closer to the Lord

By Jennifer Kearon, Utah, USA

Blessings of the Word of Wisdom

"All saints who remember to keep and do these sayings . . . shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures" (Doctrine and Covenants 89:18, 19).



SUBSTANCES
TO **avoid**

**ILLEGAL DRUGS,
TOBACCO, COFFEE**

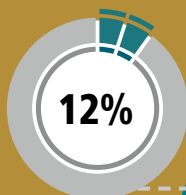
TEA **ALCOHOLIC
DRINKS**

5 **PROMISED**
blessings

**RUN AND NOT
BE WEARY,**

**HEALTH, WISDOM,
TREASURES of
KNOWLEDGE,** and
the destroying
angel shall
pass us by

10 GRAMS (2.4 tsp) of
ALCOHOL consumed
PER DAY is associated
with a 12-percent increase
in the risk of

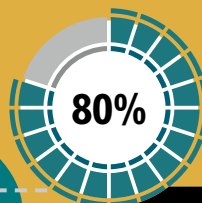


BREAST CANCER.

**ALCOHOL-RELATED
CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES**
caused an estimated

593,000 DEATHS

globally.



80 percent of cases of

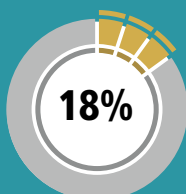
**HEART DISEASE
AND STROKE CAN
BE PREVENTED**

by making lifestyle changes:
INCREASING levels of
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY and
EATING HEALTHFULLY.



Risks

18 percent of all deaths
can be attributed to
POOR DIET and
**SEDENTARY
LIFESTYLE.**



Benefits

People who ate 8 or more
servings of fruits and
vegetables a day were
30 percent **LESS
LIKELY TO HAVE
HAD A HEART
ATTACK OR STROKE.**





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COME, FOLLOW ME

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