

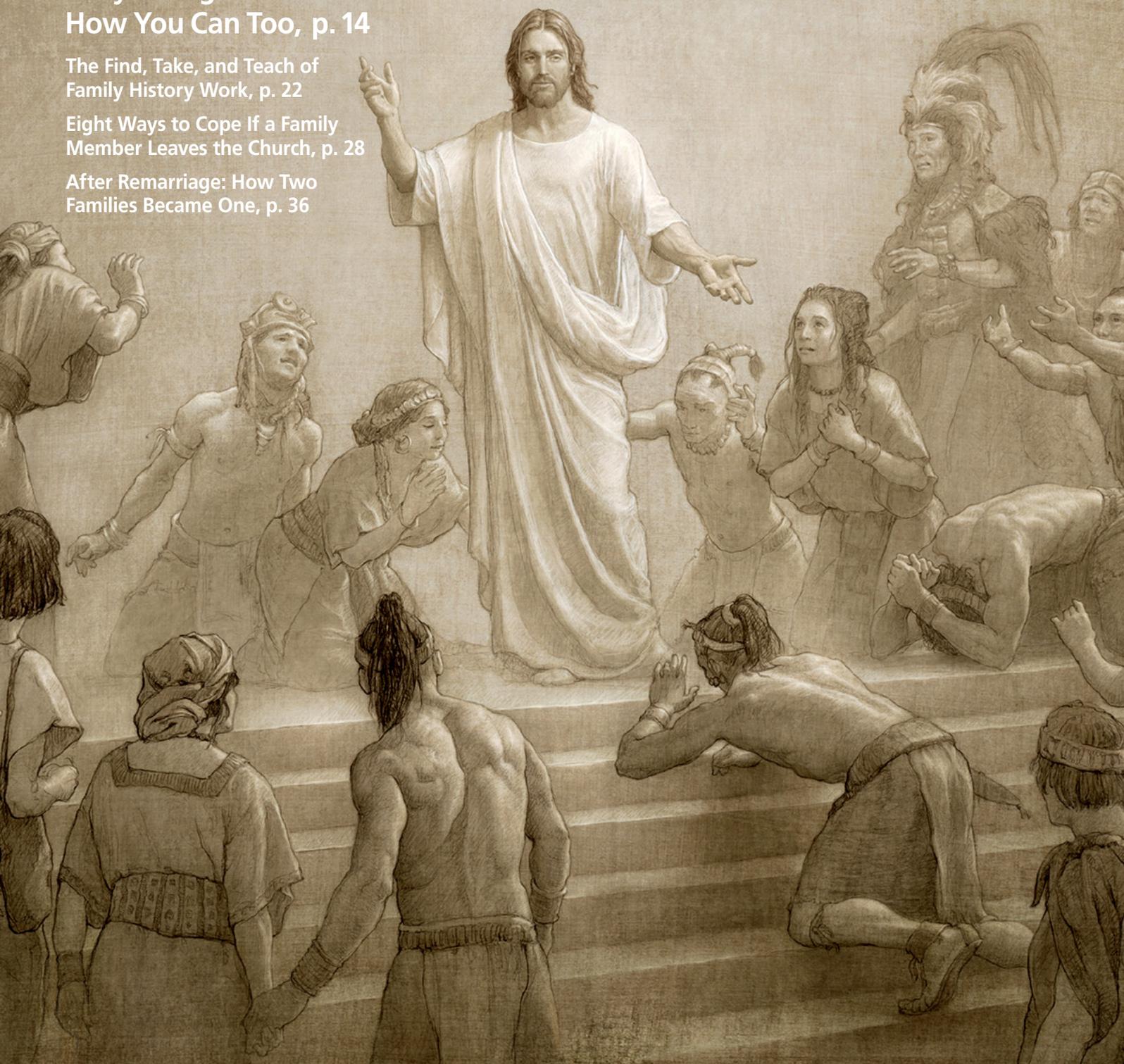
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"Knowest thou the meaning of the tree which thy father saw?"

"And I answered him, saying: Yea, it is the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men; wherefore, it is the most desirable above all things."

1 Nephi 11:21-22



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Family Home Evening Ideas

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



"The Joy of Family History Work," page 22: Elder Cook invites us to get started on family history work by holding a "Family Tree Gathering." For your family home evening, consider using FamilySearch.org to record information, stories, and photos of your family. Elder Cook promises that "if you look beyond the bonds of time and mortality and help those who cannot help themselves, you will be blessed with more closeness and joy in your family and with the divine protection afforded those who are faithful in His service."

"Testimony Treasure," page 70: When Sabrina realizes that her testimony is a treasure, she wants to share it with everyone. Consider helping your family recognize their own "testimony treasures" by discussing why they love the gospel of Jesus Christ, how it makes them feel, or how it applies to their daily life. You might have each person record his or her answers to these questions by writing them down or by using an audio recorder. Consider having each person choose someone this week with whom they can share their testimony treasure.

IN YOUR LANGUAGE

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

Visit [facebook.com/liahona.magazine](https://www.facebook.com/liahona.magazine) to find family home evening ideas, Sunday lesson helps, and content you can share with friends and family.

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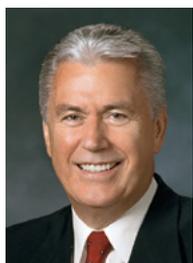
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**President
Dieter F. Uchtdorf**

Second Counselor in
the First Presidency

LANDING SAFELY IN TURBULENCE

Not long ago my wife, Harriet, and I were at an airport watching magnificent airplanes land. It was a windy day, and fierce gusts of wind whipped against the approaching aircraft, causing each one to swerve and shudder during the approach.

As we observed this struggle between nature and machine, my mind went back to my own flight training and the principles I learned there—and later taught to other pilots in training.

“Don’t fight the controls during turbulence,” I used to tell them. “Stay cool; don’t overreact. Keep your eyes focused on the centerline of the runway. If you deviate from your desired approach path, make prompt but measured corrections. Trust the potential of your airplane. Ride the turbulence out.”

Experienced pilots understand that they can’t always control the things that happen around them. They can’t just turn off the turbulence. They can’t make the rain or snow vanish. They can’t cause the wind to stop blowing or change its direction.

But they also understand that it’s a mistake to fear turbulence or strong winds—and especially to be paralyzed by them. The way to land safely when conditions are less

than ideal is to stay on the correct track and glide path as perfectly as possible.

As I watched one airplane after another make its final approach and recalled the principles learned from my years as a pilot, I wondered if there wasn’t a lesson in this for our daily lives.

We can’t always control the storms that life puts in our path. Sometimes things simply don’t go our way. We may feel shaken and blown about by the turbulence of disappointment, doubt, fear, sadness, or stress.

During those times, it is easy to get caught up in everything that is going wrong and to make our troubles the center of our thoughts. The temptation is to focus on the trials we are facing instead of on the Savior and our testimony of truth.

But that is not the best way to navigate through our challenges in life.

Just as an experienced pilot keeps his focus not on the storm but on the center of the runway and the correct touchdown point, so too should we keep our focus on the center of our faith—our Savior, His gospel, and the plan of our Heavenly Father—and on our ultimate goal—to return safely to our heavenly destination. We should trust God



and make staying on the track of discipleship the focus of our efforts. We should keep our eyes, heart, and mind focused on living the way we know we should.

Showing our faith and trust in Heavenly Father by joyfully keeping His commandments will bring us happiness and glory. And if we stay

on the path, we will get through any turbulence—no matter how strong it may appear—and return safely to our heavenly home.

Whether the skies around us are clear or filled with threatening clouds, as disciples of Jesus Christ, we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, knowing that

if we do so, everything else we need will eventually be provided (see Matthew 6:33).

What an important life lesson!

The more we obsess about our difficulties, our struggles, our doubts, and our fears, the more difficult things can become. But the more we focus on our final heavenly destination and on the joys of following the disciple's path—loving God, serving our neighbor—the more likely we are to successfully navigate through times of trouble and turbulence.

Dear friends, no matter how violently the winds of our mortal existence howl around us, the gospel of Jesus Christ will always offer the best path to a safe landing in our Heavenly Father's kingdom. ■

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

President Uchtdorf counsels us to “trust God and make staying on the track of discipleship the focus of our efforts.” Consider asking those you teach how they have stayed focused “on our final heavenly destination and on the joys of following the disciple’s path” at times when they have faced trials. You might invite them to think of ways that they can focus on their testimony and on Christ in difficult moments and to prayerfully decide how to implement one or more of those ideas in their lives.



A Foundation for My Testimony

By Jennifer Weaver

When I was 16, a friend showed up at our home with the missionaries. Within a month of the first discussion, all my questions were answered in clarity. I felt the Holy Ghost testify of the truthfulness of the messages about the Restoration. It was unlike anything I had ever felt, and I knew all of it was true.

However, I experienced more rejection and opposition than ever before. I felt alone, tired, and confused. If I was doing the right thing, why was I encountering so much adversity? I couldn't understand how my trials were for my good. The missionaries taught me to fast and pray, even in the middle of a school day. When things became unbearable

I'd pour out my heart and immediately feel the comfort of the Spirit.

The week of my baptism was full of trials. My boss threatened to fire me if I didn't skip my baptism to fill in for someone, I ended up in the hospital with kidney stones, and my parents asked me to leave our home. With so many things out of my control, the only thing I could do was turn to the Lord.

Every one of those trials *did* turn out to be for my benefit. They helped me learn about the doctrines of the gospel, which provided me a foundation for my testimony.

The author lives in Idaho, USA.

CHILDREN

He Will Guide Us Home

When we follow the example of Jesus Christ, it's like following a straight path that leads to Him! We can be safe and happy, just like the plane that lands safely on the runway. Guide the airplane through the maze back to the runway!



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

Marriage Is Ordained of God

Prophets, apostles, and leaders continue to “solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator’s plan.”¹

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “A family built on the marriage of a man and woman supplies the best setting for God’s plan to thrive. . . .

“ . . . Neither we nor any other mortal can alter this divine order of matrimony.”²

Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women general president, said: “Everyone, no matter what their marital circumstance or number of children, can be defenders of the Lord’s plan described in the family proclamation. If it is the Lord’s plan, it should also be our plan!”³

Elder Christofferson continued: “Some of you are denied the blessing of marriage for reasons including a lack of viable prospects, same-sex attraction, physical or mental impairments, or simply a fear of failure. . . . Or you may have married, but that marriage ended. . . . Some of you who are married cannot bear children. . . .



“Even so, . . . everyone can contribute to the unfolding of the divine plan in each generation.”⁴

Additional Scriptures

Genesis 2:18–24; 1 Corinthians 11:11; Doctrine and Covenants 49:15–17

NOTES

1. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129.
2. D. Todd Christofferson, “Why Marriage, Why Family,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 52.
3. Bonnie L. Oscarson, “Defenders of the Family Proclamation,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 15.
4. D. Todd Christofferson, “Why Marriage, Why Family,” 52.
5. Larry M. Gibson, “Fulfilling Our Eternal Destiny,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2015, 21–22.
6. David A. Bednar, “Marriage Is Essential to His Eternal Plan,” *Ensign*, June 2006, 86; *Liahona*, June 2006, 54.



Faith, Family, Relief

Living Stories

Brother Larry M. Gibson, former first counselor in the Young Men general presidency, remembered when Shirley, now his wife, said: “I love you because I know you love the Lord more than you love me.” . . .

“That answer struck my heart. . . .

“ . . . [And] I wanted her to always feel that I loved the Lord above all else.”⁵

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “The Lord Jesus Christ is the focal point in a covenant marriage relationship. . . . [Imagine that] the Savior is positioned at the apex of [a] triangle, with a woman at the base of one corner and a man at the base of the other corner. Now consider what happens in the relationship between the man and the woman as they individually and steadily ‘come unto Christ’ and strive to be ‘perfected in Him’ (Moroni 10:32). Because of and through the Redeemer, the man and the woman come closer together.”⁶

Consider This

How am I individually and steadily striving to “come unto Christ”?

OCTOBER 2015 CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

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

As you review the October 2015 general conference, you can use these pages (and Conference Notebooks in future issues) to help you study and apply the recent teachings of the living prophets and apostles and other Church leaders.

DOCTRINAL HIGHLIGHT



Honoring the Sabbath

“Honoring the Sabbath is a form of righteousness that will bless and strengthen families, connect us with our Creator, and increase happiness. The Sabbath can help separate us from that which is frivolous, inappropriate, or immoral. It allows us to be in the world, but not of the world.

. . . Truly keeping the Sabbath day holy is a refuge from the storms of this life. It is also a sign of our devotion to our Father in Heaven.”

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Shipshape and Bristol Fashion: Be Temple Worthy—in Good Times and Bad Times,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 41–42.

PROPHETIC PROMISE



He Appreciates Your Service

“Whatever your calling . . . , you may have at times felt Heavenly Father was unaware of you. You can pray to know His will, and with the honest desire to do *whatever* He asks you to do, you will receive an answer.

“Heavenly Father will allow you to feel that He knows you, that He appreciates your service, and that you are becoming worthy of the greeting from the Lord you want so much to hear: ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord’ [Matthew 25:23].”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “You Are Not Alone in the Work,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 82.

For Single Adult Members

Here is what three speakers said about being single:

- “Now is *part* of eternity. It doesn’t only begin after we die! Faith and hope will open your eyes to the happiness that is placed before you.” —President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “A Summer with Great-Aunt Rose,” 19.
- “Another painful affliction is the circumstance of singleness. Those who suffer this circumstance should remember that our Savior experienced this kind of pain also and that, through His Atonement, He offers the strength to bear it.” —Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “Strengthened by the Atonement of Jesus Christ,” 63.
- “Be patient. Wait upon the Lord. I testify that the Lord knows your desires and loves you for your faithful devotion to Him. He has a plan for you, whether it be in this life or the next. Listen to His Spirit. . . . In this life or the next, His promises will be fulfilled.” —Elder Robert D. Hales, “Meeting the Challenges of Today’s World,” 46.



MEETING THE LORD’S STANDARDS

“Sisters, Satan has raised a Korihor-like banner in our day. . . . What are some of his tools? Seductive romance novels, TV soap operas, married women and old boyfriends connecting on social media, and pornography. . . . We cannot play with Satan’s fiery darts and not get burned. . . .

“When we are involved in watching, reading, or experiencing anything that is below our Heavenly Father’s standards, it weakens us. Regardless of our age, if what we look at, read, listen to, or choose to do does not meet the Lord’s standards in *For the Strength of Youth*, turn it off, rip it up, throw it out, and slam the door.”

Linda S. Reeves, second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, “Worthy of Our Promised Blessings,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 10.

GREAT STORIES FROM CONFERENCE

What catches our attention better than a great story? The following are two of many stories shared during conference:

- What can Chloe and her car seat teach us about love and keeping the commandments? —See Carole M. Stephens, “If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments,” 118.
- In what ways can we, like Pablo’s father, help our children understand the gospel? —See Bradley D. Foster, “It’s Never Too Early and It’s Never Too Late,” 50.

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

FORGIVING MY EX-HUSBAND

Name withheld

Studying Christ's example of love and forgiveness helped me overcome the hurt I felt following my divorce.

When I found myself in unfamiliar territory, facing a divorce that I didn't want, I experienced pain and rejection that I have never felt before. I was in my mid-40s, alone to finish raising my teenagers, hold down a full-time job, and pay the mortgage. I was overwhelmed, tired, and worried, but mostly filled with the most incredible pain I have ever felt.

Because of my gospel foundation and my desire to live righteously, I knew I had to forgive my ex-husband. I knew it was important to not be critical of him in front of the children, but how was I going to get past those feelings of rejection that made me want to cry out in agony?

Day after day in my anguish, I turned to the scriptures, seeking direction from the Spirit. I searched

diligently day and night. I needed to know what I could personally do at this unfamiliar crossroads of my life to follow the Savior's example, to heed His call to follow Him.

As I studied the scriptures, I wrote down each attribute of Jesus Christ that I desired to develop in my own life. I recorded teachings from the stories and parables that He shared during His mortal ministry. I noted the things that spoke to my heart about forgiveness. I diligently penned

in my notebook the hardships and trials that the Lord faced and how He overcame them.

Over time I recognized that His pain was much worse than mine, yet He forgave those who hurt Him. He was a perfect example. That notebook, filled with lessons from the Lord's life, became a source of great strength to me. It was my lifeline. Following His example, I was determined to endure my trial as well as I could. I was willing to move forward through my pain.



FORGIVENESS: THE ESSENCE OF THE GOSPEL

"A spirit of forgiveness and an attitude of love and compassion toward those who may have wronged us is of the very essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Each of us has need of this spirit. The whole world has need of it. The Lord taught it. He exemplified it as none other has exemplified it."

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), "Of You It Is Required to Forgive," *Ensign*, June 1991, 2.



It worked! Now a few years later, I am blessed to have a good relationship with my ex-husband. Even though he has remarried, our relationship as the parents of our children is sweet and pain free. By following Christ's example of not criticizing him, I overcame the negative feelings of pain and rejection. I can love!

What a valuable lesson I learned during this intense trial. I am grateful for my Savior's perfect example. He is my rock and my foundation. And I never feel alone. I have His love, His Atonement, His perfect example, and the love and blessings of a beloved Heavenly Father. ■

HOW CAN SCRIPTURE STUDY HELP US DURING TRIALS?

"Scriptures can calm an agitated soul, giving peace, hope, and a restoration of confidence in one's ability to overcome the challenges of life. They have potent power to heal emotional challenges when there is faith in the Savior" (Richard G. Scott, "The Power of Scripture," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 6).

Consider doing what this sister did to get through her trial: study the scriptures to look for attributes of the Savior and other faithful people. Their examples can help you with your challenges or questions. If you know the topic you would like to study—for example, "Endure," "Forgive," or "Patience"—the Guide to the Scriptures can suggest several scriptures to start with.

THE LESSON OF THE SANTOL TREE

By Irene Taniegra

We are much like santol fruit in a storm.

On June 23, 2009, the Philippines experienced a typhoon. That afternoon, our area was placed under a severe storm warning. The rest of that day and into the night, we heard something banging on our rooftop. When my son asked what it was, I told him it was our santol tree being whipped by the wind.

I regretted not picking the santol's sweet fruit a day earlier, as I had planned. But my mother had told me the fruit wasn't ripe yet and to leave it alone.

At 5:00 a.m. I went outside to look at the tree, fearing to see all the fruit on the ground. I couldn't see into the tree—it was still dark outside—but I did see four small fruits scattered around our backyard.

An hour later I again inspected the tree. To my delight I saw many big, yellow-green fruit still clinging to the branches. Collecting those that had fallen, I noted that two of them had brownish lesions at the bottom. Black speckles discolored the other one, and the last was misshapen and warty in appearance.

I had expected the bigger, heavier fruit to have fallen; they were twice as big as the ones I collected. But there they were: still securely hanging on to the tree.

As I thought about the experience, I concluded that we are much like the two kinds of santol fruits—the ones that fell and the ones that held on. We too could fall when buffeted by the windy trials of life if we aren't holding firm to the tree of life, our Savior Jesus Christ (see 1 Nephi 8:10; 11:8–9, 20–23).

The fruits that fell from our santol tree were weak with disease, not able to withstand the wind. The ones that remained on the tree survived because they were healthy and strong.



If we don't keep ourselves spiritually strong and healthy—learning from the scriptures and the living prophets, keeping the commandments, serving others—we too might fall when the adversary brings his forces against us.

The moment the tender fruits stopped drawing on the strength of the santol tree, their maturation stopped. So too the moment we separate ourselves from Christ, the true vine, our spiritual progress stops (see John 15:1; 1 Nephi 15:15).

Sometimes too we need to bend with the wind. Trials are part of mortality, and a humble spirit helps us accept the will of God in hard times. Humility helps us repent of our sins, forgive others, and forget offenses.

Allied with humility is patience. If we are patient in our trials, if we hold on to our faith a little longer, the answers we seek may come.

Sooner or later the Savior will calm the storm. Peace and deliverance will come. If we remain obedient and faithful, nothing can separate us from the love of God (see Romans 8:38–39). ■

The author lives in San Jose, Philippines.

WE CHOSE TO SERVE

By Irmgard Meissner

My husband was battling cancer, but we accepted without hesitation the call to serve in the Frankfurt Germany Temple.

On December 12, 1994, we received a telephone call from Salt Lake City. A friendly voice told us that President Thomas S. Monson, then serving as the Second Counselor in the First Presidency, wanted to speak with us.

“The president of the Frankfurt Germany Temple would like to call you to be his counselor and your wife to be an assistant to the temple matron,” President Monson told my husband, Gerhard. Then President Monson expressed concerns about my husband’s health.

Gerhard had battled chronic lymphocytic leukemia for 11 years. Despite that challenge, the Lord had called us, and we said yes without hesitation.

When I resigned from my job in preparation to serve, my boss asked, “Can I keep you if I raise your wages?”

“No, we have to go,” I answered, telling him that we had promised the Lord we would serve a mission. “We had intended to serve in a couple of years, but I don’t know if my husband will still be alive then.”

When Gerhard received a routine examination less than two weeks later, the doctor told him, “Stay here; you have a high risk of dying.”

His condition had worsened. We were shattered and could not imagine how we could fulfill our calling, but we were full of faith, hope, and assurance. We put everything in the Lord’s hands. If He had an assignment for us, He would make a way for us to fulfill it.

On January 2, 1995, we left on our mission. Suddenly I realized what I was giving up: my mother, my children, my grandchildren, my career, my house, and my garden. But the next day we took our place in the Frankfurt Temple, where a dark night became a bright new day for us. All of the stress of everyday life left us.

In this holy place we found love, light, hope, joy, trust, warmth, security, protection, and the peace that radiates from our Savior. As we served, we met wonderful people from many countries. Though they spoke different languages, the language of love bound us. Our service in the temple made us very happy.

The spirit of the temple and the strength of God carried my dear husband for 26 months. One day not long after we had been released from our temple calling, Gerhard went to the hospital for his standard treatment. This time doctors kept him there. A few months later he returned to his heavenly home.

When I look back, I see those years of temple service as a gift from heaven—serving side by side with my husband in the house of our loving Father as we fulfilled our promise to serve a mission together. I am grateful with all my heart for that experience. ■

The author lives in Bavaria, Germany.



ILLUSTRATION BY BEN SOWARDS



By Elder
Daniel L. Johnson
Of the Seventy

HOLD FAST TO THE ROD

Continually studying the scriptures helps us keep our eyes, minds, and hearts focused on the Savior, and as we apply and live the teachings found in the scriptures, we become more like Him.

During their journey in the wilderness, Lehi and his family awoke one morning to find “a round ball of curious workmanship” on the ground. It had two spindles, one pointing “the way whither [they] should go” (1 Nephi 16:10).

The Liahona, or ball, also provided “a new writing” that gave them “understanding concerning the ways of the Lord.” This writing was “changed from time to time, according to the faith and diligence which [they] gave unto it” (see 1 Nephi 16:28–29).

Lehi and his family already had the brass plates, which contained the writings and prophecies of several Old Testament prophets. The brass plates and the Liahona constituted their scriptures, and Lehi’s people were expected to study and give heed to them continually. If they did so, they progressed in their journey; if they did not, they tarried in the wilderness and were afflicted with hunger and thirst.

What was the Lord trying to teach them—and us—through the workings of the Liahona?

One of the primary purposes of the scriptures is to help us know, understand, and become like the Savior (see 3 Nephi 27:27). Continually studying the scriptures helps us keep our eyes, minds, and hearts focused on Him. As we apply and live the teachings found in the scriptures, we become more like Him. As we become more like Him, we become candidates for eternal life (see John 5:39).

Lehi’s Dream

In Lehi’s dream, or vision, four groups of people were represented. The first three groups entered the path that led to the tree of life. The gate to the path is baptism (see 2 Nephi 31:17–18), so we are talking about members of the Church in these first three groups.

I will not discuss the fourth group—those heading directly toward the great and spacious building. As we consider the other three groups, however, you might want to do an internal evaluation to determine the group to which you belong and ask yourself to which group you would prefer to belong.

Group 1

“And I saw numberless concourses of people, many of whom were pressing forward, that they might obtain the path which led unto the tree by which I stood.

“And it came to pass that they did come forth, and commenced in the path which led to the tree.

“And it came to pass that there arose a mist of darkness; yea, even an exceedingly great mist of darkness, insomuch that they who had commenced in the path did lose their way, that they wandered off and were lost” (1 Nephi 8:21–23).

Members of this group apparently did not read or study the scriptures, listen to or watch general conference, read the *Liahona*, or attend Sunday meetings, all of which offer the word of God. Consequently, they lost their way.





TO GAIN FAITH

“In order to gain and to keep the faith we need, it is essential that we read and study and ponder the scriptures.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Be an Example and a Light,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 87.

Group 2

“And it came to pass that I beheld others pressing forward, and they came forth and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; and they did press forward through the mist of darkness, clinging to the rod of iron, even until they did come forth and partake of the fruit of the tree. . . .

“And after they had tasted of the fruit they were ashamed, because of those that were scoffing at them; and they fell away into forbidden paths and were lost” (1 Nephi 8:24, 28).

Note that this group caught hold of and clung to the rod of iron. They held on until they reached the tree of life and partook of its fruit. But they became ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, stopped focusing on the Savior, and were distracted by the attractions, temptations, and riches of the world. Then they too became lost.

The key to understanding these verses is the phrase “clinging to the rod of iron.” I compare the word *clinging* to a “white knuckle” experience. If you have been

white-water rafting, you recall that you clung so hard to the raft that your knuckles turned white. Then, when you came to calm waters, what did you do? *You let go!*

In the gospel context, this can occur when you are asked to prepare a talk or when you face a crisis, such as a death in the family or the breakup of a relationship. You look up general conference talks you seldom listen to or consult scriptures you generally neglect. You seek spiritual guidance and support because of your spiritual weakness. Then, when the crisis is over, *you let go!* You put the scriptures back on the shelf, regress to old habits of infrequent Church attendance, and abandon daily prayer—at least until the next crisis, or white-water experience, arrives. In other words, you turn to the Savior for help only when a desperate need arises instead of continually.

Members of this group had been baptized, and many had probably been ordained to the priesthood, received temple ordinances, served full-time missions, and married in the

temple. But *they let go!* They stopped reading the scriptures *continually*, fell into forbidden paths, and were lost.

Thankfully, most young adults and returned missionaries remain faithful to gospel truths they have learned and shared. They also focus their lives on the Savior through daily scripture study and prayer. We are grateful for them and their faithfulness. They are the future of the Church and the future parents of those who will carry the Church forward.

Group 3

“Behold, [Lehi] saw other multitudes pressing forward; and they came and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; and they did press their way forward, continually holding fast to the rod of iron, until they came forth and fell down and partook of the fruit of the tree” (1 Nephi 8:30).

Note the phrase “continually holding fast to the rod of iron.” This group read the scriptures *continually*. They kept their focus on the Savior *continually*.

The scriptures are the most important thing we can study. They should take precedence over chemistry, physics, accounting, dance, music, sports, or any other secular study or activity.

Start every day with the scriptures. Prayer and scripture study go hand in hand. They are inseparable companions. Constant prayer will lead you to the scriptures, and continual scripture study will lead you to prayer. Both keep you focused on the Savior and give you access to revelation and to the peace that can come only by “continually holding fast to the rod of iron.” Prayer and scripture study will lead you to the temple. They will make you want to keep the Sabbath day holy. They will help you avoid and overcome the temptations of the adversary.

Now I draw your attention to the phrase “they came forth and *fell down* and partook of the fruit of the tree.” A key to understanding this phrase is found in 1 Nephi chapter 11:

“And it came to pass after I had seen the tree, I said unto the Spirit: I behold thou hast shown unto me the tree which is precious above all.

“And he said unto me: What desirest thou?

“And I said unto him: To know the interpretation thereof.”

The angel responded, “Look!” Then Nephi saw in vision

the Virgin Mary, whom the angel identified as “the mother of the Son of God.” Next, Nephi saw Mary bearing a child—“the Lamb of God”—in her arms.

Now note verse 24: “And I looked, and I beheld the Son of God going forth among the children of men; and I saw many *fall down* at his feet and worship him” (see 1 Nephi 11:9–24; emphasis added).

The tree represents the love of God, as manifested through His Son, Jesus Christ (see 1 Nephi 11:21–22). Those in Group 2 who arrived at the tree did not fall down, as did those in Group 3. Is it possible to be in the presence of the Son of God and not know it? You have only to read the New Testament to find the answer. The Savior ministered for three years, teaching and performing miracles, but few recognized Him for who He was.

Search the Scriptures

Ask yourself these questions:

- What can I do to ensure that I continually hold fast to the rod of iron so that when I arrive at the tree of life, I will recognize the Savior and fall down and worship him?
- What can I do to keep my eyes, mind, and heart focused on the Savior?
- What can I do to become more like the Savior?

The answer to all three questions is found in the scriptures. “Search the scriptures,” the Savior said, “for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39). If you immerse yourself in the scriptures each day of your life, you will have strength to resist serious transgression; more important, you will come to know the Savior. You will be able to keep your eyes, mind, and heart focused on Him.

As you come to know Jesus Christ, apply His teachings, and follow His example, you will become like Him. As you become like Him, you will be a candidate to live forever in His presence. ■

From a devotional address, “Continually Holding Fast to the Rod of Iron,” given at Brigham Young University–Idaho on May 12, 2015. For the full address in English, visit web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches.

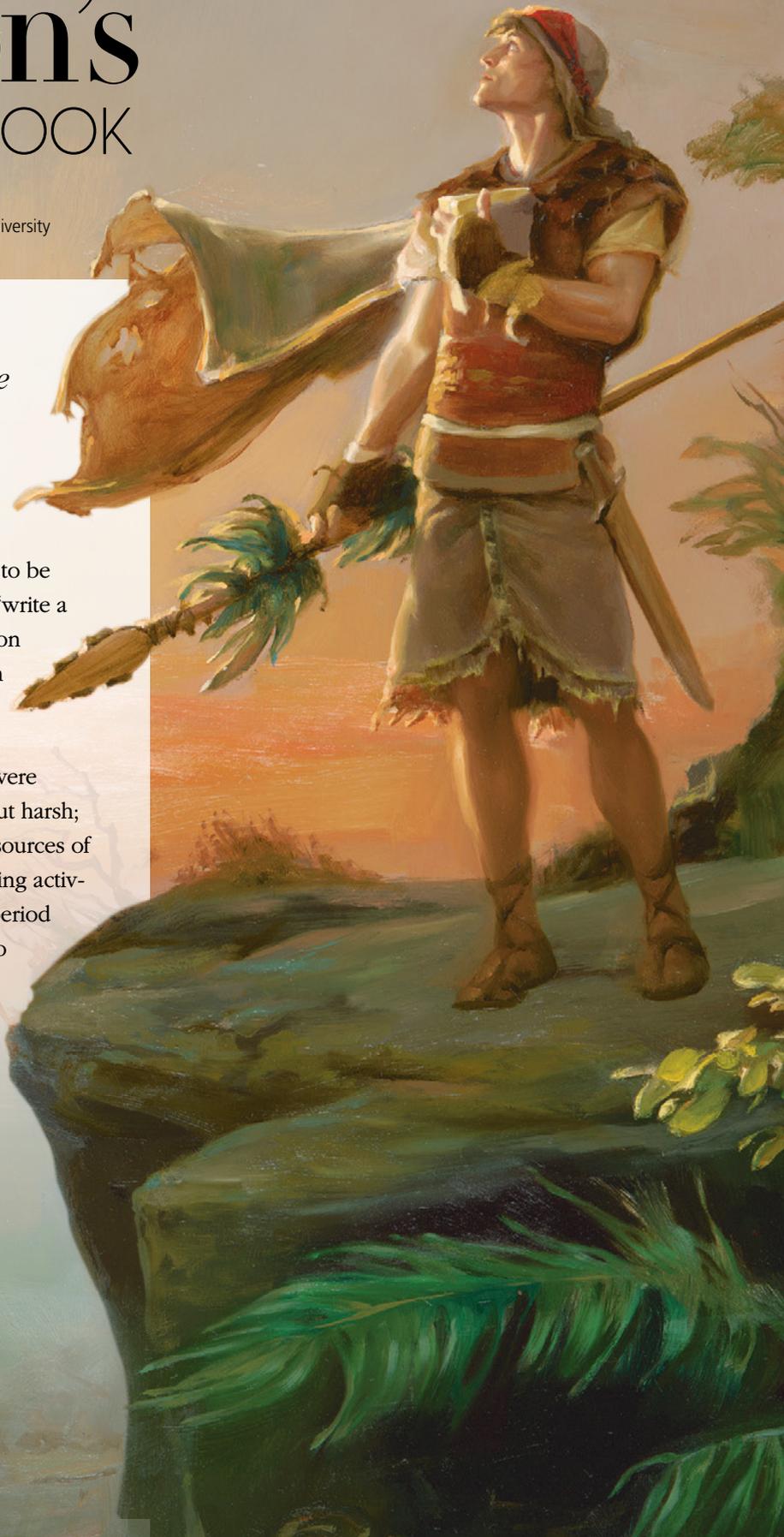
Mormon's MIRACULOUS BOOK

By John L. Sorenson

Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, Brigham Young University

Mormon carried out the daunting task of abridging the Nephite records in an effective and miraculous manner.

When Mormon saw that his Nephite people were about to be exterminated, he set out to “write a small abridgment” of their records (Mormon 5:9). This project began at the last location where the Nephites camped before they finally gathered to the land of Cumorah. The subsistence conditions the Nephites were enduring could not have been anything but harsh; the people were refugees with uncertain sources of food, clothing, and shelter. Mormon’s writing activity probably extended into the four-year period of preparation for the final battle agreed to by the Lamanite commander, but in any case the abridged history was completed and the archive was buried in the Hill Cumorah well before the final conflict (see Mormon 6:6).





PAINTING BY JOSEPH BRICKEY

It is clear that the creation of the Book of Mormon was a daunting feat, especially given the “field” conditions in which Mormon had to work and his competing duties in commanding his forces as they prepared for the final battle. And understandably, the final product isn’t without imperfections.¹

Limitations on Mormon’s Work

Consider some of the limitations Mormon faced in realizing his aim:

1. The size of his new record would have to be severely restricted. The book had to be portable enough that Moroni could carry it to a safe location.
2. The physical product must be prepared to endure for centuries.
3. Of the possible writing systems Mormon could use, only one was concise enough to fit in the book.
4. The narrative had to be of practical length, faithful to the facts of history in the records he was summarizing, and phrased in a manner he considered appropriate.
5. The work schedule was short. Mormon had little more than three years to do all of the compiling and writing of over 600 years of history. He may not have had time even to read through all the archival records in his hands, and there surely would be no time for stylistic fine-tuning or reediting.

Given all these constraints, how did Mormon choose what information to include and what to omit?

In some ways his inspired accomplishment in producing the Book of Mormon was just as surprising and admirable as Joseph Smith’s later achievement in translating the record in such short order.

Choosing a Writing System

The Book of Mormon text reports at several points the difficulty the scribes had in making their statements clear (see Jacob 4:1; Mormon 9:33; Ether 12:23–25, 40). Mormon said, “There are many things which, according to our language, we are not able to write” (3 Nephi 5:18). “Our language” in this sense obviously refers to their writing system, not to their spoken tongue. Moroni further tells us that there would have been “no imperfection” (Mormon 9:33) had they used Hebrew script, an alphabetic system.

The “characters” used for writing were called by Nephite historians “reformed Egyptian” (Mormon 9:32). This system consisted of “the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians” (1 Nephi 1:2). Egyptian glyphs were occasionally used in ancient Palestine to write the sounds of Hebrew words.² From the sample of characters in “the Anthon Transcript,”³ which purports to be a copy of characters from the plates Joseph Smith translated, it is apparent that they were not modeled directly on the Egyptian writing in everyday use in Lehi’s time. They look more like signs of hieratic Egyptian, an older, parallel sign system still used by the Egyptians when they employed brush and ink instead of engraving on stone.

The hieratic system was more concise than the alphabetic Hebrew script but also more ambiguous, because a large majority of the characters represented whole, complex morphemes or words (today called logograms) rather than sounds spelled out to form words as in an alphabet. The meaning of each logogram had to be memorized. This ambiguity may have been part of the problem of “the placing of our words” (Ether 12:25) spoken of by Moroni.

An additional cause of “imperfections” could have been that since hieratic Egyptian was mainly used to write cursively, its use to engrave a record on metal plates could mean that minor slips of an engraver’s hand without an effective “eraser” at hand to make corrections could result in misreading the characters.

Many Sets of Records

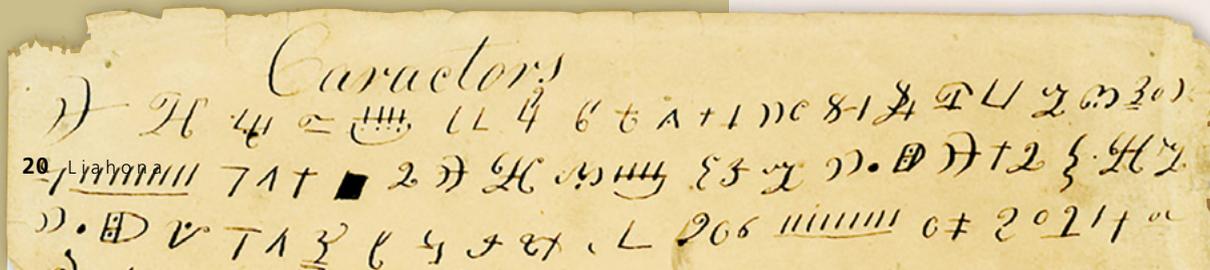
In addition to the large plates of Nephi, supplementary documents were used at certain points in creating Mormon’s narrative. He noted several times his dependence upon “[Alma’s] own record” (Alma 5:2; chapter 7, heading; 35:16). He also utilized “the records of Helaman” and “of his sons” (introduction to the book of Helaman), and we also read of the “record of Nephi” (3 Nephi 5:10).

Sometimes Mormon also depended on other original writings, some of which he did not distinctly identify. Some possible supplementary records include:

- The text of King Benjamin’s great discourse (Mosiah 2:9–Mosiah 5).
- The record on the plates of Zeniff (Mosiah 9–22).
- Alma’s first-person preaching at Zarahemla, Gideon, and Melek (Alma 5, 7, and 8).
- The story of Alma’s and Amulek’s experiences at Ammonihah (Alma 9–14).
- The detailed account of the ministry of the sons of Mosiah and their companions among the Lamanites (Alma 17–27).
- Alma’s discourses to his sons Helaman, Shiblon, and Corianton (Alma 36–42).

Moroni also included his translation and abstract of Ether’s history of the Jaredites, prepared and appended by Moroni as the book of Ether, as well as excerpts of teachings and letters from his father, Mormon (Moroni 7–9).⁴

The key sacred records were kept on metal to ensure their permanence; accounts kept on any more perishable substance would, they assumed, become unreadable over time (see Jacob 4:2). The use of copies of the scriptures on paper for everyday use is implied by the burning of those in the possession of Alma’s converts at Ammonihah (see Alma 14:8; compare Mosiah 2:8; 29:4; and Alma 63:12). Metal plates were not easy to manufacture (see Mormon 8:5) and engrave, so they were in limited supply.





Drawing on the varied materials available to him, Mormon composed his history “according to the knowledge and the understanding which God” had given him (Words of Mormon 1:9). Divine assistance was sometimes direct and specific, as when the Lord instructed him not to include a lengthier treatment of Jesus’s teachings to the Nephites (see 3 Nephi 26:6–12), but no indication is given that additional historical information was revealed to him.

“And Thus We See”

Mormon said several times that his abridgment could not treat more than a fraction of the historical material found on the large plates of Nephi (see Words of Mormon 1:5; 3 Nephi 5:8; 26:6; see also Jacob 3:13–14; 4:1). How, then, did he make his selection of materials?

His primary criterion comes through repeatedly in his book. The aim was to ensure that his readers, especially the future inhabitants of the American promised land and particularly Lehi’s descendants, grasp the significance for them of the promise and prophecy given to father Lehi: “Inasmuch as ye will keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land” (Jarom 1:9). Actually, it is Amaron’s *negative* version of Lehi’s dictum to which Mormon gives prime attention: “Inasmuch as ye will *not* keep my commandments ye shall *not* prosper in the land” (Omni 1:6; emphasis added).

Mormon’s lessons draw the contrast between good and evil dramatically. The people in his record emphasize obedience and virtue on the one hand versus stubborn villainy on the other. He describes scoundrels as thoroughly evil and deserving of their fates; he describes heroes as praiseworthy in almost all respects. Characters in the gray zone are barely noted. Mormon wanted to leave no question in the

minds of his readers that good and bad are polar opposites (note Mormon’s own words on that contrast in Moroni 7:5–19).

Mormon certainly colored some of his reporting with inspired personal interpretation. This stance is often signaled by use of a phrase like “and thus we see” (for instance, in Alma 42:4, 7, 14; Helaman 3:23–31; 6:34–40).

Mormon and Moroni present their “brief” record to their future readers as a unique kind of interpretative history. They conferred it on the ages to come not as a historian’s history but as a powerful moral message intended to school readers in the lessons the two men had learned in long, arduous service to their people and to God. They used the best sources available in the most efficacious way they knew how. The labor and dedication their work displays have been for the gain of all people in our day.

They have my profound thanks. ■

NOTES

1. For instance, minor errors (the equivalent of modern “typos”) may be among the “faults” alluded to by Moroni on the title page of the Book of Mormon that are “the mistakes of men.” They include the erroneous report of the capture of the city of Nephihah (Alma 51:26; contrast Alma 59:5) and a mistake where the same event is said in one passage to have taken place in the 26th year of the judges (Alma 56:9) and in another in the 28th year (Alma 53:22–23). Such flaws show the human side of the historian’s task, although they need not cause us any serious problem in reading the account.
2. See John A. Tvedtnes and Stephen D. Ricks, “Jewish and Other Semitic Texts Written in Egyptian Characters,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2 (1996), 156–63; and John A. Tvedtnes, “Linguistic Implications of the Tel-Arad Ostraca,” *Newsletter and Proceedings of the Society for Early Historic Archaeology*, no. 127 (1971).
3. See B. H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God*, 3 vols. (1909), 2:93–104.
4. For more on the different sources of the record, see “A Brief Explanation about the Book of Mormon” in the Book of Mormon.



By Elder
Quentin L. Cook
Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

THE JOY OF Family History Work

Elijah's promise makes it clear that each of us has an obligation to the generations that precede us and to the generations that follow us.

Never forget that family history—and the temple ordinances enabled by it—is an essential part of the work of salvation and that participation in this sacred work for the dead blesses the lives of the living. It strengthens our faith in and commitment to the gospel, helps us resist temptation, draws our families closer together, and strengthens our wards and stakes.

I want to emphasize the “find, take, and teach” of family history work. By *find*, we mean use the FamilySearch website or the *My Family: Stories That Bring Us Together* booklet¹ to find the name of one or more of your ancestors or their descendants. Then *take* these names to the temple, or share them with others so they can take them. (When possible, go to the temple as a family.) Finally, *teach* your family and then teach others to do the same.

Our Father's plan is about families, symbolized by a great tree. For a tree to live and grow, it needs both roots and branches. We likewise need to be connected to our roots—our parents, grandparents, and other ancestors—as well as to our branches—our children, grandchildren, and other descendants. Several poignant scriptures use the analogy of a tree with roots and branches representing the family (see Isaiah 11:1; Jacob 5).



With Moses, Elijah appeared to the Savior and Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration in the meridian of time.

The Mission of Elijah

The prophet Malachi, in the last book of the Old Testament, prophesied of a time when Elijah the prophet would return to the earth “before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord . . . [to] turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest [He] come and smite the earth with a curse” (Malachi 4:5–6).

When the angel Moroni appeared to 17-year-old Joseph Smith in 1823, he quoted these same verses from Malachi but rendered them differently. Moroni said on that September night:

“Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

“ . . . And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole

earth would be utterly wasted at his coming” (Joseph Smith—History 1:38–39).

Four times the angel Moroni repeated Malachi’s words to the boy Joseph.

Imagine if all we knew about this great prophet Elijah was what Joseph Smith knew from the Bible. From that book of scripture we know that Elijah lived during a troubled time, almost 900 years before Christ’s birth. The evil duo Ahab and Jezebel reigned in wickedness over Israel as king and queen, inducing subjects to worship the false god Baal and murdering the Lord’s prophets, among others.

Elijah was a remarkable prophet. Christians and Jews the world over accept the Old Testament account of Elijah.

The scriptures record how Elijah’s life was miraculously preserved and how he saved a widow from famine and raised her son from the dead (see 1 Kings 17). Elijah describes how “a still small voice” reassured him that he was not alone in his devotion to Jehovah

(see 1 Kings 19:4–14). Finally, Elijah was translated and carried into heaven without tasting death (see 2 Kings 2:7–12).

Only through modern revelation is Elijah’s complete role revealed. He was the last prophet to hold the sealing power of the Melchizedek Priesthood before the time of Jesus Christ. With Moses, he appeared to the Savior and Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration in the meridian of time (see Matthew 17:1–4; Mark 9:2–5). As a seminal element of the Restoration, Elijah appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in 1836 in the Kirtland Temple. There, he again restored the keys of the sealing power, this time for sealing families in this dispensation in fulfillment of Malachi’s prophecy (see D&C 110:13–16). Because Elijah was sent in this dispensation, the fulness of salvation is available to both the living and the dead.

Elijah’s mission is facilitated by what is sometimes called the spirit of Elijah, which, as President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, is “a manifestation of the Holy Ghost bearing witness of the divine nature of the family.”² That is why we often call the manifestations of the Holy Ghost associated with family history and temple work the spirit of Elijah.

Of those who have passed on before us, we read in the Doctrine and Covenants that “we without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect” (D&C 128:18). What does this mean? We find the answer in scripture:

“And now, my dearly beloved brethren and sisters, let me assure you that these are principles in relation to the dead and the living that cannot be lightly passed over, as pertaining to our salvation. *For their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation*, as Paul says concerning the fathers—that they without us cannot be made perfect—neither can we without our dead be made perfect” (D&C 128:15; emphasis added).

“Their salvation is necessary and essential to our salvation” means that the salvation of the whole human family is interdependent and interconnected—like the roots and branches of a great tree.

Hold a Family Tree Gathering

Family commitments and expectations should be at the top of our list of priorities. They will protect our divine destiny. For families to get started on their family history work, I challenge them to hold what I call a “Family Tree Gathering.” This should be a recurring effort. Everyone could bring to these gatherings existing family histories, stories, and photos, including cherished possessions of grandparents and parents. The *My Family* booklet could be utilized to help record family information, stories, and photos that could then be uploaded to Family Tree on FamilySearch.org.

However, this cannot be only a one-time effort. It requires a lifetime of diligence. For those who are looking for more fruitful ways to observe the Sabbath day as a family, the hastening of this sacred work is fertile ground.

The center of family history is the home. We need to help our young people develop a love for this work. Many of our youth have already had their hearts turned to their



fathers. Our young people are excited to learn about the lives of family members—where they came from and how they lived. Some become so excited about the work that they lose track of time and are disappointed when they have to stop.

Young people love stories and photos, and now they have easy access to the technological expertise to preserve those memories in Family Tree on FamilySearch.org. They can find family members who need temple ordinances through a newly released “record-hinting” experience on FamilySearch.org.³

These record hints about family members are powered by the indexing efforts of Church members worldwide. These records—and there are millions of them—will help you find more ancestors who may not yet be connected to your family and who need ordinances performed for them in temples. Other websites that use hinting technology with records from around the world include Ancestry.com,



Findmypast.com, and MyHeritage.com, which all Church members can access for free.

Although the center of family history is the home, the Church will continue to provide family history centers where families can discover their ancestors together and access the Internet if it isn't readily available at home.

All worthy members of the Church ages 12 and up can obtain a limited-use temple recommend to perform baptisms for the dead after an interview with one or two ecclesiastical leaders. This includes all new converts.

Having a signed recommend that you can present at any temple is a joy. A recommend also carries with it sacred protection. As President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015) said:

“No work is more of a protection to this Church than temple work and the family history research that supports it. No work is more spiritually refining. No work we do gives us more power. No work requires a higher standard of righteousness.

“Our labors in the temple cover us with a shield and a protection, both individually and as a people.”⁴

Our Obligation to Our Ancestors

Family history is a family affair, but not all family members face the same situation. Many of our ancestors have died without being married or having children. Some divorced, and some married several times. Many had children who were disabled or who died young. Everyone has a story.

Every soul, living or dead, who is accountable for his or her actions needs the blessing of sacred temple ordinances, and we can help our family members receive them. It doesn't matter if you are single, whether your husband or wife is less active, or whether you yourself are less active or even a member of the Church, you too can assist in the salvation of souls. There can be no more important, fulfilling, or glorious work.

The head of this work is our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. After His death, He opened the door to the prison that held the dead captive:



“He organized his forces and appointed messengers, clothed with power and authority, and commissioned them to go forth and carry the light of the gospel to them that were in darkness, even to all the spirits of men. . . .

“And the chosen messengers went forth to declare the acceptable day of the Lord and proclaim liberty to the captives who were bound, even unto all who would repent of their sins and receive the gospel” (D&C 138:30–31).

Our message is simple, but it is profound. It does not require soaring rhetoric or complex doctrine. It is about having a broken heart and a contrite spirit and a commitment to follow our Savior.

As an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, I promise that if you look beyond the bonds of time and mortality and help those who cannot help themselves, you will be blessed

with more closeness and joy in your family and with the divine protection afforded those who are faithful in His service.

Elijah’s promise makes it clear that each of us has an obligation to the generations that precede us and to the generations that follow us. May you parents, youth, and children find joy and be blessed in every other aspect of your life as you fulfill the obligation that has been sent from heaven to participate in the sacred work for the dead. ■

From an address, “Our Father’s Plan Is about Families,” delivered at the RootsTech 2015 Family History Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, on February 14, 2015. Visit RootsTech.org to learn more about the 2016 RootsTech conference.

NOTES

1. For information on the *My Family* booklet, go to familysearch.org/myfamily.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “A New Harvest Time,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 34.
3. The Record Hints feature shows “the results of an extensive search of [FamilySearch’s] collection looking for your ancestors” (familysearch.org/blog/en/give-research-boost-record-hints/).
4. Boyd K. Packer, “The Holy Temple,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Oct. 2010, 35.

The head of this work is our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. After His death, He opened the door to the prison that held the dead captive.

When a Child Leaves the Church

We can embrace the principle that our children are blessed with agency, even when they use it to head in directions we don't agree with.

By Robin Zenger Baker

Weeks had passed since my adult daughter had moved to a new city, and each Sunday that she missed church brought me the same concerns. Would she ever return to church? I tried everything I could think of to get her there: encouragement, logic, pleading, acting as her personal alarm clock, prayer, fasting, even calling her bishop. Since we lived 2,000 miles (3,220 km) apart, it was difficult for me to attend with her, but I even tried that!

I continually imagined that if I could just tweak the situation a little, my daughter would reestablish her spiritual trajectory. I felt I just needed the right person—her visiting teacher, her bishop, a friend or family member—to be placed in her path to say or do just the thing that would steer her back. But nothing was working. My head spun with worry, and my heart filled with guilt and anguish that I had failed her as a parent.

Many others share my experience. When children leave the gospel path, it can be very difficult for parents who remain faithful to cope. One mother was so upset by her daughter's choices that she said it felt painful to breathe. A father shared that he felt his children were rejecting him and his way of life. A young mother worried that her own

young children might someday question themselves out of the Church.

How do we cope with these painful feelings when family members choose to leave the Church? There are several things we can do.

Learn from Others Who Have Struggled

Some of the most righteous families in the scriptures struggled with rebellious children. Sariah and Lehi had children who abandoned their parents' teachings (see 1 Nephi 2:8–12). So did Adam and Eve (see Genesis 4:8). Even our heavenly parents sorrowed when a third of their spirit children chose another path (see D&C 29:36). The plan of happiness includes agency. And that means that even members of righteous families may choose to reject gospel principles. We can gain comfort from the stories of struggling families in the scriptures. We gain a better understanding of agency and empathy, and that understanding can help us heal and move ahead.

Recognize Our Children Are Also God's

When her teenage son started questioning his beliefs, one mother became overwhelmed with feelings of guilt and failure. While thinking of how she could have parented



differently, she received a merciful impression: “He is *not* only your child. I love him even more than you, and I’m not feeling guilty about him or any of my other wandering children.” From that moment on, this mother was able to let go of the guilt and focus instead on what a lovely child of God her son was.

Focus on Success

Sometimes parents struggle because they do not completely understand the teaching that “no other success can compensate for failure in the home.”¹ Success and failure are not easily defined. As Elder John K. Carmack, a former member of the Seventy, explains, “Because this statement was intended to inspire parents to become or stay involved with their children, it should not be taken to mean that parents who have indeed put great time, effort, and sacrifice into parenting, and yet who have still not reaped the desired rewards, have failed.”² We need to celebrate the good qualities of our children and the happy moments we shared. We should embrace the principle that our family members are blessed with agency, however they may use it.

Adjust Our Expectations

While we hope family members will follow paths we have chosen, they must choose for themselves to receive the blessings of the gospel. Elder Carmack suggests that instead of fighting this reality, parents may need to “adjust their present expectations and approach, accepting things as they are rather than continuing in turmoil.”³

A mother felt frustrated and sad as she realized her son would not go on a mission. Eventually she recognized that she needed to let go of the thought that her son had to go on a mission in order for her to be happy. “I was finally able to realize, this is not about me,” she said. “Each child’s life is *their* life. I’m just their mother. I don’t own them.”

Gain Insight

Many parents find solace and maintain perspective in prayer, scripture study, and temple attendance. One

parent shared that her experience with prayer taught her to remember how precious her child is to Heavenly Father, which helped lift her pain. Prayer brings helpful insights into what to do and say. It also helps us find consolation.

Scriptures tell stories of people who have made poor choices and how family members have coped. “It’s a good thing the scriptures aren’t full of stories about perfect families or we might be too discouraged to even try!” one parent shared. The story of Alma the Younger reassures us that the righteous prayers of parents are heard (see Mosiah 27:14). The parable of the prodigal son teaches us the joy we feel when someone who was lost returns (Luke 15:20–24).

Temple attendance can also help us gain useful insights to deal with family issues. “I believe that the busy person . . . can solve . . . problems better and more quickly in the house of the Lord than anywhere else,” said Elder John A. Widtsoe (1872–1952) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “At the most unexpected moments, in or out of the temple will come . . . as a revelation, the solution [to] the problems that vex [our lives].”⁴ As parents attend the temple, their hearts and minds can become more attuned to the peace they seek.

Continue to Show Love

Lehi and Sariah undoubtedly loved Laman and Lemuel just as much as they loved Sam, Nephi, Jacob, and Joseph. While it can be easier to get along with family members who share our beliefs and lifestyle, it is still crucial for us to learn to show our love for others who don’t.

One woman who stopped attending church at a young age shared the following experience of how her family continued loving her. In her large LDS family, missions were celebrated in a visible way. Photographs of all the missionaries in the family adorned her grandmother’s living room wall. It was “the epicenter of our family’s universe,” she said. She knew she would never serve a mission, and she felt that no matter what good she did in the world, she would never earn a place on her grandmother’s wall.



As we keep loving our loved ones as they currently are, we can still hold on to the hope that they will return to a gospel-centered life.

At age 30 she decided to serve in the United States Peace Corps. She journeyed to Madagascar and devoted all her energy to serving there. Partway through her experience, she learned that her grandmother had included her photo on the wall. When the Peace Corps term ended, grandmother and granddaughter embraced and shed tears. “Service is service,” her grandmother explained. Whether or not we have a missionary wall in our homes, there are still plenty of ways we can show *all* our family members they are loved and valued.

Hold On to Hope

As we keep loving our loved ones as they currently are, we can still hold on to the hope that they will return to a gospel-centered life. Often family members do return after a period of wandering. Like the prodigal son, they realize that their former lives brought them good messages and principles, and they embrace those values once again. In fact, prophets have promised that family members who are sealed to parents will feel the tug of their righteous upbringing and will someday return.⁵ Such promises give us great hope for our own loved ones.

Maintain an Eternal View

We must remember that we simply do not know what will happen to our loved ones. One father of rebellious teens shared that he has learned that even though his sons are not living righteously right now, he should not assume

that disaster is imminent. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, suggests that sometimes we believe that the end of the story has already been written, when in reality, we are only in the middle chapters.⁶ God’s reckoning of time is vastly different from ours, and we do not know how each person’s story will end.

If we knew that our family members would eventually return, would that change how we act in our stories today? I believe we might live with a much greater degree of peace, love, and acceptance. As we work to make our story turn out well, it helps to remember that we can choose to approach loved ones from a place of peace and love rather than anger and fear. As Paul wrote, “God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7). As Elder Carmack urges: “Never give up. If you cannot seem to reach your daughter or son now, you can at least keep trying and keep loving them. . . . Do not give in to paralyzing feelings of guilt and hopelessness. Seek spiritual help and peace. Be strong and courageous. You will see it through.”⁷

My daughter has not yet returned to church. But our goals are clear; we are both working to stay close. We talk frequently, and I know her LDS upbringing has helped her to become kind, disciplined, and thoughtful. While I would never have chosen for her to take the path she is currently traveling, I am grateful for the lessons we are learning along the way. And I have found peace as I embrace our unique positions in our journeys back home. ■

The author lives in Massachusetts, USA.

NOTES

1. David O. McKay, in Conference Report, Apr. 1964, 5; quoted from J. E. McCulloch, *Home: The Savior of Civilization* (1924), 42.
2. John K. Carmack, “When Our Children Go Astray,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1997, 9.
3. John K. Carmack, “When Our Children Go Astray,” 9.
4. John A. Widtsoe, “Temple Worship,” *The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine*, vol. 22 (1921), 63–64, quoted in David B. Haight, “Temples and Work Therein,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 61.
5. See “Hope for Parents of Wayward Children,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2002, 11.
6. See Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “See the End from the Beginning,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2006, 42–45.
7. John K. Carmack, “When Our Children Go Astray,” 10, 13.

CONDUCTING A WELL-TUNED

Group Discussion



By Dustin West

Seminaries and Institutes

When you lead a gospel discussion, it might be helpful to think of yourself as a conductor of an orchestra. Those you are teaching are not the audience listening to the concert. They are in the orchestra, playing their parts to create music. The conductor coordinates the musicians, brings out the best in each, and helps their music become an inspiring work of art.

Meaningful gospel discussions can be like beautiful music. A good discussion results in a deeper understanding of the doctrines of the gospel being discussed as well as a genuine desire to apply gospel truths.



Meaningful gospel discussions can be like conducting beautiful music. One of the teacher's key roles is to direct the discussion so learners have the opportunity to feel the Spirit and discover truths for themselves.

Here are several principles that will improve the discussions you lead:

Teach people, not lessons. Those you teach will be more willing to participate in discussions when they feel that you care more about them than getting through the lesson. Learners want to feel that you have prepared yourself to fortify and increase their faith in the Lord, rather than just present facts. Learners who feel loved by their teacher and by other class members will be more willing to share insights and experiences.

Invite inspiration. Time together is an opportunity for you and those you teach to receive revelation, not just a chance for you to share what you know. One of the teacher's key roles is to direct the discussion so learners have the opportunity to feel the Spirit and discover truths for themselves. When revelation flows, all are edified—both teacher and learners—and rejoice together (see D&C 50:22). You can know that your discussions are edifying when you are learning from the Spirit as well as teaching by the Spirit.

TO THE TEACHER: "CAN I FIT IT ALL IN?"

The lesson materials, the chapters of scripture, the insights you gained as you studied—it's all so good, but your hours of study often can't be replicated in a designated period of time. Your task is not to share all you learned but to direct the class time in such a way that learners discover truths for themselves—much as you did in your own preparation. Pray for help, and the Holy Ghost will teach you what to focus on. As you focus on a few truths, you can allow for a more meaningful discussion that penetrates deeper into the hearts of those you teach.

Invite all to participate. Participating does not necessarily mean that everyone has to answer a question out loud. Some prefer to participate simply by listening or by taking notes. Others are willing to share their thoughts as long as they have time to ponder and prepare. You might consider contacting a few of those you teach ahead of time and asking them to come prepared to share their thoughts on a particular topic.

There are several other ways to help learners participate in the discussion. For example, you could:

- Ask them to ponder how they would answer a question before you ask for responses.
- Ask them to write their answers on a piece of paper. Then you could ask a few of them to share their responses with others.
- Invite them to respond to questions with someone sitting next to them or in small groups.

Sometimes you may have a member of the group who dominates the discussion. If this happens, you could say something like, “Let’s hear from someone who hasn’t

shared yet.” In some cases it may be necessary to speak to this person privately to thank him or her for sharing and to explain the importance of encouraging other participants to share.

Don’t be afraid of silence. Silence may feel like a lull in your discussion, but for learners it can be valuable pondering time.

Ask meaningful questions. Ask questions that encourage learners to think deeply about the meaning of scripture passages and gospel principles. As you prepare your lesson, think of questions that will help those you teach understand and apply the truths they learn. A few well-phrased questions can make a great difference.

Listen carefully. Often teachers are so worried about what they are going to say next that they don’t listen carefully to comments. If you sincerely listen to those you teach, they will feel valued and be more likely to participate. President Thomas S. Monson stated: “[Everyone] has a story waiting to be told. Listening is an essential element as we teach and as we learn” (“Examples of Great Teachers,” *Ensign*, June 2007, 108; *Liahona*, June 2007, 76).



Learners who feel loved by their teacher and by other class members will be more willing to share insights and experiences.

Ask follow-up questions. When learners share insights and experiences, you might sense that they have more to share. Consider asking follow-up questions such as these: What about that is important to you? When have you seen this in your life? What does this mean for us today? Who else has something to say about this? Who has a related thought that they would like to share? What other scripture passages teach this truth?

Acknowledge responses. When someone gives a response, it needs to be acknowledged in some way. This can be done by making an appreciative comment about the response or by asking a follow-up question.

Keep the doctrine pure. Remember that the primary goal of teaching the gospel is not just to have a good discussion.

Rather, it is to learn the doctrine so that our hearts can be changed and we can be converted. During the discussion, part of your responsibility is to ensure that true doctrine is being taught.

If someone shares something that is doctrinally incorrect, you have the responsibility to state the doctrine correctly. You could build on a correct portion of the answer, share a scripture or teaching from general conference, or bear your testimony.

Using these ideas, you can have some great gospel discussions. You won't be using discussions just to pass the time. You can lead effective discussions so that learners will receive personal revelation, develop unity with each other, and deepen their understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ. ■

TO THE LEARNER: YOUR VOICE MATTERS

Having a good discussion about the gospel is a responsibility you share with the teacher. Here are some situations you may have wondered about:

I have something to say, but my teacher hasn't asked for comments. Should I interrupt?

You might wait for an appropriate moment to catch the teacher's eye and signal your willingness to contribute. If you feel inspired to share, do your best to act on that prompting.

I'm not sure my comments are valuable, so should I really raise my hand?

You have a perspective and experiences that others may not have. As you prepare for class, you gain personal insights that could be a blessing to other learners.

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that when we raise our hands during a gospel discussion, we “signify to the Holy Ghost [our] willingness to learn.” So if your comments are appropriate to

the topic and the time allows, you can share them. Elder Scott explained, “Participation allows individuals to *experience* being led by the Spirit” (“To Learn and to Teach More Effectively” [Brigham Young University Education Week devotional, Aug. 21, 2007], 5, speeches.byu.edu).

I'm scared to talk in front of so many people. What do I do?

As you work to overcome this fear, you might start small. Try volunteering to read a scripture or a quote. Then look for opportunities to answer questions or to share insights. As you demonstrate your willingness to participate, you will be blessed with the courage to speak and the words to say. When we “open [our] mouths,” we find that “they shall be filled” (D&C 33:10).

If you find it easy to comment, you may want to ask yourself if, rather than sharing your own thoughts again, there's a way for you to encourage one of your fellow learners to comment.

Remarriage

An Adventure in Patience and Love



Blending families requires twice as much patience. But it can also create twice as much love.

By Heidi Eljarbø Morrell Andersen

Divorce was never a part of my vocabulary until it actually happened to me. For a long time I felt the embarrassing downside of the word every time I was asked about my marital status. “I’m divorced.” It was as

if I could hardly say the words out loud—as if I were saying bad words.

Nevertheless, it was where I was in life, and I had a hard time fitting in. “You’ll find someone,” my friends would say. But I was not interested and had no desire to remarry. My four children kept me busy enough.

Until one day, without expectations or plans for the future, I met Arnfinn, and to my surprise we communicated so well that I enjoyed his company more and more. He was smart, good-looking, and playful. When he proposed,

I did not know what the future would hold, but I knew I wanted that future with him. We took our time to “iron out the wrinkles,” as Arnfinn called it, and were married in the Stockholm Sweden Temple in the fall of 1997.

Being newlyweds at almost 40 was not the same as the first time. Falling in love was the same wonderful thrill,



and the excitement of a new relationship was similar, but now we had two ex-spouses, a disobedient dog, a loud bird, and nine children, ages 3 to 17. Luckily, the newness of our romance was enough to get us through challenging days ahead.

The Key to Understanding

“It seems like we don’t always have the same opinions about things,” Arnfinn said one day. Forty years of habits and doing things your own way will do that. I was 19

the first time I married, and routines and traditions were formed along the way. Arnfinn and I found out that it was all right and even healthy to have more than one opinion. It did not necessarily mean that one was right and the other was wrong. Opinions are shaped by many things in life, and respect and listening became the key words to understanding the other person.

We also tried to come to an understanding of how to blend our lives together—where to live, how to deal with the family economy, and which holiday traditions to uphold. There were a few more wrinkles to iron out along the way, but looking back, some seem trivial today. Harmony and love at home were the targets we were aiming for.

Having another mother involved in our family was especially hard for me. Arnfinn’s ex-wife is a wonderful mother and concerned with her children’s welfare. Vacations and weekends were planned with her, and at times I felt I did not have a say in my own life.

But the transition was probably more of a challenge for Arnfinn, who moved into a home with four children, two of them in their teens—

children whose personalities were more boisterous than what he was used to and who had been brought up slightly different from what he would prefer.

Different Paths, Same Answers

Then one evening, so late that my thinker had stopped working for the day, Arnfinn challenged me to an IQ test. He sat down on one side of the dining room table and started making up equations and mathematical formulas in order to answer the questions. I was on the opposite side

of the table drawing pictures to solve the problems presented. We finished and compared our test answers, only to find that we had achieved the same answers. That's when I realized that the test was similar to our lives together.

Let me explain: He does things one way, and I do them another. But we have the same goal, even though the way there may vary. Reaching that goal is like the IQ test: while he makes equations and I draw pictures, we still get to the same answers.

I know I could never do his job as a lawyer, and I am pretty sure he would find my line of work as a writer and water-color artist difficult. The trick has been to find him cute when he does things differently from me instead of being annoyed. Difference can be an exciting learning experience if we let it. I told Arnfinn one day, "If you can teach me some things and maybe I can teach you some, we will turn out OK one day." We both have to be teachable, and it's an ongoing process. Admiration has become a key word.

If Mom and Dad are two diverse species, you can be sure that two sets of children will be poles apart as well. We rolled up our sleeves and faced the everyday problems

of varying eating habits, clothing styles, bedtime, and chores, to mention a few. For a long time the children were titled "mine" and "yours" and did not always think that being thrown together was all that wonderful.

The oldest one let me know that she would soon be out of the house anyway and that she wanted me to be happy; the next two girls did not even seem to like each other; and one of the boys gave up his bedroom every other weekend and slept on the couch whenever his step-brothers came. He has never complained about that, bless his heart.

Making Room for Those We Love

There's always room for those you love. We rearranged the parlor next to the living room as a parent refuge and had the children in the upstairs bedrooms. Two television sets and two bathrooms became a necessity instead of a luxury. A few days alone once a year for the newlywed parents was also an essential investment for our future as a family.

Weekends and other events were planned ahead; meals, games, and activities had to suit most of the children.

Arnfinn's five children lived with their mother on weekdays, and I wanted to respect her wishes as well as make sure the children enjoyed their visit with their dad. That meant I sometimes had to keep quiet about minor annoyances and instead focus on what was more important in order for them to have an enjoyable stay. I applied patience and love—then

Blowing bubbles with three of our grandchildren. Our children have grown up and moved out, but they know they are always welcome to visit.



One of our traditions is to attend the Stockholm Sweden Temple each summer with as many of our children as possible. Last year we drove 10 hours so that Arnfinn's 90-year-old mother could come with us and be sealed to her parents.

more patience, in addition to a bucket of humor.

Chaotic Sunday mornings were a major trial. We tried to set the atmosphere with beautiful classical music while guiding one child after another in and out of the two bathrooms before the cowbell rang for a scrumptious breakfast. Still, getting everyone out the door and into the minivan to get to church on time was a trial of keeping the spirit of the Sabbath every Sunday. By the time we came home and enjoyed a nice dinner, we had calmed down enough to enjoy playing games together.

There is much wisdom in the programs and lessons we are taught in church. Family prayer, family home evening, and discussing gospel principles are worth the time and effort. The gospel has brought us joy and helped us understand even more how important and valuable families are.

We have made many new traditions but also kept some from our previous lives. Every summer we bring as many children as possible to the Stockholm Sweden Temple. We stay at a campground south of the temple. It has become a tradition that we enjoy and one that even the kids who are married have adopted for their families.

When our children now come to ask for advice about dating and marriage, I tell them that it does not matter if one likes jogging and the other is partial to ballet. The most important thing is to have the same enthusiasm for serving our Savior and the determination to strive toward the goal to be an eternal family.

Twice the Patience, Twice the Blessings

When I meet couples who find each other for a second opportunity for marriage, I am delighted for them, glad that



they have a partner and best friend to spend time with. But I also remember that the first few years of putting together two families were not all bliss and glee. It comes at a cost, and some days we wonder why it needs to be so challenging.

Today, our daughters who did not really like each other as teenagers are both mothers and enjoy comparing notes at family dinners and even spending vacation time together at the family cabin. Encouraging letters have been mailed to the boys serving missions, and some of our children have visited each other as they have lived abroad. They always have fun getting together for large holiday dinners and rejoice when the arrival of a new niece or nephew is announced.

There's only Arnfinn and myself at the house now. We have a fun-loving dog and a new little bird. The kids have frequented their bedrooms in between studies and establishing new homes. They know they are always welcome and will be fed and loved when they come by.

Putting two families together requires twice as much love and twice the patience. There has been a lot of cooking and many loads of laundry to wash, but it's worth it. We love our large family. The blessings of having twice as many people to love are twice as great.

And our family is still growing. There's a new generation of beautiful babies, and they are all our grandchildren! ■

The author lives in Norway.

SHE READ MY TESTIMONY

Answering my phone, I heard the excited voice of one of the local full-time missionaries telling me about a baptism to be held in a few days. Baptisms, of course, are always a reason for excitement among missionaries, but the name of the sister being baptized was unfamiliar to me. Yet the elder insisted that I attend the baptism because a surprise awaited me. He would not tell me more.

On the day of the baptism, I arrived at the church early to find out what the surprise was. But I did not know the young sister—Alice—who was getting baptized, and she gave no indication that she recognized me.

When the business was leaving the kiosk, the boss told Alice to throw the book away. But Alice was curious and asked if she could have it.

After the sweet, Spirit-filled baptism, Alice held a Book of Mormon as she bore testimony of its truthfulness and expressed gratitude for its teachings, especially its witness of the Savior. In her testimony, she told how the book had come to her. She had been working at a kiosk in a local shopping mall. One day a woman came by and gave the book to her boss. The boss was not interested and put it on a shelf.

A short time later, when the business was leaving the kiosk, the boss told Alice to throw the book away. But Alice was curious, briefly looked at the book, and asked if she could have it.

Alice took the Book of Mormon home, read it within a few weeks, and was convinced of its truth. But she didn't know what to do. Some months later she found another job, where she worked with a Latter-day Saint. She asked him about the Book of Mormon and the Church, and he and his wife invited her to meet with the missionaries.

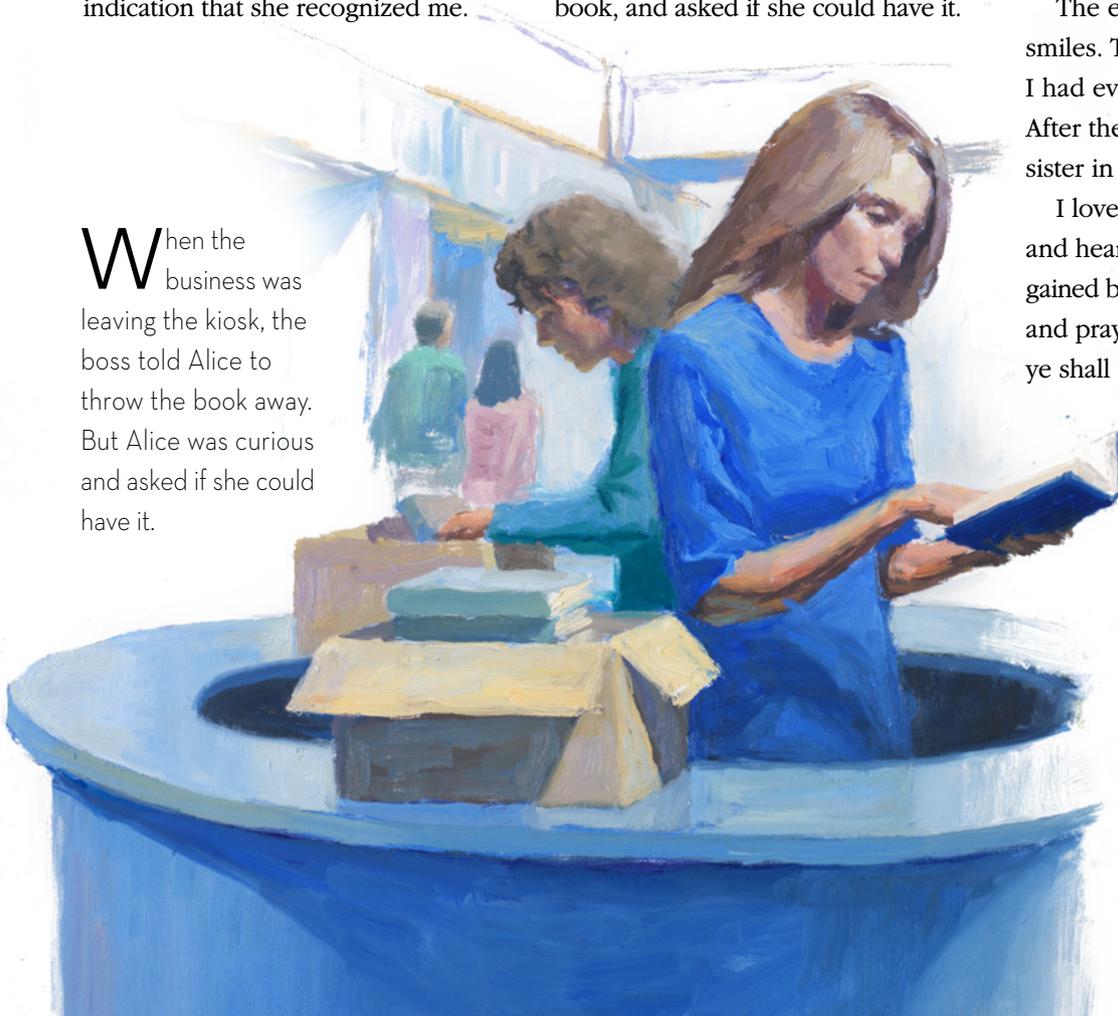
Then this sister said she would like to read the testimony written in the front of her Book of Mormon. The testimony was mine. I had placed it there before giving it to Alice's boss at the kiosk.

The elders broke into delighted smiles. This was the sweetest surprise I had ever experienced in my life! After the baptismal service, my new sister in the gospel rushed to hug me.

I loved witnessing Alice's baptism and hearing her humble testimony, gained by reading the Book of Mormon and praying as Moroni counsels: "If ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you" (Moroni 10:4).

A deep gratitude still fills me that I had been allowed to play a small part in helping one of God's children receive the blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ. ■

Faith Watson, Utah, USA





I agonized over how I would ever be able to help my children pay for their missions.

RAISE WORTHY SONS

Years ago, when I was a single mother, overwhelmed with the care and support of my four children, a generous gift from my mother and brother allowed me to return to college. During my drive to school, I would think about my hopes and dreams for my children. I was a convert to the Church. My fondest desire was that they would have the opportunity to teach the gospel to others and bring them the happiness I felt.

One morning, as I was driving down to school, I thought about my two oldest sons, who were 22 months apart. If they served, the oldest would finish his mission just as his brother started his. I agonized over this and wondered how I would ever be able to help them pay for their missions. I wasn't sure I could find funds to send the first, let alone the second.

This turmoil continued for four days, while I prayed for an answer. On the fifth day the answer came:

“Raise worthy sons. Money is easy to find; worthy sons are not.”

Peace flooded my heart. The answer was so far from my monetary concerns that I was startled. My job was to raise worthy children. I could hold family home evening, attend church, get my children to seminary, and help my sons with Young Men activities. I could make prayer, fasting, and scripture reading part of our family life. I knew that if I did my part, my children might have an opportunity to serve missions.

In addition to our routine, we had an incredible home teacher who loved our family. He and his wife came faithfully each month. He taught my children lessons, gave them blessings, and attended their sports events. Friends took my sons to stake priesthood meetings and overnight campouts. There were stake members who gave them opportunities to work and earn money, neighbors who were

like an extra set of parents, and school teachers who taught them discipline and consistency through academics, music, and sports.

When my oldest son turned 19, the funds were there for his mission. As it turned out, the funds were there for all four children to serve. They served in Mexico and Brazil and in South Carolina and Virginia, USA. The youngest two even served at the same time!

That experience has often made me think of the Lord's words in Isaiah: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways” (Isaiah 55:8).

Prayers are answered when we follow the counsel we receive, and blessings often follow. I know the service my children gave to the Lord changed their lives and the lives of those they taught. Their service has blessed our home and will continue to do so for generations. ■

Janness Johnson, California, USA

ONLY TWO BAPTISMS?

While I was serving as president of the Guatemala Guatemala City Mission, we received several new full-time missionaries. As I introduced myself to these missionaries, I told them the story of my conversion and baptism.

I related that Elders David Tree and Wayne Matthews had taught me the gospel when I was nine years old and living in Glendive, Montana, USA. The two missionaries and a member of the Glendive Branch drove me to Williston, North Dakota, USA, on a cold winter day in 1957 so I could

be baptized in the font of a meetinghouse there.

After I had related my story and was interviewing the new missionaries, one of them, Elder Benjamin Pixton, told me that David Tree was his grandfather. What a wonderful surprise! Elder Tree had baptized a nine-year-old boy in Glendive, Montana, and nearly 50 years later that boy was called as his grandson's mission president.

When Elder Pixton's parents and grandparents came to pick him up at the end of his mission, I had the

pleasure of meeting David Tree again. During our visit, I showed him the Book of Mormon—with a message and promise he had written—that he had given to me the day I was baptized.

Elder Pixton's mother told him that her father hadn't talked much about his mission. He felt that he hadn't been very successful because he baptized only two people: a single woman and a nine-year-old boy.

In gratitude I told him that because of his efforts, the rest of my family had eventually joined the Church and that my brother and I, along with our nine

Two missionaries and a member of the branch drove me to North Dakota, USA, on a cold winter day so I could be baptized in the font of a meetinghouse there.

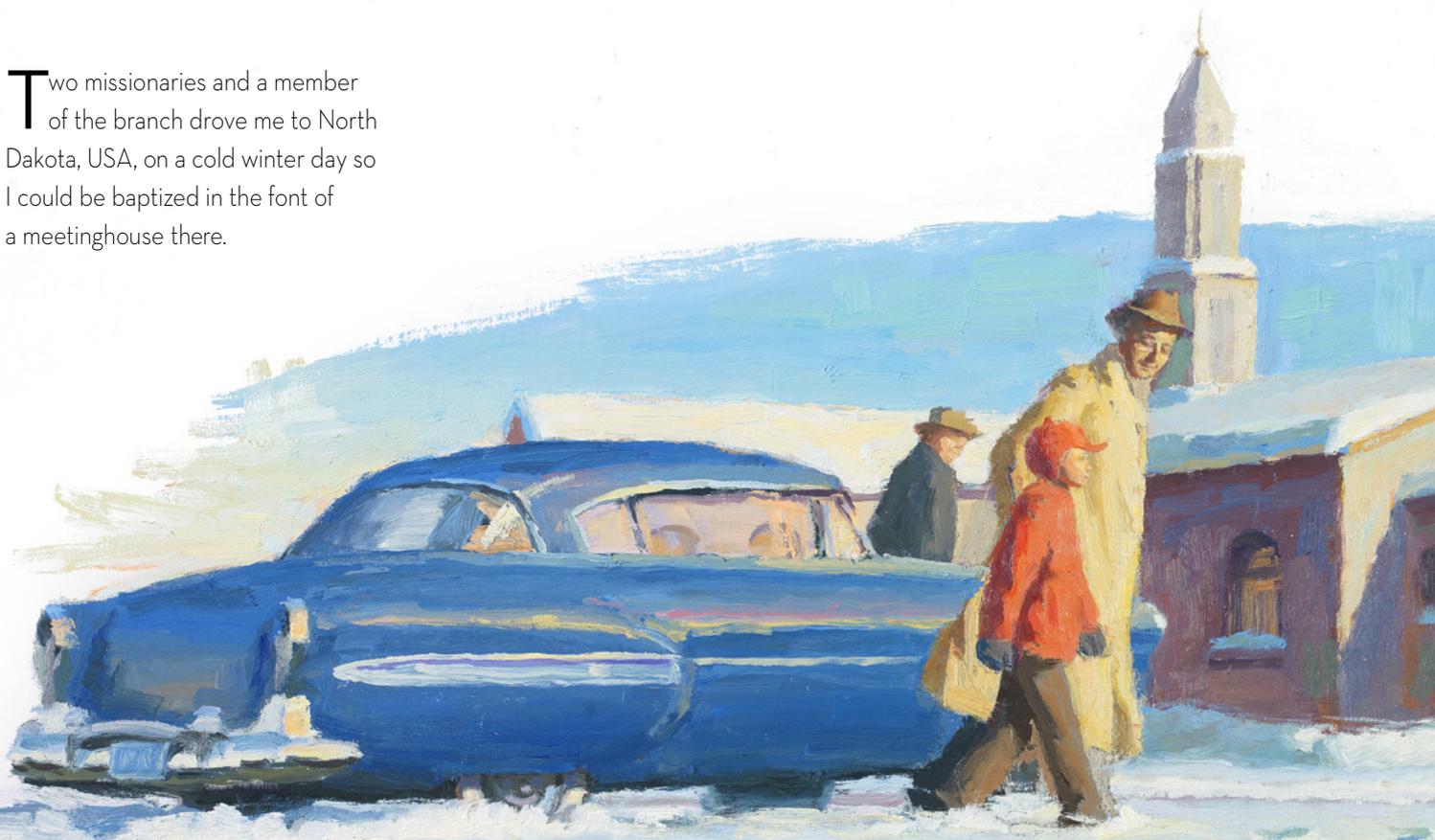


ILLUSTRATION BY ALLEN GARRIS

PRAYING WITH REAL INTENT

sons, had served full-time missions. Because of his missionary service, I said, countless people had been taught the gospel and had joined the Church.

Many good, worthy, dedicated priesthood holders looked after me during the years of my childhood and adolescence, starting with Elder Tree and his companion, Elder Matthews. I will always be grateful that they taught me the gospel of Jesus Christ and brought me into the Lord's kingdom, where He has blessed me beyond measure. ■

Thomas R. Coleman, Kansas, USA



In 1960 I met a young man at a party who told me that Jesus Christ had visited the Americas after His Resurrection. I found the idea fascinating and wanted to know more, so I began searching in libraries and inquiring at the various religious denominations in my hometown of San Miguel, El Salvador.

I searched for almost three years but found nothing. When I mentioned to religious leaders that I had heard of Christ coming to the Americas, they told me I had been deceived. Because my search turned up no information, I eventually came to believe they were right.

One day, two missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints came to my home and said they had an important message for my family. I immediately asked them, "Do you know if Jesus Christ came to the Americas?"

One of them said, "We bear witness of that."

At that moment I felt a great excitement in my mind and heart and asked, "How do you know that?"

He took a book out of his bag and said, "We know Christ came here because of this book, the Book of Mormon."

What the missionaries taught me during the first discussion troubled me, and I doubted the account of the Prophet Joseph's vision of the Father and the Son.

However, the Book of Mormon intrigued me, and the missionaries kept teaching me. One afternoon they asked me, "Have you prayed to find out if what we are teaching you is true?"

I told them I had but had not obtained any answer.

"You must pray with real intent," they said.

I had been reading the Book of Mormon for several nights. I had read about and believed in Christ's appearance to the Nephites. But I still could not accept Joseph Smith's vision. My internal struggle was terrible.

One night I knelt alone and opened my heart to God. I told Him I needed to know if He had really manifested Himself to Joseph Smith. If He had, I promised Him I would be baptized into the Church and serve Him all my life.

When I got up early the next morning, the answer came to me through the Holy Ghost. My mind cleared and my heart filled with peace. From that moment to this, I have had no doubts whatsoever that Joseph Smith truly was a prophet of God, that the Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ, and that Jesus Christ is our Savior and Redeemer. I know Christ came to the Americas after His Resurrection. My soul delights in this marvelous knowledge that was taught to me by the power of the Holy Ghost. ■

Carlos Rene Romero, El Salvador

What Can the Book of Mormon Teach Us about Happiness?

By **Hank R. Smith**

Instructor of Religious Education,
Brigham Young University

Lehi taught his son Jacob, “Men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25).

We all want to be happy. We often long for the cheerfulness, peace, and satisfaction we see in our family members and friends whose lives seem to be filled with happiness. Everyone has felt a void of happiness in their life at one time or another. Some might even have wondered, “Will I ever be happy?”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, said: “The Lord has embedded in [the Book of Mormon] His message to you. Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni knew that, and those who put it together put in messages for you.”¹ Because

God desires all of His children to be happy in this life, He has embedded eternal principles of happiness in the Book of Mormon. Though you can find these principles throughout, two chapters in particular—2 Nephi 5 and 4 Nephi 1—contain clear guidelines that will lead us to increased happiness if we are willing to live by them.

2 Nephi 5

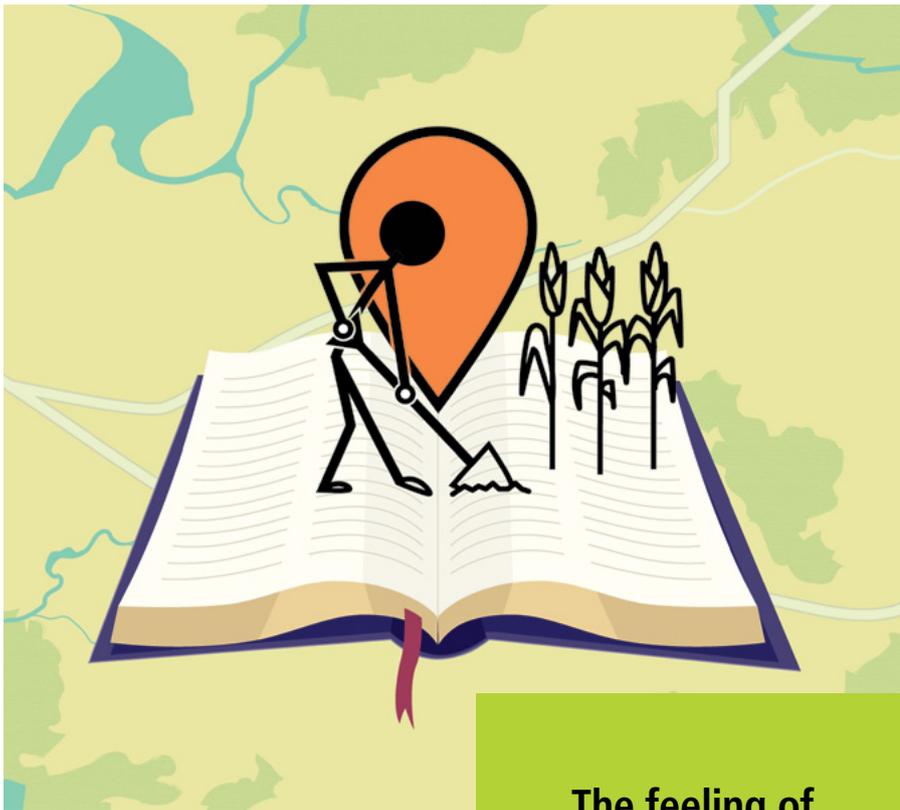
Soon after Lehi’s death, the Lord warned Nephi that Laman and Lemuel would attempt to take his life. The Lord told Nephi to take those who would go with him and flee into the wilderness. Although there must surely have been difficulties with this exodus and establishing a new community, in 2 Nephi 5:27, Nephi explained, “It came to pass that we

Seven principles we can extract from two chapters in the Book of Mormon teach us what it takes to be truly happy.

lived after the manner of happiness.” This chapter sets a pattern of happiness we can follow in our own lives. ***Maintaining Uplifting Associations***

Nephi tells us that those who fled into the wilderness with him were





those who “believed in the warnings and the revelations of God” (verse 6). A significant source of happiness is our social circle. It is important for us to spend time with others who believe as we do and whose presence is uplifting. In addition to spending time with family members, we can have uplifting associations with friends who strengthen our faith. Those interactions and associations have a significant impact on our happiness. Christine Carter, a sociologist at the University of California, Berkeley, wrote, “The quantity and quality of a person’s social connections—friendships, relationships

The feeling of accomplishment that often accompanies hard work brings happiness.

with family members, closeness to neighbors, etc.—is so closely related to well-being and personal happiness the two can practically be equated.”²

Aligning Actions with Beliefs

In verse 10, Nephi writes that his people kept “the commandments of the Lord.” Obedience to the

commandments is an important part of living a happy life. King Benjamin encouraged his people to “consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God” (Mosiah 2:41). It is difficult for us to be happy when we believe in God’s commandments but do not live them. Obedience brings peace of mind and peace of conscience. The Indian spiritual and political leader Mahatma Gandhi is said to have written, “Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.” When our beliefs and actions are misaligned, repentance is the key to reestablishing harmony in our lives.

Accomplishing Hard Work

In verses 11 and 15 of 2 Nephi 5, Nephi writes that his people planted and harvested crops, raised animals, built buildings, and worked with various ores. He said, “I, Nephi, did cause my people to be industrious, and to labor with their hands” (verse 17). From these verses we plainly see that work is a critical factor in obtaining happiness. Every day brings opportunities to work in our homes, around our homes, in our community, or in our employment. President Thomas S. Monson has said: “God left the world unfinished for man to work his skill upon. He left the electricity in the cloud, the oil in the earth. He left the rivers unbridged and the

forests unfelled and the cities unbuilt. God gives to man the challenge of raw materials, not the ease of finished things. He leaves the pictures unpainted and the music unsung and the problems unsolved, that man might know the joys and glories of creation.”³ Put simply, the exhilaration of being creative and the feeling of accomplishment that often accompany hard work bring happiness.

Focusing on the Temple

Nephi also tells us that he and his people took the time to build a temple (verse 16) as they established their new community. Temple blessings and happiness are inseparable. The temple teaches us of the plan of salvation and reminds us why we are here on earth. We learn that we are children of a loving Heavenly Father and our lives have great purpose in

His plan. In the temple we feel closer to Him; we feel His presence, His power, and His approval. Even if we cannot attend the temple on a regular basis, having a current temple recommend and having a picture of the temple in our homes can remind us of the temple experiences we have had and the truths we have learned there.

4 Nephi 1

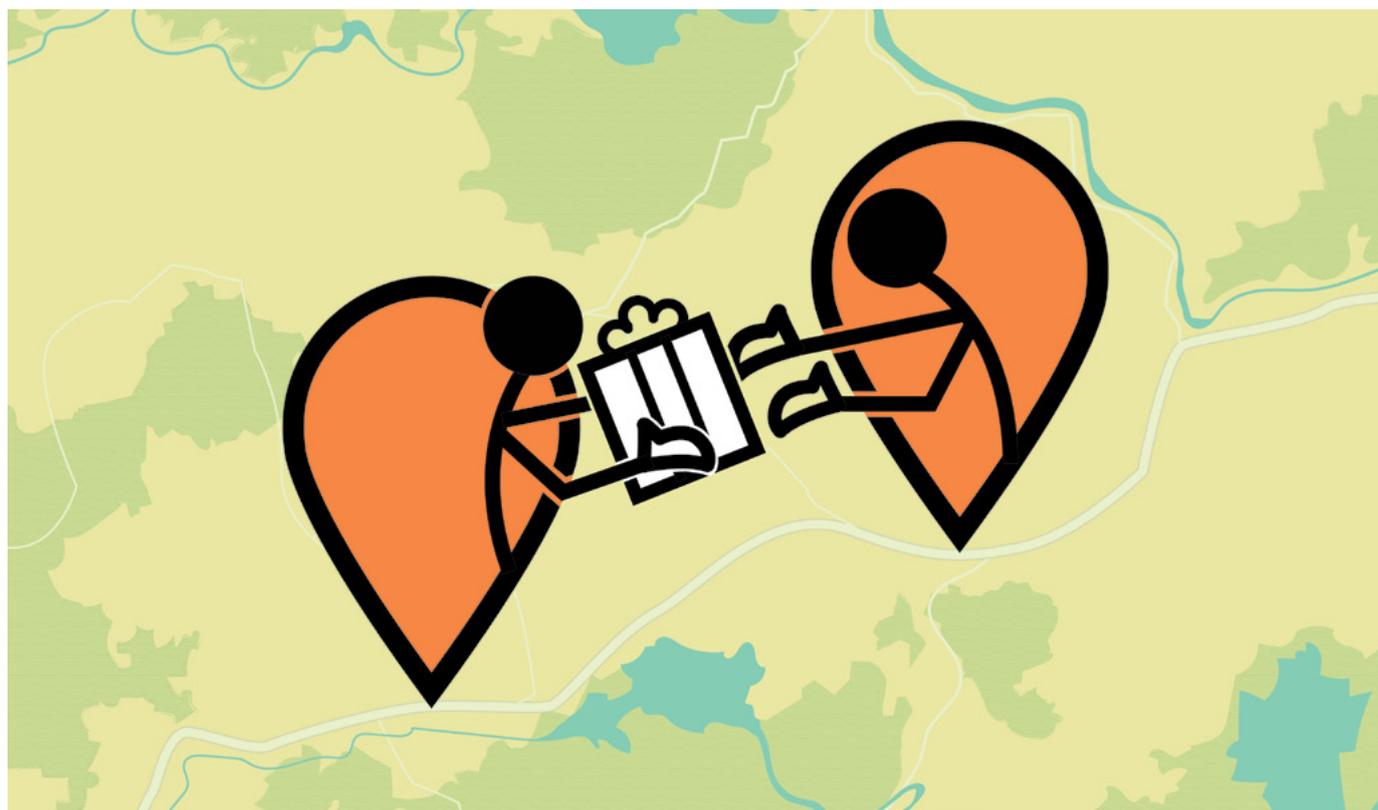
In 4 Nephi, the prophet-historian Mormon tells us what happened to the people after the Savior visited the people of Nephi. As he described these people, he noted, “There could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God” (4 Nephi 1:16).

Sharing What We Have

In verse 3, Mormon writes that these people had “all things common

among them” and “there were not rich and poor.” As we seek happiness in our own lives today, it is important for us to learn to share what we have with others.

Multiple studies have shown that time spent serving and money spent on others have a direct impact on our happiness.⁴ It is no wonder, then, that King Benjamin told his people, “I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants” (Mosiah 4:26). We have many opportunities to help those in need through service, fast offerings, and other various funds the Church manages.



Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “Down through history, poverty has been one of humankind’s greatest and most widespread challenges. Its obvious toll is usually physical, but the spiritual and emotional damage it can bring may be even more debilitating. In any case, the great Redeemer has issued no more persistent call than for us to join Him in lifting this burden from the people.”⁵ As we give more effort, time, and means to helping others, we will find an increase in our own happiness.

Belonging to a Family

Mormon tells us that these people “were married, and given in marriage” (4 Nephi 1:11). Being married and raising children (see verse 10) can be a great source of happiness for those who have these opportunities.

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said, “Happiness in marriage and parenthood can exceed a thousand times any other happiness.”⁶

But we do not have to be married or have children of our own to have relationships with family members that bring happiness. Single adults, youth, and children can take part in these blessings as well. To have happiness in family life, we must try to offer each member of the family our friendship, understanding, and love. Families can provide emotional and physical safety and a sense of belonging, which are essential to experiencing happiness.

Being a Peacemaker

Four times throughout 4 Nephi, Mormon tells us these people had “no contention” among them (see verses 2, 13, 15, and 18) “because of the love

of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people” (verse 15). Contention and happiness are polar opposites—one leads away from the other. The Savior warned the Nephites of the dangers of contention when He said, “He that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention” (3 Nephi 11:29). We must be sure we make a great effort to not do or say anything that brings a spirit of contention into our workplaces, schools, and homes. Instead we must do all we can to foster a love of God in our own hearts.

Often contention arises from impatience. With the help of the Spirit, we can change our nature and become more patient. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said: “Impatience . . . is a symptom of selfishness. It is a trait



of the self-absorbed. It arises from the all-too-prevalent condition called ‘center of the universe’ syndrome, which leads people to believe that the world revolves around them and that all others are just supporting cast in the grand theater of mortality in which only they have the starring role.”⁷

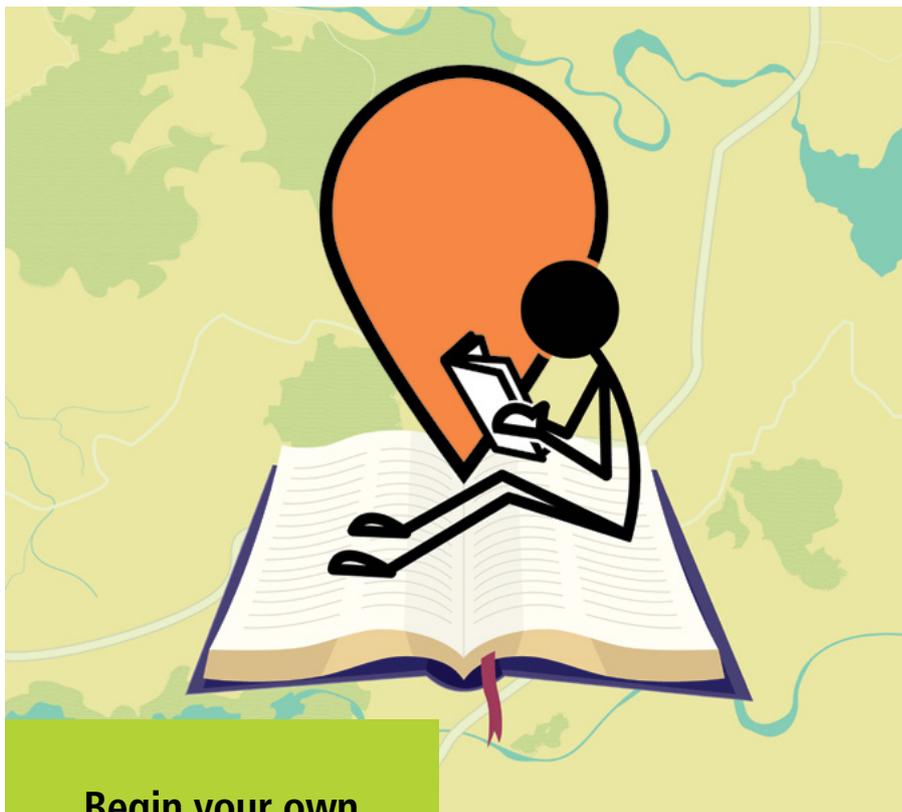
There is a better way. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) invited us to “cultivate the art of the soft answer. It will bless your homes, it will bless your lives.”⁸

An Invitation to Seek Happiness

The Book of Mormon contains principles of happiness. We have covered only part of what is found in these two chapters. What could we find in the rest of the book? It would be wise to begin our own personal search of the Book of Mormon for even more guidelines to a happier life. President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) promised the Saints: “The moment you begin a serious study of the Book of Mormon . . . you will find life in greater and greater abundance.”⁹ The Lord has given us this incredible tool. We can learn to use it to bless our own lives and the lives of those we love. ■

NOTES

1. Henry B. Eyring, “The Book of Mormon Will Change Your Life,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2004, 11; *Liahona*, Feb. 2004, 15.



Begin your own search of the Book of Mormon for more guidelines to happiness.

- Christine Carter, “Happiness Is Being Socially Connected,” Oct. 31, 2008, greatergood.berkeley.edu.
- Thomas S. Monson, “In Quest of the Abundant Life,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1988, 2.
- See, for example, Dunn et al., “Spending Money on Others Promotes Happiness,” *Science*, vol. 319 (2008), 1687–88; Netta Weinstein and Richard M. Ryan, “When Helping Helps: Autonomous Motivation

for Prosocial Behavior and Its Influence on Well-Being for the Helper and Recipient,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 98 (2010), 222–24; and Aknin et al., “Prosocial Spending and Well-Being: Cross-Cultural Evidence for a Psychological Universal,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 104 (2013), 635–52.

- Jeffrey R. Holland, “Are We Not All Beggars?” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 40.
- James E. Faust, “The Enriching of Marriage,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 11.
- Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Continue in Patience,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 57.
- Gordon B. Hinckley, “Cornerstones of a Happy Home” (address given at a satellite broadcast for husbands and wives, Jan. 29, 1984), 8.
- Ezra Taft Benson, “The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 7.

Why Institute Graduation Matters

By Matthew Porter Wilcox

Seminaries and Institutes

“What we need now is the greatest generation of young adults in the history of the Church,” said Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to young adults in the April 2015 general conference. “Young adults should enroll in an institute of religion. Institute . . . classes will provide balance to your life and add to your secular education by giving you another opportunity to spend time studying the scriptures and the teachings of the prophets and apostles.”¹

In order to deepen young adults’ understanding of the gospel, strengthen their testimony and commitment to Jesus Christ, and help them find personal guidance for their lives, the institute program has emphasized the need to elevate learning for every young adult. This elevation is reflected in three major ways: by offering four new cornerstone courses, by placing

greater importance on graduating from institute, and by inviting all students to take a more active role in their spiritual learning by completing assigned readings and learning assessments.

What are the four new cornerstone classes?

While classes such as Old Testament, New Testament, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants will continue to be offered, four new cornerstone classes now serve as the center of institute coursework. They include (1) Jesus Christ and the Everlasting Gospel,

(2) Foundations of the Restoration, (3) The Eternal Family, and (4) Teachings and Doctrine of the Book of Mormon. As the name implies, these cornerstone classes deal with foundational doctrine, history, and teachings of the gospel, as found in the scriptures and the words of the living prophets.

You can elevate your gospel learning as you take the four new cornerstone institute classes.





The cornerstone classes will be available in about 30 languages.

“[These new cornerstone classes] may lead to more in-depth scripture study than in the broad survey-type courses of the past,” stated Brent L. Top, dean of religious education at Brigham Young University. Chad Webb, administrator for Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, added, “The scriptures are woven together, and as they grow together, there are insights and understanding and strength that come from a study across all the standard works.”²

This young woman agrees: “I wondered how much I could really learn about the Restoration that I didn’t already know, but I found myself making connections I had never previously made. The course included topics such as plural marriage, priesthood to all worthy males, and the Mountain Meadows massacre. These class discussions gave me information rooted in faith rather than doubt. The course also tied the Restoration into current-day events, so I recognized that I am actually part of the Restoration. It’s not just the Prophet Joseph Smith, President Brigham Young, and other pioneers. It’s me too!”

Why should I make institute graduation a goal?

Here’s what some other students are saying about graduating from institute:

“I made a goal to graduate from institute, and though I made many sacrifices, I was rewarded with understanding, knowledge, and a stronger testimony.”

“After graduation I felt stronger and ready for new experiences. I’m going to encourage others to graduate too.”

“Graduation was a spiritual achievement that keeps me moving toward my goal of eternal salvation.”

As you also elevate your learning by working toward graduation, you will learn to prioritize study time and enhance your gospel scholarship. You will see these truths woven together into a grand tapestry of testimony. After all, institute graduation is really about you becoming spiritually stronger. ■

NOTES

1. M. Russell Ballard, “The Greatest Generation of Young Adults,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 68.
2. In Marianne Holman Prescott, “Four New Classes Added to Curriculum for Church Schools,” *Church News*, Nov. 11, 2014.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO GRADUATE?

You are being asked to step up and make institute graduation a priority and part of your gospel foundation. As a result, you will increase your knowledge and deepen your conversion as you earn the needed 14 credits.* To obtain these credits, you need to:

- Take each of the two-credit cornerstone classes listed below.
 1. Jesus Christ and the Everlasting Gospel
 2. Foundations of the Restoration
 3. The Eternal Family
 4. Teachings and Doctrine of the Book of Mormon
- Earn six more credits by taking other classes of your choice.
- In addition, you’ll need to receive an ecclesiastical endorsement from your bishop or branch president.

* To receive credit for a class, you need to attend at least 75 percent of class sessions, complete the assigned readings, and complete the course learning assessment.

THINK BIG

“Don’t let others convince you that you are limited in what you can do.
Believe in yourself and then live so as to reach your possibilities.”

President Thomas S. Monson (“Living the Abundant Life,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Jan. 2012, 5)





**YOUR FAITH
WILL GROW**
not by chance, but
BY CHOICE.

Elder Neil L. Andersen
Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
October 2015 general conference



SUNDAY LESSONS

This month's topic:

The Plan of Salvation

By Sara N. Hall

When I was 17 my mother found out she had breast cancer. The shock overwhelmed my family and brought me to my knees in deep prayer. I cried for almost an hour, asking God why He would let this happen and if He would heal my mom. Relief began to come a few days later when our ward members, extended family, friends, and neighbors learned of the news. They rushed to our aid. Meals were brought in, kind words and deeds were exchanged, concern and sympathy given. The love we felt from them was deep.

But even though we received so much help, I fell into a deep depression. I didn't care what happened to me. I stopped doing things I loved. I became lazy and careless with chores, schoolwork, and my Church calling. I saw my situation and the extra responsibility placed upon me as a great burden. I felt I could do everything myself and did not need anyone's help.

MY RECOVERY ROOM

My mom was the one who was sick, but I needed to heal too.

Satan worked especially hard on me, telling me that I should feel burdened, that God wanted me to be unhappy, and that I wasn't anything special. Sadly, for a while I believed it. I couldn't see the bright side of anything. I did not see myself as a daughter of God. Confusion blinded me, and I couldn't see my many blessings. I couldn't even look in the mirror. I felt pain and heartache.

Thankfully, a close friend spent a lot of time helping me, and my siblings supported me as well. I became more open with my parents, who in turn became more open with me. But still I struggled.

My mom would often comfort me when I felt down. When I felt like all hope was gone, it was nice to have someone to talk to and help me out. She would come home in between treatments and iron our clothing, prepare meals, and offer us comfort and counsel. It amazed me how she could endure such trials and yet be so selfless.

When I discussed my depression with her one day, she told me that just because I cried and admitted I needed help, it did not make me weak. She was taking care of me when I should have taken care of her.

After one of her many surgeries, my mom was in the recovery room. At the time, I couldn't help but think I needed my own recovery room. I had no idea where to start the healing process, but I had to do something.

So I started renewing my talents and abilities as well as developing new ones. I cooked and did the laundry. I took more walks to think. I sang solos. I played the clarinet and piano more and began playing better. I read more books.

I started to listen to more uplifting music. I surrounded myself with advice from Church leaders and other valuable sources. I became closer to God and my Savior through personal prayer, fasting, and scripture study.

Still I felt like my peace was fleeting. It was hard when I wanted to be at peace on some days, and instead I would feel the sadness. The mood swings became even more difficult. It seemed my journey for peace had only begun.

Then I went to the temple to do baptisms for the dead with my Young Women class. I thought about my problems while in the temple and while flipping through the pages of my scriptures. I found myself reading about the Savior in Isaiah 53:4, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows."

A few minutes later, the confusion that had blinded me and caused me so much pain completely vanished. The Lord broke through the darkness and the despair of my heart and left the peace of the Spirit instead. I had a sense of clarity and happiness that I hadn't felt for a long time. I saw how many blessings I had received and how much everyone had done for me and my family. I saw how close my family, friends, and I had become. I saw myself as a truly beautiful daughter of God.

There in the temple I found my recovery room.

Looking back on this experience, I realize that I now have more empathy and compassion for those less fortunate than I am. I know where to recover. The hardest year of my life became the best year of my life. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



*Want a great career,
family, and testimony?
You can choose the path
to success today!*



YOUR FUTURE

Awesome by Design

Making choices now to achieve your dreams for the future can seem challenging, but good decisions in your teenage years will pay off. This approach follows this counsel from a prophet: “Our daily conduct and choices should be consistent with our goals” (Quentin L. Cook, “Choose Wisely,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 49).

These four stories show that regardless of your specific personal goals, you can achieve future success through committed preparation today.

Illustrating Superheroes: Clint Taylor

Clint grew up in Utah and currently works in California, USA, at Nickelodeon Studios as a storyboard artist.

What are some accomplishments you're proud of?

I've been a director at Warner Brothers Animation, and I've worked for Disney, Warner Bros., DreamWorks Studios, Marvel Comics, and Sony Pictures Entertainment. I've worked on animated shows from the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and *X-Men* to *Dora the Explorer*.

How did you get good at what you do?

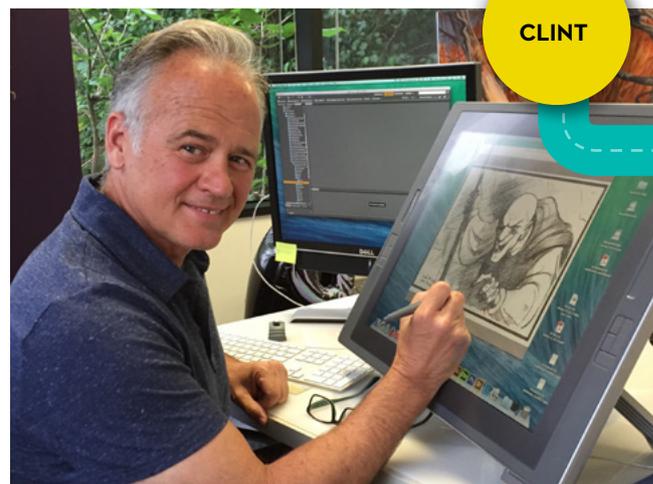
As a young boy, I enjoyed drawing pictures of what I was interested in. I spent hours drawing soldiers or superheroes or animals or whatever interested me that day. The more I practiced, the better I got at it. I found that my talent grew through diligence, observation, and perseverance. I felt that God had given me a wonderful gift, and I wanted to excel at it.

How did your mission prepare you for career success?

My mission to Korea was crucial in that it helped me learn faith, self-discipline, and commitment to excellence. I came off my mission with a greater sense of confidence. I had done something difficult and succeeded at it. It certainly helped me to be a better student at college.

What part did your education play in your success?

After my mission I studied painting and drawing at the University of Utah College of Fine Arts. Then I spent a semester abroad in France studying art and culture in Europe, which opened my eyes and mind to more artwork.



Because of these experiences, I had a fairly extensive portfolio of artwork of my own. As soon as I graduated from the university, I was recruited by a man looking for artists to work on Marvel's *Spider-Man and His Amazing Friends*.

Becoming a Computer Whiz: Ioana Schifirnet

Ioana grew up in Romania and is majoring in information systems at Brigham Young University.

What did you do as a youth that prepared you for this work?

There was no moment when I just suddenly woke up and was good at programming or design, which I do a lot of nowadays. I know that I get to do the work that I'm doing because of a very large number of small decisions along the way.

I wasn't afraid to take hard classes, and I took the time to research different fields and the people in them. I also reached out to professionals and got advice from them. They know the good and the bad parts of the job and can help give you some direction.

What school subjects have been most helpful?

In my experience, the most helpful subjects in high school, and especially in college, had to do with technology. Learning a foreign language (for me, it was English) also helped because it taught me to be more understanding and respectful of other people and cultures. The foreign language might not translate directly into a career, but employers love to see that you have a global perspective.

What are some fears you had?

When I was younger, I feared that I would never really find something that I would enjoy doing. Then when I found something, I was afraid that I didn't have what it took to be successful.

It's normal to feel intimidated when you're trying to figure out what you enjoy, but don't let it paralyze you.

How did you overcome your fears?

The best thing that helped me was to go out and engage in meaningful activities, like doing online tutorials and



joining clubs. That's how clarity, knowledge, and confidence come. A group of friends or a club whose members share your interests can be such a powerful resource. The world is always changing and there is always something new to learn, but if you have a solid support system and great skills, keeping up with it can be fun.

Developing a Love for the Gospel: Jess McSweeney

Jess, a young adult from England, talks about her efforts as a teenager to stay strong in the gospel.

How did you strengthen your testimony?

As a teenager I studied the scriptures because I was counseled by leaders to do so. As I studied in faith, hoping for my testimony to grow, that is exactly what happened.

Now, as a young adult, I have found that my desire to learn and grow in the gospel comes from the way I can use it to impact others. I know that everything I learn can help someone else as well as myself.

Did you make goals to help you?

When I was in seminary, I made a goal to read the scriptures every day. However, as my daily scripture study became a habit, my motivation changed. I started reading not just to reach a goal but also because I loved the scriptures and wanted to strengthen my testimony. That reward isn't tangible, but it is something I can keep forever.

How has your love of the gospel helped you in your life?

Developing a love of gospel learning is not only about gaining knowledge; it's about understanding and applying

gospel principles. As I cultivate the habit of asking questions and seeking answers from the scriptures, I gain a testimony as well as the confidence to share the things I learn with others.

How important is hard work and diligence?

Gaining knowledge in any area of life takes time and effort. But to me, learning the gospel of Jesus Christ is one of the most important things to work hard for. You have to learn of Christ to gain a testimony of Him.

Raising Young Children: Han Lin

Han Lin was born and raised in Taiwan. He and his wife were sealed in the Laie Hawaii Temple, and they now live in Hawaii, USA, with their two children.

What's your definition of a good father?

A good father is not a perfect person, but he is one who is humble enough to take counsel from others and constantly seek to improve himself. A good father puts his family and their needs first. He is willing to sacrifice his time, personal interests, and everything else in order to make his family better. He strives to know how to help each family member grow and become Christlike.

What did you do as a youth that prepared you to be where you are today?

I did my best to keep all the commandments and make good decisions. Going to seminary definitely helped too. It was a big commitment since I had to wake up at 5:00 in the morning. However, I think that having friends who had the same goal as I did was helpful because we lifted each other. I think all the activities that we did as youth and as a group of good friends in the Church really helped us.

What messages from society did you have to overcome to become a good father?

The world tells people that they should have more fun and less responsibility, but hard work is essential in becoming successful at whatever you do. Being a good father requires everything you can give; growing toward perfection is a lifetime process—I grow together with my family.

What would you say to your teenage self and other teenagers?

Everyone needs friends, so make good friends. Be friends with people who are “anxiously engaged in a good cause” (D&C 58:27). Learn from these good friends, and you will be influenced by their examples and have the desire to become like them and improve yourself.

Do your very best in everything that you want to do—don't hold anything back. That way you will have no regrets when you look back. ■



JESS



HAN



By Elder
Chi Hong (Sam)
Wong
Of the Seventy

Help through the Holy Ghost

The Holy Ghost can help you with school, family, and work as well as spiritual matters.

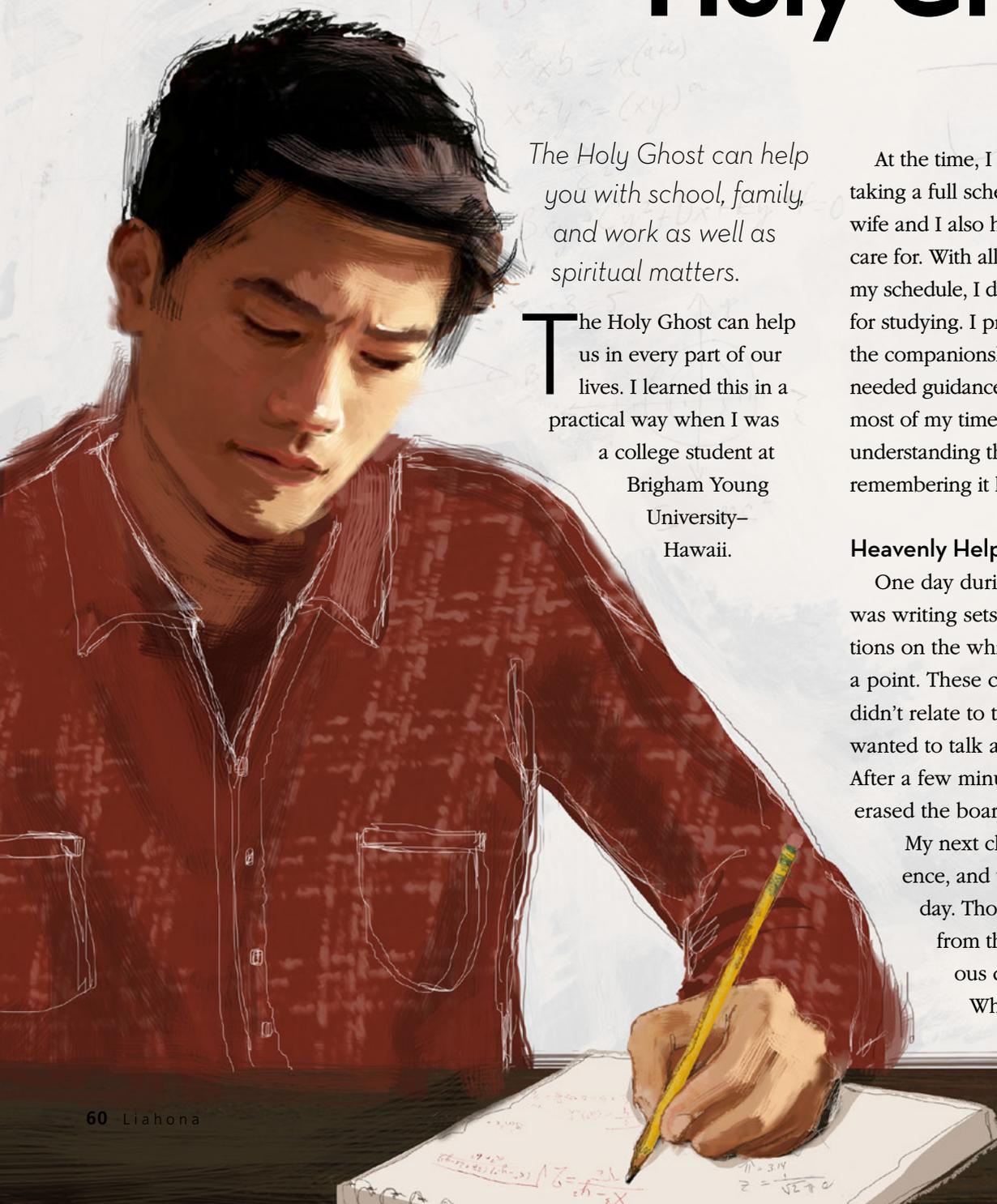
The Holy Ghost can help us in every part of our lives. I learned this in a practical way when I was a college student at Brigham Young University—Hawaii.

At the time, I was working and taking a full schedule of classes. My wife and I also had a small baby to care for. With all these demands on my schedule, I didn't have much time for studying. I prayed every day for the companionship of Holy Ghost. I needed guidance to help me make the most of my time. I needed assistance understanding the material as well as remembering it later during exams.

Heavenly Help for a School Exam

One day during class, a professor was writing sets of advanced equations on the whiteboard to illustrate a point. These complex equations didn't relate to that class, but he wanted to talk about them briefly. After a few minutes the professor erased the board.

My next class was computer science, and we had an exam that day. Those exact equations from the board in my previous class were on the test! What's truly remarkable



TWO WAYS TO STAY IN TUNE

To Heavenly Father, everything is spiritual—every part of our lives. He knows what is best for us and wants to teach us and guide us through life. So it is vital that we stay in tune with the spiritual guidance of the Holy Ghost in order to receive that guidance. Here are two ways that I've found help me stay in tune with the Holy Ghost:

1. Read the Book of Mormon every day.

When I was young, the President of the Church, Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), taught the importance of reading the Book of Mormon daily. I started doing that, and I've done so ever since as far as I can remember. Each day I find a quiet moment to read and ponder. As I read, many times the Holy Ghost teaches me something new.

2. Avoid worldly distractions.

You youth are so talented in so many ways. You're so sharp and can be so amazingly spiritually in tune. But the world tries hard to distract you. If you're willing to pay attention and block out distractions, then you will receive the guidance you need from the Holy Ghost.

is that we had never studied these before in our computer science class. All that memory came back to me from the other class I had attended, and I was able to answer the problem.

When the computer science professor graded the tests, he was so sure nobody answered that specific problem correctly that he automatically marked it wrong for every student. But when I got my paper back, I showed him that the answer I wrote on the paper was correct. It was wonderful.

The Holy Ghost helped me make the most of all my studying opportunities throughout college. I was able to achieve high grades and earn scholarships, which helped me pay for school.

Guidance through Life

Toward the end of my studies, many of my friends were planning to continue their schooling and achieve a master's degree. I loved studying and wanted to do the same thing, but the Spirit told me clearly that my mission in Hawaii was complete. It was time for me to return home to Hong Kong.

My wife and I followed the prompting. At the time I couldn't understand why I was being directed away from

continuing my education. But sometimes we follow the Spirit without knowing all the details. Though my wife and I didn't know what to expect as we looked for jobs and an apartment, we were blessed and soon found success.

As I look back now, I understand why the Spirit was so strong in encouraging us to return to Hong Kong. It was very valuable to my family and me to be strengthened in the Church among the members there. I served as a bishop, as a counselor in the stake presidency, and as a stake

president before being called as an Area Seventy. After retiring from my profession, I was able to earn a master's degree. All of those experiences helped prepare me for my current calling.

I testify to you that seeking after and following the guidance of the Holy Ghost is always the best way to plan and live your life. You were already given the gift of the Holy Ghost when you were confirmed a member of the Church, and if you will use that gift, it will be a huge help in all that you do. ■

“Some of my friends think that going to church is a waste of time. How can I help them see that it can be a great blessing?”

A comparison might help your friends. You could explain that just as your body needs to eat and drink and sleep and your mind needs to learn, your spirit also needs to be fed. Attending church helps you feed your spirit.

You do this by learning the gospel and taking the sacrament, renewing the sacred promises you have made with Heavenly Father. This reflection and recommitment help you receive the promised blessing to “always have his Spirit to be with [you]” (D&C 20:77). Having His Spirit with you strengthens your faith and helps you become more Christlike.

You can also talk to your friends about other blessings you receive. You might tell them about the peace that you feel at church, share something helpful that you learned at church, tell about an opportunity you had to serve, or testify that going to church helps make the Sabbath day a delight (see Isaiah 58:13–14).

Perhaps the most powerful way to help your friends is to invite them to come and see for themselves. As they attend sacrament meeting and the other meetings with you, they will be able to feel the power of the Holy Ghost, learn the gospel, and see its blessings in members’ lives.



Let the Spirit Guide

You could bear your testimony about going to church. You could explain how good

it makes you feel and how special the things you learn about are. As you bear your testimony, the Spirit will help you know what to say, and your friends will know that what you’re saying is true. The more they know, the more interested they might become. You can even invite them to come to church with you.

Mikelle M., age 13, Utah, USA

Invite Them to Church

It’s hard to have friends who think that going to church is a waste of time, although we can feel happy for them as we help them come to know what our Father in Heaven has in store for each one of them. We can help them by inviting them to church so they can feel the joy of being in a dedicated meetinghouse and by having faith that they can feel love toward Heavenly Father and become aware of the blessings we receive by attending church.

Oscar Y., age 19, Monagas, Venezuela



Focus on the Sacrament

Coming to church is important because it is the place where we

can renew our baptismal and all our



covenants through the sacrament. The Lord promises that His Spirit will always be with us if we partake of the sacrament worthily and fulfill our side of the covenant. The protection, direction, and comfort that we get from the Spirit are essential for our day-to-day lives. These unique blessings cannot be received any other way besides showing up at church and partaking of the sacrament.

Diana R., age 16, Oregon, USA



Be Bold

You can help them understand by simply talking to them, inviting them, giving them scriptures, or even inviting the missionaries over to their house. Don't be shy. Be happy because they just might join the Church.

David H., age 12, New Mexico, USA

Do Your Part

Going to church is not a waste of time if you actively participate and try to learn and understand what is being said or taught. You can feel the Spirit, and sometimes you can meet new people.

Ethan H., age 15, Utah, USA



Let Your Light Shine

As members of the Church, we shine with the things that we've learned in the gospel of

Jesus Christ. Setting a good example and showing your friends that you're happy with the blessings that you've received through going to church can possibly teach them that going to church is worth it.

Johanna R., age 20, Surigao del Sur, Philippines

Keep the Eternal Perspective

Knowing that the Church is the kingdom of God on earth, we go to church every Sunday to take a step toward perfection and toward the celestial kingdom. By going to church every Sunday, we get closer to Heavenly Father by renewing our covenants (taking the sacrament), and we evaluate ourselves to see how we are doing spiritually.

Esther M., age 17, Kasai-Oriental Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo



A DAY OF DELIGHT

"The wards and branches of the Church offer a weekly gathering of respite and renewal, a time and place to leave the world behind—the Sabbath. It is a day to 'delight thyself in the Lord' [Isaiah 58:14], to experience the spiritual healing that comes with the sacrament, and to receive the renewed promise of His Spirit to be with us."

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Why the Church," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 109.

UPCOMING QUESTION

"How do I make time for weekly youth activities, family home evening, and family and personal scripture study when school and homework take so much of my time?"

Submit your answer and, if desired, a high-resolution photograph by March 1, 2016, at liahona.lds.org, by email to liahona@ldschurch.org, or by mail (see address on page 3).

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

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.





**By Elder
Dallin H. Oaks**

Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

HOW TO FIND JOY

Brothers and sisters, old and young, I plead with each of you to **remember that wickedness never was happiness** and that sin leads to misery. Young people, do not seek happiness in the glittering but shallow things of the world. We cannot achieve lasting happiness by pursuing the wrong things. Someone once said, “You can never get enough of what you don’t need, because what you don’t need won’t satisfy you.”

Young and old, **turn your eyes and your hearts away from the deceptive messages of the media.** There is no happiness in alcohol or drugs, only enslavement. There is no happiness in violence, only pain and sorrow. There is no happiness in sexual relations and physical familiarities outside the bonds of marriage, only degradation and increased momentum along the way to spiritual death.

There is no lasting happiness in what we possess. **Happiness and joy come from what a person is**, not from what he or she *possesses* or *appears to be*. Youth, **hold fast to your standards. Study and use that saving pamphlet, *For the Strength of Youth*.**

Righteousness fosters righteousness. The effects of righteous examples are felt for generations to come. Good parenting produces youth who make good parents. Just as many of us have been strengthened by the noble examples of our pioneering ancestors in many lands, so the righteous choices and sacrifices of our day can bless our families and our friends and our nations for all the years to come.

I testify to you of the lasting happiness and ultimate joy of those who exercise faith in God and keep His commandments. I urge each of you to **seek the joy that comes from keeping the commandments of God and exerting a righteous influence** for the benefit of those we love. ■

From an October 1991 general conference address.



HOW HAVE YOU APPLIED THIS?

Last year at school I decided to try to do more with some of my friends. But I realize now that I actually began to be worldly and isolate myself from my family and my actual friends. This brought a lot of unnecessary heartache, which I could have avoided. This year I focused a lot more on church. I have found true happiness and joy as a result of trying to develop charitable and Christlike attributes. I know that this blessing is available for anyone if they will seek it diligently.

**Ephream James O., age 17,
Australia**

My Almost-Missed MISSIONARY EXPERIENCE

For a Personal Progress goal, I started praying to have a missionary experience. I tried to figure out which of my friends would be most willing to join the Church.

Months passed, and I thought I wouldn't have the experience that I sought—until I met Brenda. It was her first year at our school.

As the year progressed, we became close schoolmates, but it didn't occur to me to invite her to church until one of our friends invited Brenda to her church. I thought, "I don't believe it! I should've thought of that."

The next week Brenda said she enjoyed going to our friend's church and wanted to go again. I thought, "I've lost out." Not that it was a competition, but I wanted to take the gospel to Heavenly Father's children.

At that time our meetinghouse was being renovated and was scheduled to be rededicated in a few months. The bishop handed out invitations for an open house and the dedication. I invited all my friends who lived near the meetinghouse. The only one who accepted was Brenda. I was excited.

A few days before the open house, Brenda said she might not be able to go because her mother didn't want her to. I was disappointed, but I

understood and told her there would be other opportunities to learn about the Church.

At the open house, however, I was surprised to see Brenda there. She had talked to her mother, who ended up letting her go. I introduced her to the missionaries. We went to each room in the meetinghouse and heard a brief description of each Church organization. Finally, we went to the cultural hall and picked up pamphlets about the Restoration, family history, eternal marriage, and other gospel topics. Brenda said, "I believe in this!"

On Sunday she attended church. On Monday she attended a Mormon Helping Hands service project.

The seed that was planted in Brenda's heart grew with each passing day. She started changing her habits to conform with the commandments and was soon baptized.

Now, a few years later, she still tells me how happy she is to have found the true gospel and how grateful she is that I helped her find it.

Many times it is difficult to talk to people about the gospel, but if we pray, study the scriptures, listen to the Holy Ghost, and are willing to talk to someone, the Lord will help us. ■

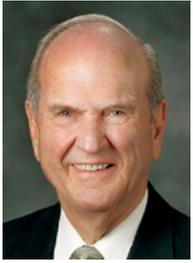
The author lives in Sergipe, Brazil.



By Anne Laleska

I wanted to share the gospel, but which of my friends might be interested?





By President
Russell M. Nelson

President of the
Quorum of the Twelve
Apostles

How can I make SUNDAY a special day?

God gave us this special day to rest from work and to grow closer to Him.

We can be happier if we go to church and take the sacrament on Sunday.

Sunday is a great day to spend time with your family.

Make Sunday a delight by serving others, especially those who are sick or lonely.

You show your love for the Lord by the things you choose to do on His day.

From "The Sabbath Is a Delight,"
Ensign or Liahona, May 2015,
129–32.

If I Listen with My Heart

Quietly ♩ = 88-104

Words and music by Sally DeFord

G C D G Em D

1. If I had been a lit-tle child when Je-sus lived on earth, I
hear a liv-ing proph-et speak the things that Christ would say If
feel the Ho-ly Spi-rit as He tea-ches truth and right. He

G C D G Em Am B

would have liked to walk with Him and lis-ten to His words, But
He were here up-on the earth to talk with me to-day. The
com-forts me in times of need; He tes-ti-fies of Christ. He

Em B7 G Cm G Em

as I search the scrip-tures I can hear His words of peace, And if I list-en
proph-et teach-es how to live in righ-teous-ness and peace, speaks to me in
qui-et ways that fill my soul with peace,

Am D7 | 1, 2. G Am D G Am7 D

with my heart I hear the Sav-ior's voice.

3. G Am D C Cm G

hear the Sav-ior's voice.

Sharing Standards

By Hilary Watkins Lemon



I live in Geneva, Switzerland. When I grow up, I want to be a paleontologist or a veterinarian. I love running and playing with my dog, Happy.



My brother and sister and I are the only members of the Church at our school. We have lots of nice friends, but some of them do not have the same standards. I have decided to always stand up for what I believe, even if it's not the popular thing to do.

Hi! My name is Isaac.

"NO" TO TEA
Iced tea is very popular in Switzerland. At my birthday party, one of my friends asked me for a glass of iced tea. I told him that we didn't have any. He asked me why. I explained nicely that my family does not drink tea.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANK HELMRICH

SERVING MY SISTER

My sister, Mayla, has cerebral palsy. She uses a wheelchair and sometimes needs help sitting up or getting around the house. I like to help her. After school my brother, Samuel, and I bring her outside the school to go home with our dad.

**A BRAVE MISSIONARY**

My sister isn't afraid to talk about what she believes. Mayla is already planning her baptism and wants to invite her friends!

**GOOD WORDS**

I ask my friends not to use bad words around me, but some still do. One boy dared me to say a bad word. I said, "No, I will not say it." He was surprised, but he doesn't try to get me to join him anymore.

A KIND FRIEND

My brother, Samuel, is a good example. Once a new boy named Max came to school. He spoke Korean and English, but not French. Samuel helped Max feel welcome and helped him learn French. Now they play together after school, and once Max came to a Church activity with us.

ISAAC'S TIPS FOR STANDING TALL

- Obey your parents and the Savior.
- Go to activities at church.
- Go to church on Sundays and take the sacrament.
- Respect others. ■

Testimony Treasure

By Leonardo Rodrigues

Based on a true story

“And now I do know of myself . . . for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit” (Alma 5:46).

Sabrina watched as Mom walked to the door with their neighbors. “Thank you for this book,” the father said. He was holding a Book of Mormon.

“Mommy, why do you talk about the Church to everyone?” Sabrina asked later while they washed dishes together.

“It’s because my testimony of the Church is like a treasure,” Mom said. “It makes me happy. And I want to share it with others so they can be happy too!”

Sabrina pictured Mom’s shiny necklace in her jewelry box. “What do you mean it’s like a treasure?”

“Well, a testimony is very valuable,” Mom said. “It’s a gift from Heavenly Father that helps us know what’s true.”

“How did you get it?” Sabrina wanted to know.

Mom handed Sabrina a sparkling clean dish to dry. “I got it a little at a time. When I pray or read the scriptures, I feel peaceful and warm inside. It’s like I’m adding to my testimony treasure.”

Sabrina nodded slowly. Could *she* get a testimony treasure?

What kind of treasure grows when you share it?



“Now is the time and today is the day to learn . . . for ourselves that the gospel is true.”

Elder Craig C. Christensen of the Presidency of the Seventy, “I Know These Things of Myself,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 52.



On Sunday, Sabrina’s Primary teacher told a story about Jesus Christ. Sabrina listened closely. Sister Lopez said Jesus invited all the little children to come to Him. He blessed and taught them. When Sabrina thought about Jesus, she started to feel warm in her heart.

Sabrina hurried to find Mom after Primary. “Mommy, guess what?” She told Mom about the warm feeling.

“That’s beautiful,” Mom said. “That feeling is when the Holy Ghost touches our hearts and lets us know the gospel is true.”

Sabrina smiled up at Mom. “That’s what happened! It made me happy inside.” The Holy Ghost had been so quiet that Sabrina knew she wouldn’t have noticed Him if she hadn’t been reverent.

Mom hugged her tight. “Now you’re getting your own testimony treasure.” Sabrina hugged Mom back. She wanted to share her treasure with everyone—just like Mom did! But how could she do that?

That night Sabrina found a pass-along card with a picture of Jesus on the front. She tucked it in her backpack.

The next day when it was time for recess, Sabrina remembered the card. She pulled it out and went to find her friend Carla. “Here, Carla, this is for you,” Sabrina said.

Carla held the card close. “Thank you! I love pictures of Jesus.”

Sabrina showed Carla the website on the back. “You can learn more about Jesus’s Church here.”

“What church is that?” Carla asked.

“The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” Sabrina said. “Going to church and learning about Jesus makes me happy.”

Carla put the card in her pocket. “I’m going to show this card to my mom.”

A few weeks later, Carla ran up to Sabrina before class. “I have

something to tell you!” she said. She had a big smile on her face.

Sabrina was excited. What could it be? Carla smiled. “My family went to your church! And it was like you said—I felt happy there.”

“I knew you would feel the Holy Ghost!” Sabrina said.

“And I think we’re going to get baptized soon!”

Sabrina jumped up and hugged Carla. Now they could share their testimony treasures together! ■

The author lives in Amazonas, Brazil.



Scriptures from the Old and New Worlds

When Nephi and his family traveled from Jerusalem (the “Old World”) to the promised land (the “New World”), they brought scriptures. These were called the brass plates. In the Old World, these scriptures became part of the Bible.

In the promised land, Nephi wrote down what his father taught, what happened to his family, what he learned from Heavenly Father, and what he learned from the brass plates. The things Nephi wrote became part of the Book of Mormon. ■



Moroni

Mormon

NEW WORLD



Alma



Moses



PROPHETS IN DIFFERENT LANDS

Read these scriptures and match them with the prophets on the map.

1. Exodus 19:20
2. 2 Kings 20:14
3. 1 Nephi 2:1–2
4. 1 Nephi 18:22
5. Mosiah 18:7
6. Words of Mormon 1:9
7. Mormon 8:1, 4

Nephi

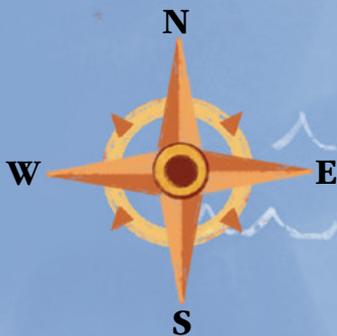


OLD WORLD

Lehi



Isaiah



Answers: 1. Moses; 2. Isaiah; 3. Lehi; 4. Nephi; 5. Alma; 6. Mormon; 7. Mormon

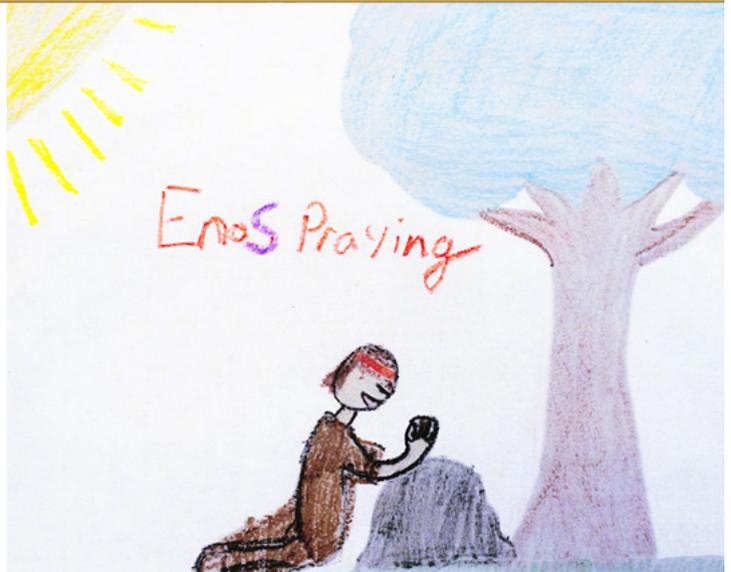
Enos Was PRAYERFUL

Enos prayed about what was worrying him. He prayed for others too. He even prayed for his enemies!
How can you be like Enos this month?



While on a family vacation, we got separated from my dad and little brother. It was getting dark. The rest of the family didn't know what to do. I told them we should pray. We said a prayer, and then we started to walk to some other stores. We looked up the street and saw my dad and my little brother! I was happy. I knew that God loved us and helped us find our dad.

Oliver P., age 8, São Paulo, Brazil



"Enos Praying" by Amanda F., age 11, Arizona, USA

ILLUSTRATION BY JARED BECKSTRAND

Cut, fold, and keep this challenge card!



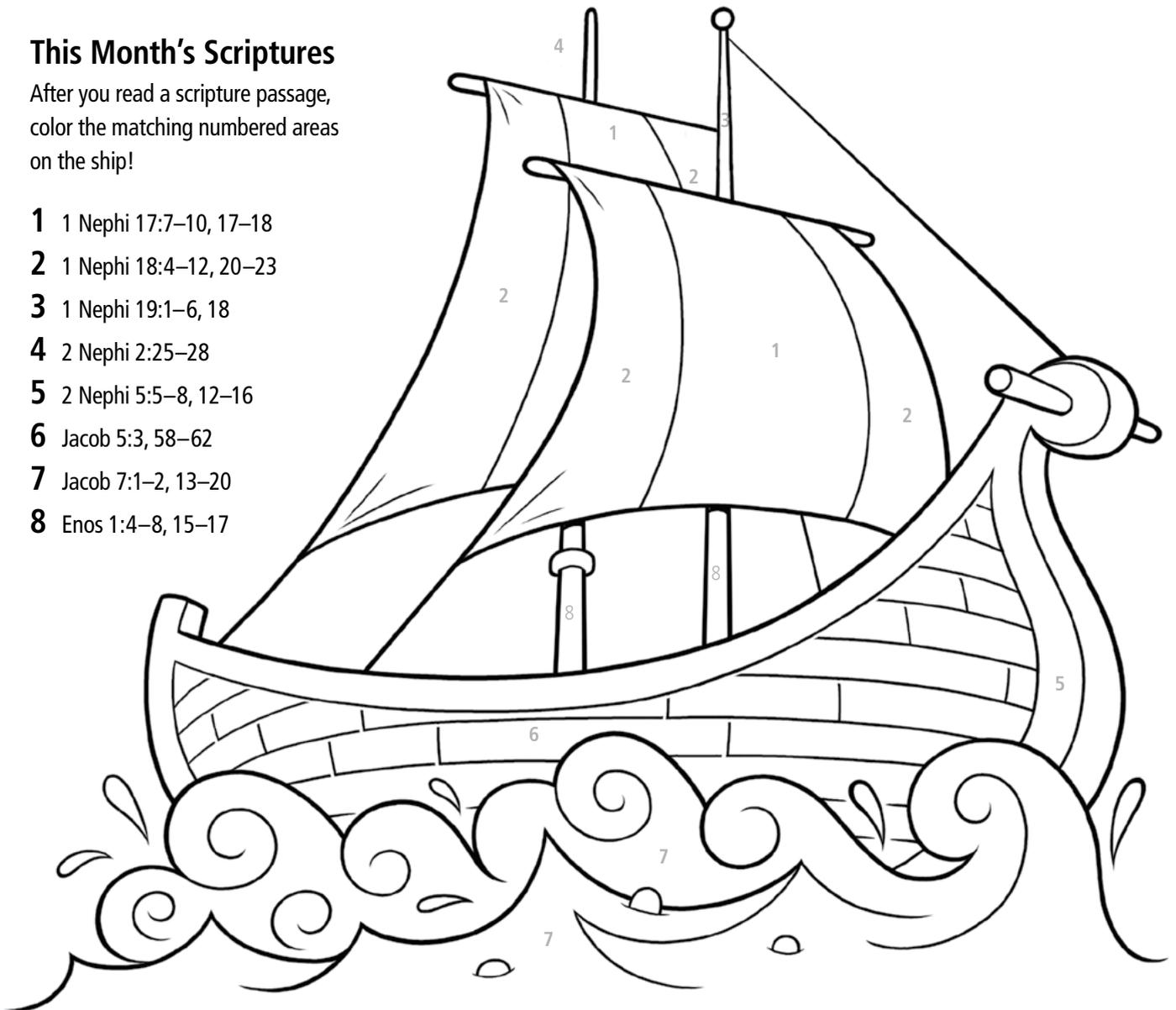
I Can Be Prayerful!

- Memorize Enos 1:4.
- Write in your journal about a time when Heavenly Father answered your prayers.
- Watch chapter 11 of the animated Book of Mormon stories at scripturestories.lds.org.
- I challenge myself to . . .

This Month's Scriptures

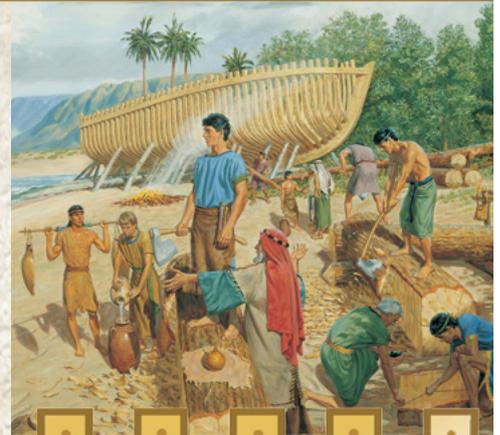
After you read a scripture passage, color the matching numbered areas on the ship!

- 1 1 Nephi 17:7–10, 17–18
- 2 1 Nephi 18:4–12, 20–23
- 3 1 Nephi 19:1–6, 18
- 4 2 Nephi 2:25–28
- 5 2 Nephi 5:5–8, 12–16
- 6 Jacob 5:3, 58–62
- 7 Jacob 7:1–2, 13–20
- 8 Enos 1:4–8, 15–17

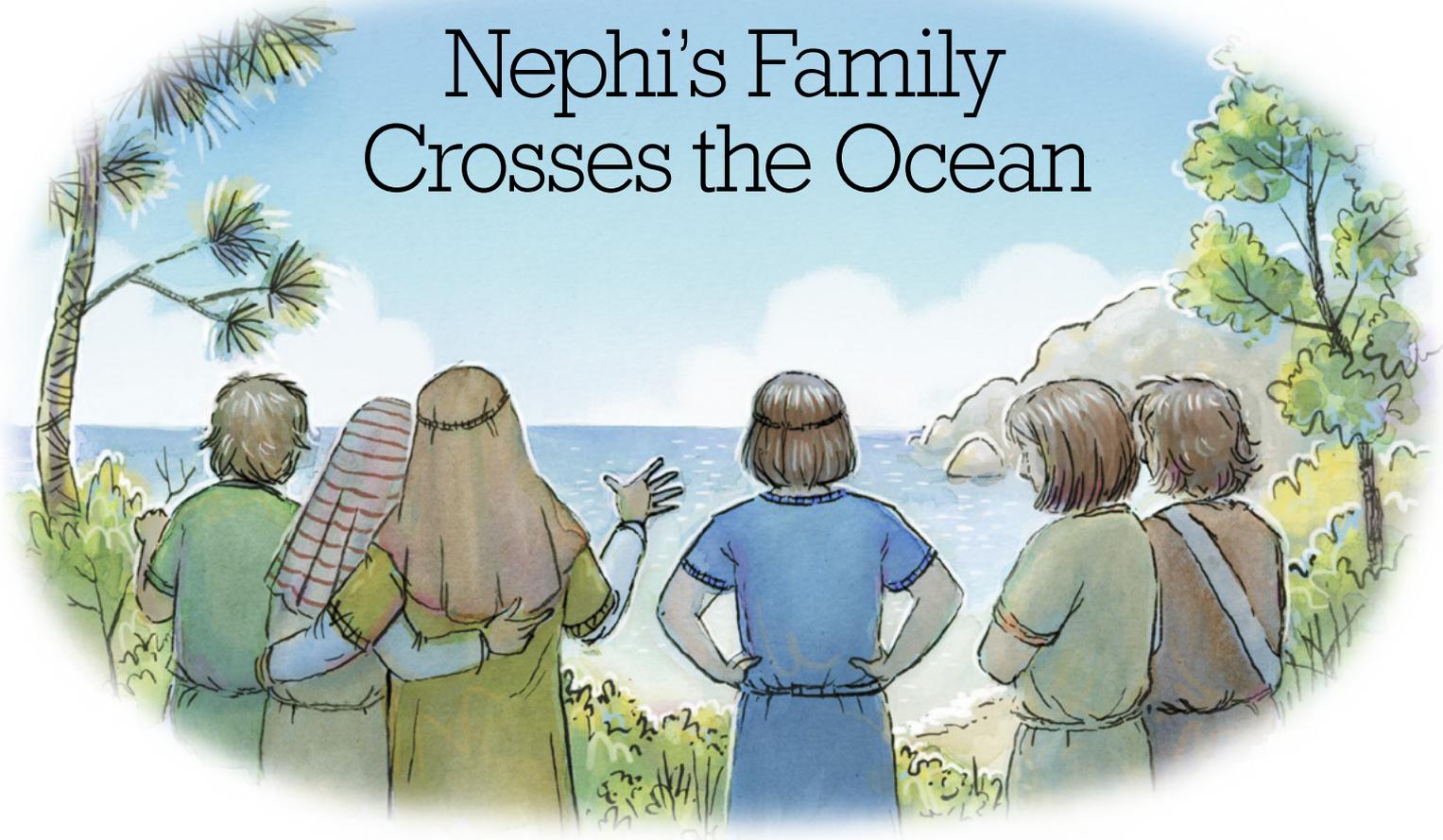


Sailing to the Promised Land

Nephi built a ship so his family could travel to the promised land. Read about their journey on pages 76–78. In the promised land, the righteous people were called Nephites. The wicked people were called Lamanites. In these chapters, we learn from Nephi's brother Jacob and Jacob's son, Enos. Look for another reading challenge in the next issue. ■



Nephi's Family Crosses the Ocean



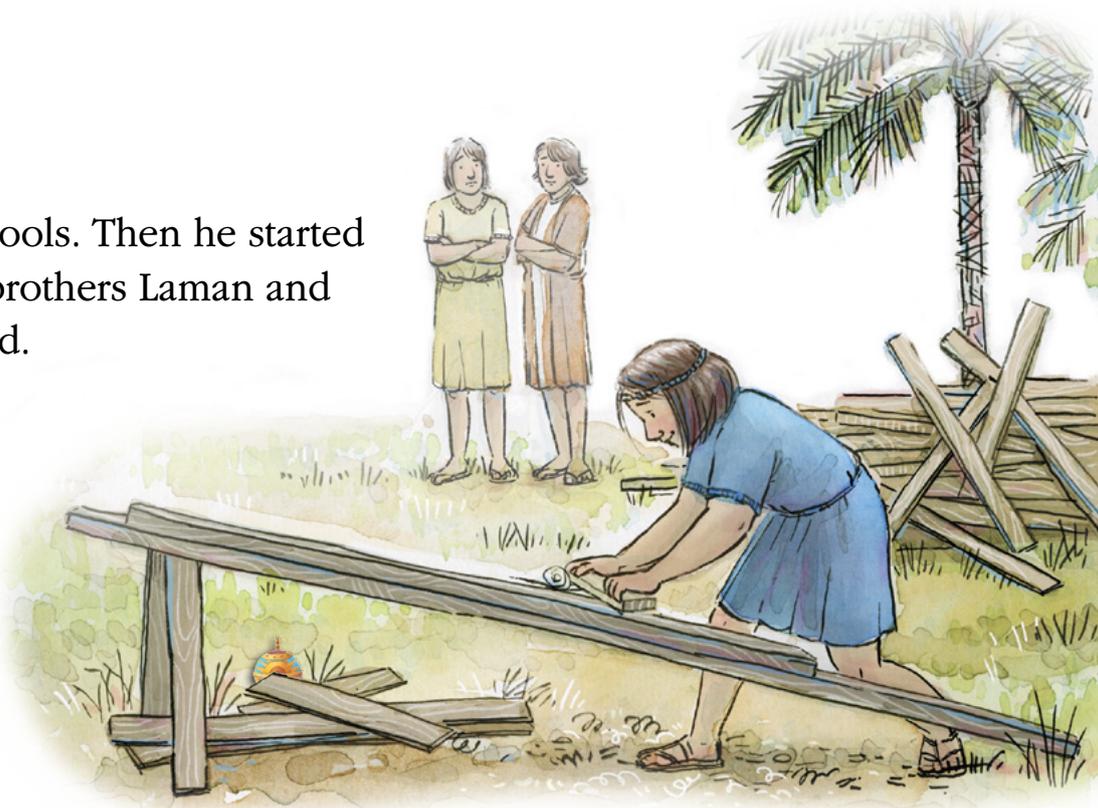
Nephi's family traveled in the wilderness for eight years. At last they came to a beautiful place. It was near the sea, and it had lots of fruit and honey to eat. Everyone was so happy!



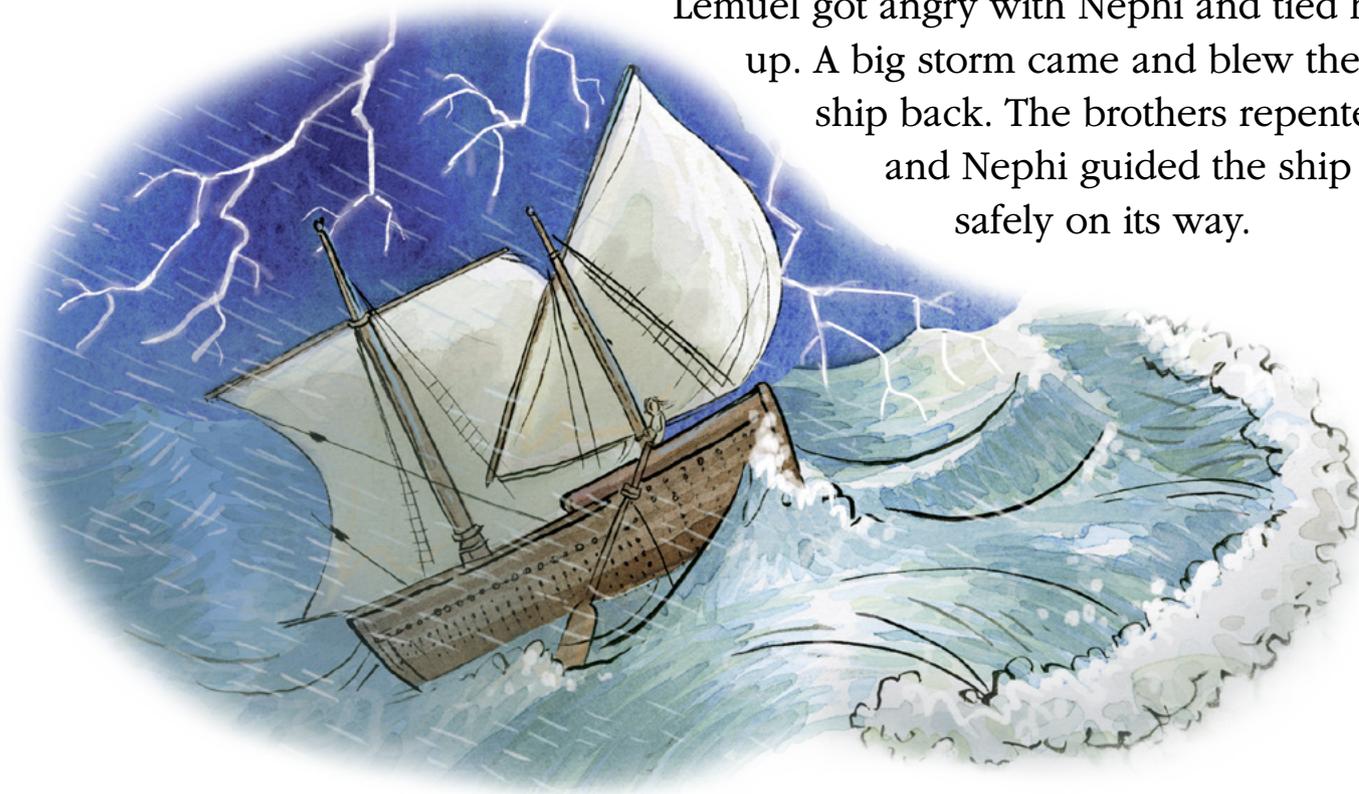
But their journey was not over. Heavenly Father told Nephi to build a ship. He showed Nephi how it should look. He promised the ship would take them to a wonderful new land.

First Nephi made tools. Then he started building. Nephi's brothers Laman and Lemuel complained. They didn't believe he could build a ship.

Nephi knew their family could trust Heavenly Father.

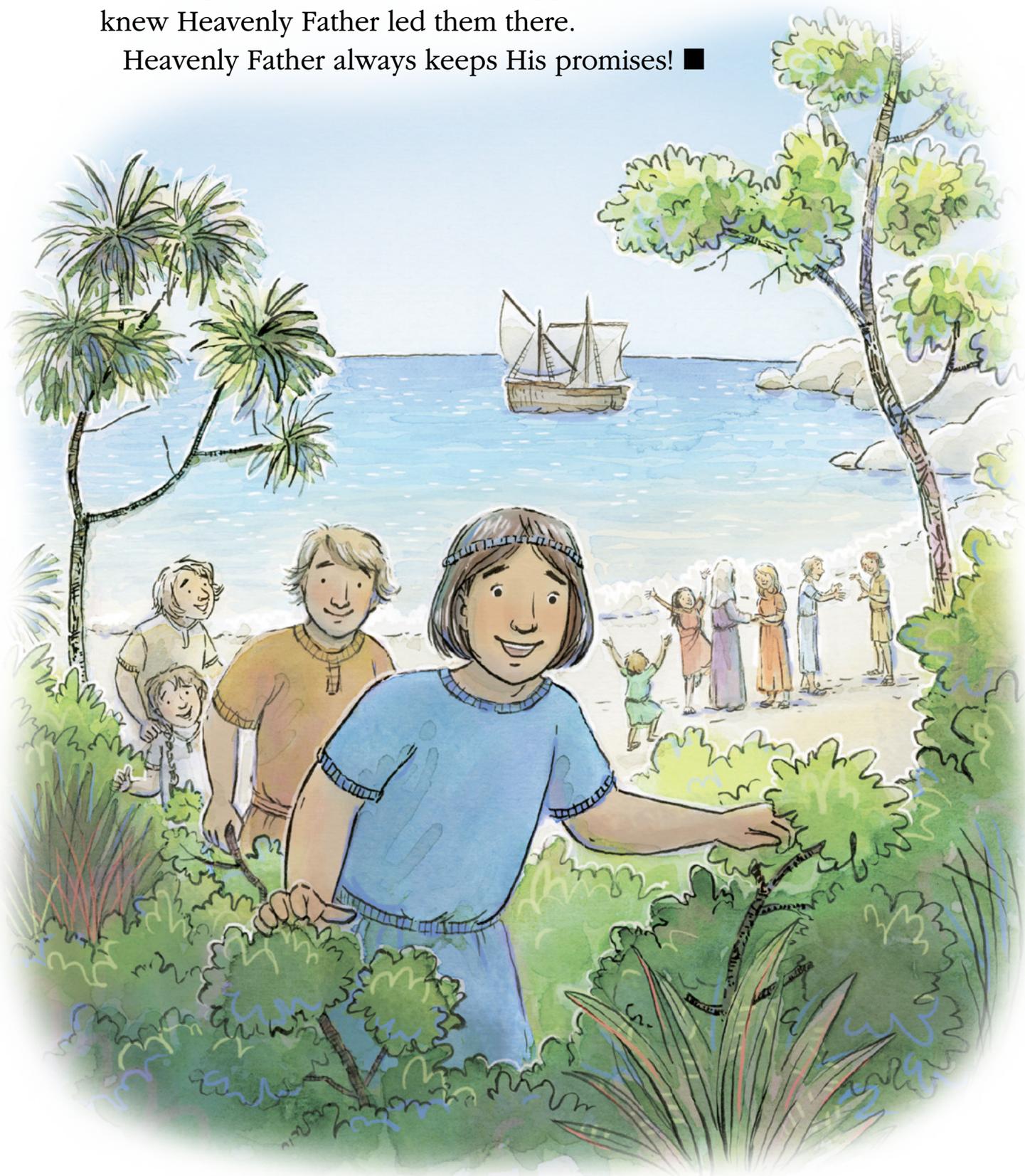


When the ship was finished, Nephi's family began their ocean journey. One day Laman and Lemuel got angry with Nephi and tied him up. A big storm came and blew the ship back. The brothers repented, and Nephi guided the ship safely on its way.



Finally Nephi's family reached the shores of a new land. Nephi and his family were happy because they knew Heavenly Father led them there.

Heavenly Father always keeps His promises! ■



Our Families Are Special

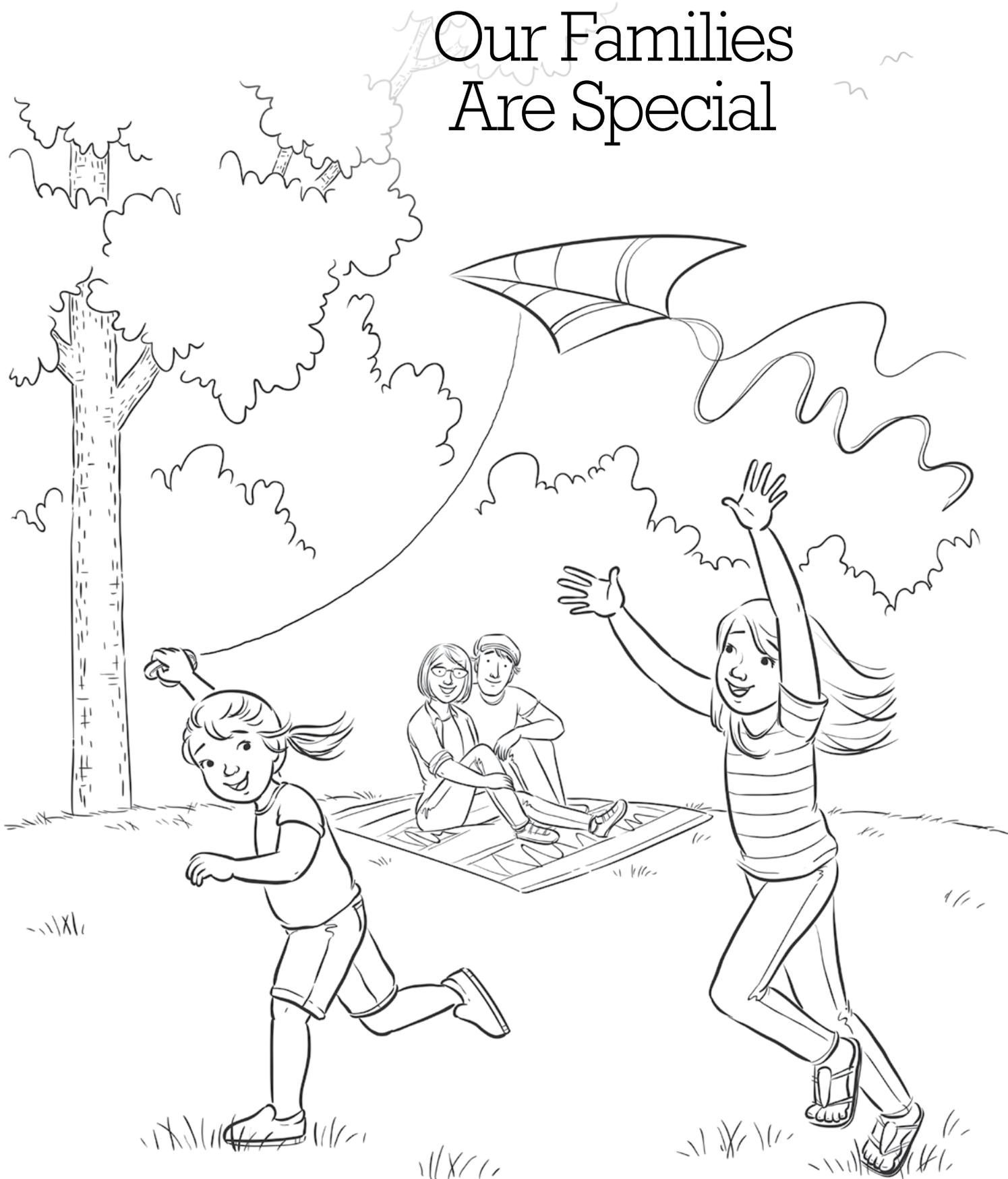


ILLUSTRATION BY APRYL STOTT



By President
Howard W. Hunter
(1907–95)

Fourteenth President
of the Church

TRUE GREATNESS

*We need not look far to see the unnoticed
and forgotten heroes of daily life.*

Because we are being constantly exposed to the world's definition of success and greatness, it is understandable that we might frequently find ourselves making comparisons between what we are and what others are, or seem to be, and also between what we have and what others have. . . . We often allow unfair and improper comparisons to destroy our happiness when they cause us to feel unfulfilled or inadequate or unsuccessful. Sometimes, because of these feelings, we are led into error, and we dwell on our failures while ignoring aspects of our lives that may contain elements of true greatness. . . .

. . . Surely they include the things that must be done in order to be a good father or a good mother, but, to generalize, they are also the thousands of little deeds and tasks of service and sacrifice that constitute the giving or losing of one's life for others and for the Lord. They include gaining a knowledge of our Father in Heaven and His gospel. They include bringing others into the faith and fellowship



of His kingdom. These things do not usually receive the attention or the adulation of the world. . . .

Surely we need not look far to see the unnoticed and forgotten heroes of daily life. I am speaking of those you know and those I know who quietly and consistently do the things they ought to do. I am talking about those who are always there and always willing. I am referring to the uncommon valor of the mother who—hour after hour, day and night—will stay with and care for a sick child, or the invalid who struggles and suffers without complaint. I'm including those who always volunteer to give blood. . . . I am thinking of those who may not be mothers but who nevertheless “mother” the children of the world. I am speaking

of those who are always there to love and nurture.

I am also talking about teachers and nurses and farmers and others who do the good work of the world, who teach and feed and clothe, but who also, in addition, do the work of the Lord—those who lift and love. I am referring to those who are honest and kind and hardworking in their daily work, but who are also servants of the Master and shepherds of His sheep. . . .

To those who are doing the commonplace work of the world but are wondering about the value of their accomplishments; to those who are the workhorses of this Church, who are furthering the work of the Lord in so many quiet but significant ways; to those who are the salt of the earth and the strength of the world and the backbone of each nation—to you we would simply express our admiration. If you endure to the end, and if you are valiant in the testimony of Jesus, you will achieve true greatness and will live in the presence of our Father in Heaven. ■

From “True Greatness,” Ensign, May 1982, 19–20.

INSIGHTS



How do we view our spouse?

"None of us marry *perfection*; we marry *potential*. The right marriage is not only about what I want; it's also about what she—who's going to be my companion—wants and needs me to be."

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Meeting the Challenges of Today's World," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 46.

Also in This Issue

FOR YOUNG ADULTS

What Can the Book of Mormon
Teach Us about
Happiness?

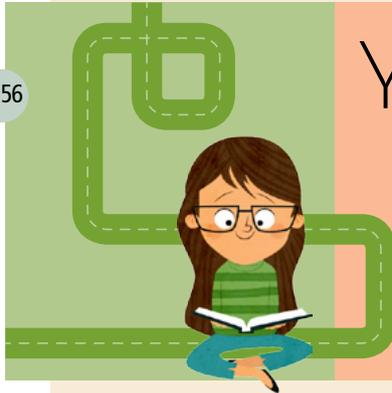
We all want to be happy. These seven principles from the Book of Mormon show us how we can.



p. 44

FOR YOUTH

p. 56



YOUR FUTURE *Awesome by Design*

Real-life stories that show how you can make your future as awesome as you want it to be by working for it today.

FOR CHILDREN



Testimony Treasure

Sabrina's mom said her testimony was like a treasure. Could Sabrina find this treasure too?

p. 70



THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS