

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • FEBRUARY 2017

Liahona

**Finding Help
and Hope When
Your Spouse Uses
Pornography, p. 26**

Four Ways to Hear
the Holy Ghost
Better, p. 16

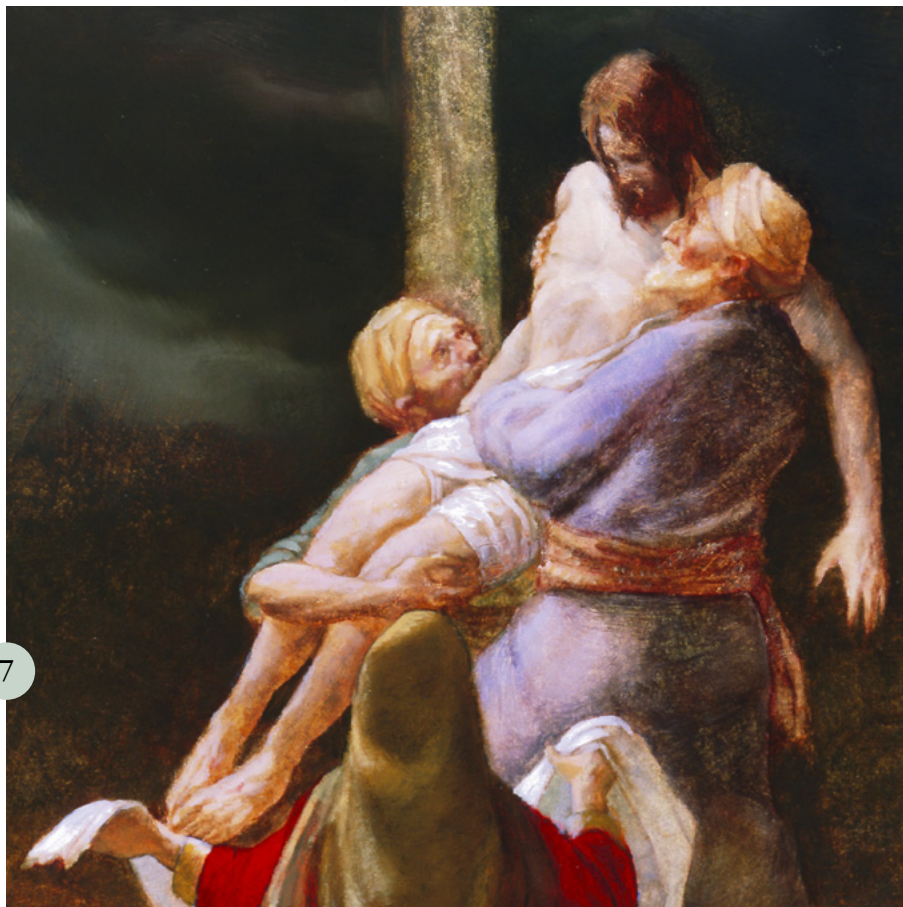
Making Sense of the
Pieces of the Past,
p. 22

Family History
and Temple Work:
A Powerful
Combination, p. 34



These elders were serving in Denmark in 1913. Decades earlier the Lord had revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith that the field was "already to harvest" (D&C 4:4) and "that the thing which will be of the most worth unto you will be to declare repentance unto this people" (D&C 15:6). Accordingly, the Prophet and succeeding Church Presidents called many members to serve missions throughout the world.

Photograph courtesy of Church History Library



7

DEPARTMENTS

- 8** **October 2016 Conference Notebook**
- 10** **We Talk of Christ: The True Miracle of Healing**
By Jonathan Taylor
- 12** **Our Homes, Our Families: Am I Going to Die?**
By Gregory Hamblin
- 20** **Portraits of Faith: Adriana González**
- 40** **Latter-day Saint Voices**
- 80** **Until We Meet Again: The Parable of the Unwise Bee**
By Elder James E. Talmage



ON THE COVER
Detail from *She Will Find What Is Lost*,
by Brian Kershisnik.

MESSAGES

- 4** **First Presidency Message: "As I Have Loved You"**
By President Thomas S. Monson
- 7** **Visiting Teaching Message: Christ's Atonement Is Evidence of God's Love**

FEATURE ARTICLES

- 14** **Life's a Play: The Plan of Salvation in Three Acts**
By Margaret Willden
Our eternal existence is like a three-act play, and the gospel of Jesus Christ is our script.
- 16** **The Voice of the Spirit**
By Elder Eduardo Gavarret
The Spirit can warn, guide, and speak to us as we listen closely to His voice.
- 22** **Understanding Church History by Study and Faith**
By Keith A. Erikson
How do we best study the incomplete pieces of history?
- 26** **Heartbreak and Hope**
Seven ways spouses of pornography users can find hope and the strength to endure.
- 32** **I Set Out to Find a Temple**
By Mireille Rouffet
I was searching for a holy place and ended up finding my eternal family.
- 34** **Family History and Temple Blessings**
By Elder Dale G. Renlund, Ruth L. Renlund and Ashley R. Renlund
Real power comes from combining family history with temple blessings.



44

44 Finding Peace in Imperfection

By Elizabeth Lloyd Lund

Personal weaknesses can be discouraging, but imperfection provides an opportunity for personal growth.

48 Working Out Weaknesses, Sketching Out Faith

By E. Tracy Williams

Before and during my mission, I had to learn to rely on the Savior—and found myself in the process.

50 At a Crossroads with My Friends

By Stephen W. Owen

Walking the lonely road can be tough, but it's decisions like these that determine our destiny.

53 Poster: Reach Out to Others

54 Find, Take, Teach: Join the Temple Challenge

By Carlisa Cramer

How can you help the Lord's work move forward? It's simple—just find, take, and teach!

56 Three Ways to Be Involved in Family History

By Sally Johnson Odekirk

When it comes to family history, sometimes it's hard to know where to start. Three youth share what they did.

59 Line upon Line: 1 Corinthians 10:13

60 Answers from Church Leaders: How to Change

By Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

61 Our Space

62 Questions and Answers

How do I make time for Church activities, family home evening, and scripture study when homework takes so much time?

64 When the Plan Became Real

By Alissa Holm

After my Young Women leader died, the plan of salvation suddenly became more than just a flow chart.

Hi!
My name is Rentalyn.



68

66 Me? A Bully?

By Merillee Booren

Jeff just wanted to play with Ben. But what about Sam?

68 Children with Heart: Sharing Love with Friends

By Devan Jensen

70 Multiplication Master

By Jessica Larsen

Luca just had to pass his multiplication tables. Could prayer help?

72 Answers from an Apostle: What are priesthood keys?

By Elder Gary E. Stevenson

74 Scripture Figures: Baptism and the Priesthood Restored

75 Conference Quote Cards

76 Stories of Jesus: When Jesus Was a Child

By Kim Webb Reid

79 Coloring Page: I Can Show Love for Others



Where is the Liahona hidden in this issue? Hint: How do you show kindness on the playground?

50

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

The First Presidency: Thomas S. Monson,
Henry B. Eyring, Dieter F. Uchtdorf

The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard,
Robert D. Hales, Jeffrey R. Holland, David A. Bednar,
Quentin L. Cook, D. Todd Christofferson, Neil L.
Andersen, Ronald A. Rasband, Gary E. Stevenson,
Dale G. Renlund

Editor: Joseph W. Sitati

Assistant Editors: James B. Marino, Carol F. McConkie

Advisers: Brian K. Ashton, Randall K. Bennett,
Craig A. Cardon, Cheryl A. Esplin, Christoff Golden,
Douglas D. Holmes, Larry R. Lawrence, Carole M.
Stephens

Managing Director: Peter F. Evans

Director of Church Magazines: Allan R. Loyborg

Business Manager: Garff Cannon

Managing Editor: Adam C. Olson

Assistant Managing Editor: Ryan Carr

Publication Assistant: Cremilda Amaral

Writing and Editing: Bethany Bartholomew, Brittany
Beattie, David Dickson, David A. Edwards, Matthew D.
Flitton, Lori Fuller, Garrett H. Garff, LaRene Porter Gaunt,
Charlotte Larcabal, Michael R. Morris, Eric B. Murdock,
Sally Johnson Odekirk, Joshua J. Perkey, Jan Pinborough,
Richard M. Romney, Mindy Anne Selu, Marissa Widdison

Managing Art Director: J. Scott Knudsen

Art Director: Tadd R. Peterson

Design: Jeanette Andrews, Fay P. Andrus, C. Kimball
Bott, Thomas Child, David Green, Colleen Hinkle, Eric
P. Johnsen, Susan Lofgren, Scott M. Mooy, Mark W.
Robison, Rachel Smith, Brad Teare, K. Nicole
Walkenhorst

Intellectual Property Coordinator:

Collette Nebeker Aune

Production Manager: Jane Ann Peters

Production: Glen Adair, Connie Bowthorpe Bridge,
Julie Burdett, Bryan W. Gygi, Ginny J. Nilson, Gayle Tate
Rafferty, Derek Richardson

Prepress: Joshua Dennis

Printing Director: Stephen T. Lewis

Distribution Director: Troy K. Vellinga

For subscriptions and prices outside the United States
and Canada, go to store.lds.org or contact your local
Church distribution center or ward or branch leader.

Submit manuscripts and queries online at liahona.lds.org;
by email to liahona@ldschurch.org; or by mail to
Liahona, Rm. 2420, 50 E. North Temple St., Salt Lake
City, UT 84150-0024, USA.

The *Liahona* (a Book of Mormon term meaning
“compass” or “director”) is published in Albanian,
Armenian, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cambodian, Cebuano,
Chinese, Chinese (simplified), Croatian, Czech, Danish,
Dutch, English, Estonian, Fijian, Finnish, French,
German, Greek, Hungarian, Icelandic, Indonesian,
Italian, Japanese, Kiribati, Korean, Latvian, Lithuanian,
Malagasy, Marshallese, Mongolian, Norwegian, Polish,
Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Samoan, Slovenian,
Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tagalog, Tahitian, Thai,
Tongan, Ukrainian, Urdu, and Vietnamese. (Frequency
varies by language.)

© 2017 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.
Printed in Argentina.

Text and visual material in the *Liahona* may be copied
for incidental, noncommercial church or home use.
Visual material may not be copied if restrictions are
indicated in the credit line with the artwork. Copyright
questions should be addressed to Intellectual Property
Office, 50 E. North Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150,
USA; email: cor-intellectualproperty@ldschurch.org.
LIAHONA English (ISSN 1080-9554) is published
monthly by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day
Saints, 50 E. North Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150.

Family Home Evening Ideas

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



“Am I Going to Die?” page 12: Having
an understanding of the plan of salvation
is integral to our eternal progression. You
might study the plan by reading scrip-
tures such as 2 Nephi 2:22–25; 9:10–11;
Alma 34:32–33; 40:11–14; 42:5–15; or
Doctrine and Covenants 76:30–113. You
could create a diagram by taking turns
drawing each part of the plan of salvation
as it relates to each scripture (see page 54
of *Preach My Gospel* for an example of a
diagram). You might also practice teaching
the principles to each other so you can
simply explain the plan of salvation to
someone who has questions about it.

**“Find, Take, Teach: Join the Temple
Challenge,”** page 54: Have you
accepted the challenge? The Lord’s
Apostles have invited every one of us
to “prepare as many names for the
temple as baptisms you perform in
the temple, and help someone else
to do the same,” and you can do it
as a family! To learn more about the
challenge, visit templechallenge.lds.org
and discover some step-by-step family
history tips. You could spend future
family home evenings preparing names
for the temple and teaching friends
how to do their own family history.

MORE ONLINE

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

TOPICS IN THIS ISSUE

Numbers represent the first page of the article.

Addiction, 26

Adversity, 64, 80

Atonement, 7, 10, 14,
44, 48

Baptism, 74

Church history, 22, 74

Divorce, 26, 43

Eternal families, 4, 32, 34

Faith, 22, 40, 48, 70

Family history, 32, 34,
54, 56

Friends, 50, 66

Healing, 10, 26

Holy Ghost, 16, 42

Hope, 26

Jesus Christ, 7, 10, 12, 42,
48, 76

Love, 4, 7, 64, 79

Missionary work, 32, 40,
42, 48, 68

Peace, 12, 41, 42, 44

Plan of salvation, 12,
14, 64

Pornography, 26

Prayer, 42, 70, 72

Priesthood, 72, 74

Priorities, 62

Repentance, 60

Sacrament, 41

Temples, 32, 34, 54, 56,
61, 76

Temptation, 59, 61

Tithing, 61

Weaknesses, 44, 48



By President
Thomas S.
Monson

“AS I HAVE LOVED YOU”

Some years ago a friend named Louis related to me a tender account about his gentle, soft-spoken mother. When she passed away, she left to her sons and daughters no fortune of finance but rather a heritage of wealth in example, in sacrifice, in obedience.

After the funeral eulogies had been spoken and the sad trek to the cemetery had been made, the grown family sorted through the meager possessions the mother had left. Among them, Louis discovered a note and a key. The note instructed: “In the corner bedroom, in the bottom drawer of my dresser, is a tiny box. It contains the treasure of my heart. This key will open the box.”

All wondered what their mother had of sufficient value to place under lock and key.

The box was removed from its resting place and opened carefully with the aid of the key. As Louis and the others examined the contents of the box, they found an individual photo of each child, with the child’s name and birth date. Louis then pulled out a homemade valentine. In crude, childlike penmanship, which he recognized as his own, he read the words he had written 60 years before: “Dear Mother, I love you.”

Hearts were tender, voices soft, and eyes moist. Mother’s treasure was her eternal family. Its strength rested on the bedrock foundation of “I love you.”

In today’s world, nowhere is that bedrock foundation of

love needed more than in the home. And nowhere should the world find a better example of that foundation than in the homes of Latter-day Saints who have made love the heart of their family life.

To those of us who profess to be disciples of the Savior Jesus Christ, He gave this far-reaching instruction:

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”¹

If we would keep the commandment to love one another, we must treat each other with compassion and respect, showing our love in day-to-day interactions. Love offers a kind word, a patient response, a selfless act, an understanding ear, a forgiving heart. In all our associations, these and other such acts help make evident the love in our hearts.

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) observed: “Love . . . is the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Yet it is more than the end of the rainbow. Love is at the beginning also, and from it springs the beauty that arches across the sky on a stormy day. Love is the security for which children weep, the yearning of youth, the adhesive that binds marriage, and the lubricant that prevents devastating friction in the home; it is the peace of old age, the sunlight of hope shining through death. How rich are those who enjoy



it in their associations with family, friends, church, and neighbors.”²

Love is the very essence of the gospel, the noblest attribute of the human soul. Love is the remedy for ailing families, ill communities, and sick nations. Love is a smile, a wave, a kind comment, and a compliment. Love is sacrifice, service, and selflessness.

Husbands, love your wives. Treat them with dignity and appreciation. Sisters, love your husbands. Treat them with honor and encouragement.

Parents, love your children. Pray for them, teach them, and testify to them. Children, love your parents. Show them respect, gratitude, and obedience.

Without the pure love of Christ, Mormon counsels, “[we] are nothing.”³ My prayer is that we may follow

Mormon’s counsel to “pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that [we] may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that [we] may become

the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him.”⁴ ■

NOTES

1. John 13:34–35.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, “And the Greatest of These Is Love,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1984, 3.
3. Moroni 7:46; see also verse 44.
4. Moroni 7:48.

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

President Monson teaches us the importance of demonstrating true Christlike love, particularly in the home. Consider what you can do to show love to those you teach. You could also ask them to discuss ways they can show more love to one another. You might encourage them to select one of those ideas and make plans to achieve it as a family. For instance, family members could offer a secret act of service to another family member each week. You might ask them to later reflect on how striving to reach their goal increased the love in their home.

Praying for Peace

By Sarah T.

My parents often attended meetings after church, and I would watch my three younger brothers and help them make lunch—though they were often short-tempered and hungry. Usually if they started fighting, I could solve the small problem quickly. But sometimes it was hard to make peace once a fight had started because I'd get agitated.

One afternoon, my brothers were having an especially hard time getting along. I found that my efforts to make peace only made things worse because I was upset. So I just made my own lunch and stopped talking. Finally, I announced, "I'm going to pray. Can we please be quiet for a minute?" Once they settled down, I asked for a blessing

on the food. Before I closed the prayer, I added, "And please help us to be peacemakers."

At first, they seemed not to hear and began fighting again. I was annoyed but knew I needed to be as loving and calm as I could be because I'd just prayed for peace. After a minute, I felt very calm. I ate without saying anything, and the boys eventually stopped fighting. I realized the peace I felt was an answer to a simple prayer. I had prayed to be a peacemaker, and my Heavenly Father had helped me stay calm when it was so tempting to yell. I know that He can truly give us peace.

The author lives in Arizona, USA.



CHILDREN

True Treasure

President Monson tells a story about a mother who had a special treasure box. When her children opened the box, they found pictures of themselves. The mother's treasure was her family!

True treasure isn't gold or jewels—it's the people you love. Who do you love? Draw a picture of them or write their names in the treasure box.



Christ's Atonement Is Evidence of God's Love

Prayerfully study this material and seek for inspiration to know what to share. How will understanding the purpose of Relief Society prepare daughters of God for the blessings of eternal life?



Faith
Family
Relief

Understanding that our Heavenly Father gave His Only Begotten Son that we might have immortality and the potential for eternal life helps us feel of God's infinite and incomprehensible love for us. Our Savior also loves us.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . .

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

"Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35, 38–39).

Of Jesus Christ's Atonement, Elder D. Todd Christofferson

of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: "The Savior's suffering in Gethsemane and His agony on the cross redeem us from sin by satisfying the demands that justice has upon us. He extends mercy and pardons those who repent. The Atonement of Jesus Christ also satisfies the debt justice owes to us by healing and compensating us for any suffering we innocently endure. 'For behold, he suffereth the pains of all men, yea, the pains of every living creature, both men, women, and children, who belong to the family of Adam' (2 Nephi 9:21; see also Alma 7:11–12)."¹

Christ has "graven [us] upon the palms of [His] hands" (Isaiah

49:16). Linda K. Burton, Relief Society General President, says, "That supreme act of love ought to send each of us to our knees in humble prayer to thank our Heavenly Father for loving us enough that He sent His Only Begotten and perfect Son to suffer for our sins, our heartaches, and all that seems unfair in our own individual lives."²

Additional Scriptures and Information

John 3:16; 2 Nephi 2:6–7, 9; reliefsociety.lds.org

NOTES

1. D. Todd Christofferson, "Redemption," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2013, 110.
2. Linda K. Burton, "Is Faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ Written in Our Hearts?" *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 114.



Consider This

How can we express our gratitude and love to God and to Jesus Christ for the gift of our Savior's Atonement?

OCTOBER 2016 CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

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

As you review the October 2016 general conference, you can use these pages (and Conference Notebooks in future issues) to help you study and apply the recent teachings of the living prophets and apostles and other Church leaders.



DOCTRINAL HIGHLIGHT

The Word of Wisdom

In 1833 the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith a plan for healthy living. That plan is found in the 89th section of the Doctrine and Covenants and is known as the Word of Wisdom. It gives specific direction regarding the food we eat, and it prohibits the use of substances which are harmful to our bodies.

“Those who are obedient to the Lord’s commandments and who faithfully observe the Word of Wisdom are promised particular blessings, among which are good health and added physical stamina [see D&C 89:18–21]. . . .

“. . . May we care for our bodies and our minds by observing the principles set forth in the Word of Wisdom, a divinely provided plan. With all my heart and soul, I testify of the glorious blessings which await us as we do.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Principles and Promises,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 78, 79.

PROPHETIC PROMISE



BE GRATEFUL FOR THE SABBATH

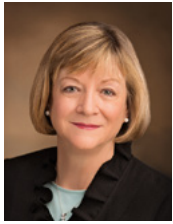
“We have the opportunity to take the sacrament each week—prepared, blessed, and passed by authorized servants of God. We can be grateful when the Holy Spirit confirms to us that the words of the sacrament prayers, offered by those authorized priesthood holders, are honored by our Heavenly Father.

“. . . We will feel greater love and appreciation for the Savior, whose infinite sacrifice made possible our being cleansed from sin. As we partake of the bread and water, we remember that He suffered for us. And when we feel gratitude for what He has done for us, we will feel His love for us and our love for Him.

“The blessing of love we receive will make it easier for us to keep the commandment to ‘always remember him’ [Moroni 4:3; 5:2; D&C 20:77, 79]. You may even feel love and gratitude, as I do, for the Holy Ghost, who Heavenly Father has promised will always be with us as we remain faithful to the covenants we have made. We can count all those blessings every Sunday and feel grateful.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Gratitude on the Sabbath Day,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 100.

Rise Up in Strength in These Perilous Times



I believe with all of my heart that we sisters do have the innate strength and faith that will allow us to meet the challenges of living in the last days. . . .

“ . . . We need to study and understand [Jesus Christ’s] Atonement. . . .

“ . . . We need to understand the need for the restoration

of the doctrine, organization, and keys of authority in these latter days [through the Prophet Joseph Smith]. . . .

“ . . . We need to study and understand temple ordinances and covenants. . . .

“ . . . I testify that the Lord has blessed us, as women who live in these perilous times, with all of the power, gifts, and strength that are needed.”

Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women General President, “Rise Up in Strength, Sisters in Zion,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 13, 15.



HOW DO WE COME TO KNOW THE LORD?

“A grand object of mortality is not merely learning about the Only Begotten of the Father but also striving to know Him. Four essential steps that can help us come to know the Lord are exercising faith in Him, following Him, serving Him, and believing Him. . . .

“On a future day, ‘every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess’ [Mosiah 27:31] that Jesus is the Christ. On that blessed day, we will know He knows each of us by name. And I witness and promise we can not only know about the Lord but also come to know Him.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “If Ye Had Known Me,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 103, 105.

DRAWING PARALLELS

Anchoring Our Testimonies in Christ and His Doctrines

Several speakers spoke to those who are struggling with their testimonies. Use the November 2016 issue or visit conference.lds.org to read what they said.

- See Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Learn from Alma and Amulek,” 71.
- See M. Russell Ballard, “To Whom Shall We Go?” 90.
- See Quentin L. Cook, “Valiant in the Testimony of Jesus,” 40.
- See Ronald A. Rasband, “Lest Thou Forget,” 113.

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

THE TRUE MIRACLE OF HEALING

By Jonathan Taylor

*After my accident, I learned that physical paralysis isn't curable—
but because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, spiritual paralysis is.*

The year 2000 was full of significant events for my family and me. My wife and I celebrated our first anniversary. We became parents for the first time. It was also the year I became paralyzed, just five weeks after our daughter's birth.

That summer I had been helping an elderly sister in our ward by regularly biking the few blocks from our apartment to her home to mow her lawn, but one morning I was very tired and not as alert as I should have been—and I was accidentally hit by a car. While it is a miracle that I survived, I unfortunately did not escape without injury. One week after the accident, I awoke to the realization that I was paralyzed, unable to move any muscles below my lower chest.

Paralysis is a permanent disability. Even with all of today's great strides in modern science and medicine, it cannot be cured. And naturally I was afraid at first, concerned with how I was going to be a husband and a father. The fear was then replaced by anger at myself for being foolish—for not stopping at that intersection

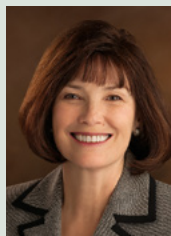
and for not wearing a helmet.

I felt like a burden. It took many months at a rehabilitation hospital to teach me to live the rest of my life with my disability and how to become independent again. At the same time, living with my paralysis has helped me better understand the scriptures and our Savior's Atonement.

One particular insight came while I was pondering the miracles that Christ performed. In Mark 2, Jesus forgives a paralytic of his sins and then heals him. When the scribes questioned

His offer of forgiveness, Jesus said, "Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?" (verse 9).

I had read this scripture many times before, but I never understood it until after my accident. In reading the chapter, we are reminded of how truly miraculous the healing was. Today, even after 2,000 years and many medical advancements, such a healing still cannot be achieved by man alone, and I live with this reality every



THE GREATEST MIRACLE

"To me, the greatest miracles in life are not the parting of the Red Sea, the moving of mountains, or even the healing of the body. The greatest miracle happens when we humbly approach our Father in Heaven in prayer, fervently plead to be forgiven, and then are cleansed of those sins through the atoning sacrifice of our Savior."

Linda S. Reeves, Second Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, "The Great Plan of Redemption," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 90.



day. Many think that this is the lesson behind this scripture—that Christ has the power to cure even the incurable. But there is so much more to this scripture, especially as we look past the physical miracle and instead focus on the spiritual miracle.

Just as it is impossible for one with physical paralysis to “arise” and “walk,” it is equally impossible for man alone to overcome the spiritual paralysis caused by sin. I have learned that the Savior’s Atonement is the true miracle in this scripture. I may never experience the miracle of being able to physically arise and walk again in my earthly life, but I have received the greater miracle of the forgiveness of my sins through

the Atonement of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The reality of this miracle is affirmed in verses 10 and 11:

“But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)

“I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.”

Being healed of the effects of sin is the greatest miracle we each receive in our lives, all because of Jesus Christ. In atoning for our sins, Christ took our infirmities and sins upon Himself. He knows what we go through in life. He understands our individual disabilities, weaknesses, and challenges, no matter how big or small. There is no other

person in the world who can heal the spiritual paralysis of sin.

I am thankful for the insight that I have been blessed with. It provides needed perspective as I live with my disability and strive to use it to help me learn and grow. I have been able to stop feeling sorry for myself and go do the same things I loved to do before my accident, and I have been blessed to be able to serve in spite of my condition. Some may find it difficult to be thankful when living with a disability, but God blesses us continually—even in these times. I am grateful for my Savior, for His Atonement, and for this amazing miracle in my life. ■

The author lives in Wyoming, USA.

AM I GOING TO DIE?

By Gregory Hamblin

I didn't know why my son was suddenly scared by thoughts of death, but the truths of the gospel contain the reassurance he needed.

My seven-year-old son was pedaling furiously and going nowhere. The chain had fallen off his bike. I went over to help him out of his predicament, flipping the bike over so I could access the chain. As I worked, he said, “Dad? When I die, will I be all covered in blood?”

Somewhat shocked, I looked up at him. He was in tears.

“What? No!” I said. “You’re not going to die.” I sat on the curb, and he sat on my lap. He cried and cried. Where had this come from?

“Will my insides fall out?” he asked.

Had my little boy been watching horror movies or something? “No!” I said. Again I told him he wasn’t going to die.

“No, Dad. Everybody is going to die, right?”

I took a deep breath. This was not a conversation I expected to have with such a young child.

When I became a father, I promised myself I would never withhold the truth from my kids, but the thought of telling any of them that they would

someday die was a nightmare. I tried to dodge his question. “You don’t need to worry about that right now,” I said. “You just be a happy boy and have fun and don’t worry. You’re going to be alive for a long, long time.”

“I don’t want to die,” he said.

“What do I do here?” I asked myself. Thoughts of saying the wrong thing and forever traumatizing him whirled around in my head. “What do I do?” I offered a silent prayer for help.

I began to tell him about the plan of salvation. I told him that we are all visitors to this world. I told him how each of us is a being made of two parts: a body and a spirit. I told him that when people die—and, yes, we all will someday have to die—it’s just our physical bodies that stop working. Our spirits are eternal and will never die (see Alma 40:11).

I told him that Jesus Christ is our Savior because He made it possible for us to all be together, even though we sometimes have to be apart for a while. I taught him that the Savior died for us and was resurrected and

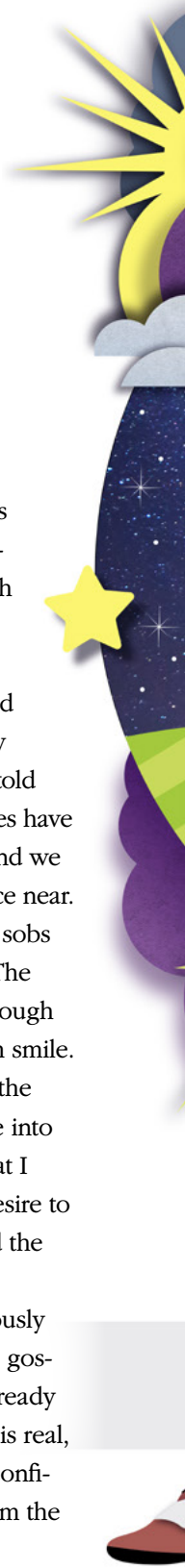
that because He lives, our spirits will someday return to our bodies, and we will never face death again (see Alma 11:43–45).

He asked if I had ever seen a dead person. I told him that I had been able to say good-bye to my grandparents at their funerals. I told him that even though their bodies have died, their spirits are still alive, and we can sometimes feel their presence near.

My son’s fears subsided, and sobs turned into his typical giggles. The idea of relatives visiting even though we couldn’t see them made him smile.

We walked together back to the house, pulling the repaired bike into the garage. I thought about what I had said. I thought about my desire to tell the truth to my children and the answers I had given my son.

In that moment I felt enormously grateful for my testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Because I already knew that the plan of salvation is real, I was able to speak to my son confidently and honestly and give him the strength to overcome his fears.





My preparation for this moment began long before my son was born. When I was preparing for a mission, I had a goal to gain a testimony of every aspect of the gospel that I might be required to teach. The part I had struggled with the most was the Resurrection of the dead.

I studied, pondered, and prayed. I fasted and asked for a testimony. After a while, the Holy Ghost witnessed to me that the Resurrection is real, that there truly is life after death, and that the promises of the plan of salvation are real. (See 1 Nephi 10:19.)

That testimony became important on my mission, but it became one of my most treasured gifts when my son needed to find peace.

I'm so grateful for that witness, and I testify that the plan of salvation is real.

I testify of the importance of strengthening our testimonies so that when we or our loved ones feel fear, we can find peace in our testimonies and understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ. ■

The author lives in Nevada, USA.



LIFE'S A PLAY

THE PLAN OF SALVATION
IN THREE ACTS

*We're in the middle of
a three-act play that
we don't fully understand,
but focusing on Christ
will help us find
an eternally happy ending.*

By Margaret Willden

The lights dim. The plush red curtain rises. The costumed figures around you spring into action. Who is the hero? Who is the villain? It's hard to say.

You stand center stage, unable to make sense of it all. Everyone seems to understand what's going on but you. "This is act 2," one actor whispers. "Look over this script."

We may not all be actors, but the notion of such a play is not that far from reality. Imagine the plan of salvation, also called "the great plan of happiness" (Alma 42:8), as a three-act play. Act 1 is where we came from, act 2 is our life on earth, and act 3 is where we are going. During act 2, we have no memory of our past and little knowledge of our future, but fortunately the gospel of Jesus Christ—the play's script—puts our mortal life in context.

Act 1: Understanding Our Beginnings

From the scriptures and the words of living prophets, we learn of our premortal existence (see Abraham 3:22–24). Before we came to earth, we participated in a council with our Heavenly Father. We learned that we would come to earth to gain a body, have posterity, face opposition, and increase in light and truth. If we were obedient and became more Christlike, we could one day live with our Father again.

Because we would make mistakes along the way, Jesus Christ was chosen as our Savior to pay the price of sin. He suffered for each of us, and because of His sacrifice, we can be cleansed through repentance.

But Satan (or Lucifer, as he was called in the premortal existence) rebelled and sought to remove our ability to choose right or wrong. A War in Heaven began. Upon his defeat, Satan was cast out of heaven, along with the spirits who chose to follow him (see Moses 4:1–4).

Though we can't remember this premortal existence, we know that we promised to do all we could to return to God's presence once we were on earth. And He promised us agency, allowing us to choose to follow Him.

Act 2: Using Our Agency

Now we are here in act 2, and God has provided the script to guide us back to Him—the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our challenge is to use our agency to follow the script so we can prepare to return to our Heavenly Father (see Abraham 3:25). Like a complex play full of subplots, our mortal life can be complicated. It is riddled with temptations, trials, and tragedies of every kind. But the truth is that act 2 is all about choosing whether we will follow the teachings of Christ so we can become more like Him.

The scriptures provide the perfect pattern for happiness, encouraging us to "press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end" (2 Nephi 31:20). We grow as we make and keep covenants, obey the commandments, and repent when we sin. As we immerse ourselves in the scriptures and teachings of our prophets, we will stay focused on the plan we joyfully agreed to follow in act 1.

Act 3: Embracing Eternity

Our physical bodies may die at the end of act 2, but the story doesn't end there. In fact, act 3 has no closing curtain—it is eternal (see Abraham 3:26).

Because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, all of God's children who come to earth will be resurrected. What could be more joyful than resurrection? (see D&C 93:33).

Nearly all will also receive a degree of glory depending on their works: the telestial kingdom, with a glory like that of the stars; the terrestrial kingdom, with a glory like that of the moon; or the celestial kingdom, with the ultimate glory like that of the sun (see D&C 76:50–113). In the celestial kingdom we will dwell with the Father and the Son. A relative few will remain "filthy still" (2 Nephi 9:16) and be cast into outer darkness, where they can never progress.

What Will Your Story Be?

If we follow the gospel of Jesus Christ in act 2, act 3 of our play will be glorious beyond belief. The curtains are up. The action is underway. What will you do on stage? ■

The author lives in New York, USA.

This idea is based on a talk, "The Play and the Plan," given by President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, in a Church Educational System fireside for young adults on May 7, 1995.



The Voice of the Spirit



By Elder Eduardo
Gavarret
Of the Seventy

Listening closely to the Holy Ghost helps me determine whether I am walking the correct path or need to change my course.

When I was young, my father had a store where he sold and repaired clocks and watches. Our family home was located in the back of the store, so I grew up with the sounds of clocks and watches.

At the end of each day, my father would take some of the wall clocks he had worked on during the day and hang them inside our home on the walls near our bedrooms. I didn't understand why he did this and why we had to sleep with all that noise. But with time, the sound of different clocks became a familiar part of otherwise quiet nights.

A couple of years later, I began working with my father in the store, learning from him how to repair watches. One morning he said something that opened my mind and helped me understand why he hung the wall clocks outside our bedrooms instead of keeping them inside the store.

"Could you bring me the wall clock that was near your bedroom last night?" he asked. "I was listening to the sound of it during the night, and I realized it is not working right. I need to look at it again."

That was it! In the silence of the night, he had listened to the sound of the clock in the same way a doctor listens to the sound of the heart of a patient. In the process of repairing various types of clocks and watches over a

lifetime, he had trained his ears to determine by a clock's sound whether it was working perfectly or not.

After that experience, I began to pay attention to the sound of the clocks during the night, just as my father did. By doing so, I learned to recognize whether a clock was working correctly or whether it needed adjustment.

As I grew older and gained an understanding of gospel principles, I began to compare this experience with the positive influence the Holy Ghost can have in our lives. I began to liken times of spiritual reflection and meditation to quiet moments in the night during my childhood, and I began to liken the sound of the clocks to the voice of the Spirit warning me, guiding me, and speaking to me from time to time.

Important Spiritual Qualities

This experience helped me recognize the truthfulness of experiences Nephi had with the whisperings of the Holy Ghost. From the Book of Mormon, we learn that Nephi shared with his brother Sam "the things which the Lord had *manifested unto [him] by his Holy Spirit*" (1 Nephi 2:17; emphasis added).

Nephi was well acquainted with the influence of the Holy Ghost. His life was filled with feelings of love from the Father and the Son, which were manifested to him

by the Holy Ghost. As we review the life of Nephi, we see clear examples of God's love made manifest through answered prayers and spiritual guidance. Examples include:

- Nephi's vision of the tree of life (see 1 Nephi 11–15).
- The Liahona, which worked according to faith (see 1 Nephi 16:10, 16, 26–30).
- Nephi's deliverance after being bound with cords (see 1 Nephi 7:17–18).
- The Lord's direction while Nephi's family crossed the ocean (see 1 Nephi 18:21–23).
- A warning from the Lord to flee into the wilderness (see 2 Nephi 5:5).

In his early years and likely with help from the example of his parents, Nephi developed a sensitivity to the voice of the Spirit. He cultivated this ability by exercising the following important spiritual qualities:

- *Desire*: “And it came to pass that I, Nephi, . . . [had] great desires to know of the mysteries of God, wherefore, I did cry unto the Lord” (1 Nephi 2:16). “I . . . desired to know the things that my father had seen” (1 Nephi 11:1; see also verse 3).
- *Faith*: “I did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father” (1 Nephi 2:16).
- *Prayerfulness*: “And I, Nephi, did go into the mount oft, and I did pray oft unto the Lord; wherefore the Lord showed unto me great things” (1 Nephi 18:3).
- *Obedience*: “And it came to pass that I, Nephi, said unto my father: I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them” (1 Nephi 3:7).

The Work of the Holy Ghost

Nephi was well qualified to speak about the third member of the Godhead. He had learned to listen to the voice of the Spirit—whether in calm waters or troubled seas. His



experiences guided him to write about “the work of the Holy Ghost”¹ (see 2 Nephi 31–32). From Nephi and other prophets, we learn that:

The Holy Ghost *reveals*: “No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations. The Holy Ghost is a revelator”² (see 1 Nephi 10:17–19; 2 Nephi 32:5; Moroni 10:5).

The Holy Ghost *inspires*: He gives us thoughts, feelings, and words, enlightens our understanding, and directs our thoughts (see 1 Nephi 4:6).

The Holy Ghost *testifies*: He testifies of the Father and of the Son (see 2 Nephi 31:18; 3 Nephi 28:11; Ether 12:41).

The Holy Ghost *teaches*: He increases our knowledge (see 2 Nephi 32:5).

The Holy Ghost *sanctifies*: After baptism we may be sanctified through reception of the Holy Ghost (see 3 Nephi 27:20).

The Holy Ghost *reminds*: He brings things to our mind when we need them most (see John 14:26).

The Holy Ghost *comforts*: During times of trouble or despair, the Holy Ghost can lift our spirits, give us hope



**THE HOLY GHOST
AND PERSONAL
REVELATION**

“The Holy Ghost provides personal revelation to help us make major life decisions about such things as education, missions, careers, marriage, children, where we will live with our families, and so on. In these matters, Heavenly Father expects us to use our agency, study the situation out in our minds according to gospel principles, and bring a decision to Him in prayer.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Holy Ghost,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2016, 105.

(see Moroni 8:26), teach us “the peaceable things of the kingdom” (D&C 36:2), and help us feel “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (Philippians 4:7).³

The Influence of the Holy Ghost

In the first chapter of the Book of Mormon, we learn that Lehi “was filled with the Spirit of the Lord” (1 Nephi 1:12). In the last chapter of the Book of Mormon, Moroni promises us that God “will manifest the truth of [the Book of Mormon] unto [us], by the power of the Holy Ghost” (Moroni 10:4).

From the beginning to the end of this inspired book of scripture, the Holy Ghost actively participates in the lives of God’s people. This powerful influence extends to and touches all readers of the Book of Mormon who pray, show faith, and have a sincere desire to know the truth (see Moroni 10:4–5).

How can we recognize the Holy Ghost and use the right we have as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to receive the influence of the Holy Ghost in our lives? Elder Craig C. Christensen of the Presidency of the Seventy has taught: “We all have experiences with the Holy Ghost, even though we may not always recognize them. As inspired thoughts come into our minds, we know them to be true by the *spiritual feelings that enter into our hearts*.”⁴

To increase our ability to receive the influence and direction of the Holy Ghost

in our lives, we, like Nephi, need to cultivate a desire to receive, exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, “pray always, and not faint” (2 Nephi 32:9), and obey the commandments.

President Thomas S. Monson has asked that we do one more thing: “Open your hearts, even your very souls, to the sound of that special voice which testifies of truth. . . .

May we ever be in tune, that we might hear this comforting, guiding voice which will keep us safe.”⁵

From my father, I learned the lesson of listening in a practical way—working with watches and clocks. Today I treasure the lesson he taught me. The Holy Ghost, in fact, still brings that lesson to my mind and heart, and He gives me a promise of good things to come.

That experience has helped me search for quiet moments when I can listen for the voice of the Spirit. Listening closely to the Holy Ghost helps me determine whether I am walking the correct path or whether I need to change my course so that I can be in tune with Heavenly Father’s desires. ■

**TO RECEIVE
INFLUENCE AND
DIRECTION FROM
THE HOLY GHOST**

- Cultivate a desire to receive.
- Exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Pray always.
- Obey the commandments.

NOTES

1. Robert D. Hales, “The Holy Ghost,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2016, 105.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 132.
3. For further understanding of the roles of the Holy Ghost, see David A. Bednar, “Always Retain a Remission of Your Sins,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2016, 59–62; Robert D. Hales, “The Holy Ghost,” 105–7.
4. Craig C. Christensen, “An Unspeakable Gift from God,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 14; emphasis added.
5. Thomas S. Monson, “Keep the Commandments,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 84.



When I asked about the bright blue table in the middle of Adriana's kitchen, I learned that there was a time she had no table at all. Struggling to make ends meet, she took one of the Church's self-reliance courses and decided that she could bake and sell bread—if only she had a table. She prayed for help and built a table from scrap wood.

CODY BELL, PHOTOGRAPHER

Adriana González

Central Department, Paraguay

Everything I have asked from my heart, He has heard me. He has heard me because He knew it was good for me. Now we have two tables. This table is central to our family. We sit here to share. We work here. We teach what we have learned to others here. Through self-reliance, I learned to value myself. I discovered talents that God has given to me to help me and my family. I try to pass on what I have learned to my sisters in Relief Society, to help them to value themselves as daughters of God. I am grateful I am able to bless those around me.

For more photos and story about Adriana, go to lds.org/go/21721.

To find out how the Church's self-reliance program can help you, visit srs.lds.org.



UNDERSTANDING CHURCH HISTORY BY
Study AND **Faith**

*Today, we learn about the past through incomplete pieces of history.
As we study these records, we must remember that they
do not represent the entirety of the past.*



By Keith A. Erikson

Church History Library Director

History means far more than memorizing dates and facts for a test. Every day, archivists, librarians, and historians in the Church History Library collect, preserve, and share records of the past that help us discern God's hand in the Church's history and in our individual lives. Understanding our history involves a process of learning and discovery that can help us strengthen our testimonies, deflect doubt, tell the best stories, discern true doctrine, and improve our thinking. As we "obtain a knowledge of history," we will also assist in bringing about "the salvation of Zion" (D&C 93:53).

As a historian, I've come to appreciate that we learn about history "by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118). Faith and study combine as we prayerfully feast on the scriptures, read and reflect on multiple historical sources, make connections between scripture passages and historical sources, consider information within proper contexts, look for patterns and themes, and draw out relevant lessons. These practices help us make sense of historical facts and find answers to our questions. Several principles can help us think about history in ways that open our minds to a deeper understanding.

The past is gone—only pieces remain

From our perspective in the present, the past is mostly gone. The people have passed away; their experiences have ended. However, pieces of the past remain—letters, diaries, records of organizations, material objects. Today, we can learn about the past only indirectly through the pieces that remain. Information is always lost between the past and the present. We must study the records that do survive while remembering that they do not represent the entirety of the past.

Consider one example: When Joseph Smith preached a sermon to the Saints, he typically had no prepared text, and no audio or video recording was made. Though a few in attendance may have written notes or reflections, even fewer of those notes survive. Thus, we cannot claim to know everything Joseph Smith ever said, though we can, for instance, quote Wilford Woodruff's notes about Joseph's sermon.

In other cases, important pieces of the Church's history have not yet been discovered. For example, we do not have records of the visit of Peter, James, and John that are as detailed as the accounts of the visit of John the Baptist (see Joseph Smith—History 1:66–75). Similarly, though we have records of the priesthood's being withheld from men of black African descent, no record has survived that authoritatively explains why the practice began. In the study of history, the absence of evidence is not a valid cause for doubt. Learning about the past is an effort of gathering as much trusted and, where possible, verifiable evidence while reserving final judgment on the portions of history that we are unable to fully understand because of the lack of information.

Facts don't speak, but storytellers do

Because the surviving pieces of the past are incomplete, people attempt to put the pieces together in order to tell a story. The earliest stories were told by participants and typically describe what they experienced and why it was important to them. Some participants told their stories on multiple occasions to different audiences. Some events prompted many participants to relate their experiences. Other events were forgotten until a later experience called them to mind.

Stories are collected and retold by others for many reasons—to entertain an audience, sell a product, shape public opinion, or lobby for change. Each story becomes an interpretation of the past, built on factual pieces and influenced by the teller's memory, interests, and goals. As a result, stories about the past are incomplete and sometimes contradictory. We must always consider who is telling the stories, how they are telling them, and why they are telling them.

Joseph Smith provided an example of how to evaluate storytellers and facts. In 1838, he observed that there were already “many reports which have been put in circulation by evil-disposed and designing persons, in relation to the rise and progress of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” As a result, he wrote a history intended to “put all inquirers after truth in possession of the facts, as they have transpired, in relation both to myself and the Church, so far as I have such facts in my possession” (Joseph Smith—History 1:1). All of the stories told about Joseph Smith do not bear equal value or accuracy. Stories told by persons more closely connected to past events may be more reliable. The best stories consider all available pieces of the past and recognize the perspectives of the sources.



As we encounter history that is incomplete, open to interpretation, and different than we assumed, we must “put [our] trust in that Spirit which leadeth . . . to walk humbly” (D&C 11:12). It requires humility not to judge people in the past by our standards.

The past is different from the present (and that's OK)

As we seek to make sense of the pieces of the past and the stories told about it, we discover people, places, experiences, and traditions different from our own. Changes in science, technology, and culture produce different experiences with birth, eating, travel, holidays, hygiene, dating, medicine, and death. Different political and economic systems create different experiences with education, choice, freedom, and opportunity. Past views differ from our views on work, family, public service, and the role and status of women and minorities. Every temporal aspect of human experience changes over time in ways both small and great.

For example, from our perspective in the present, Joseph Smith's use of a seer stone to translate the Book of Mormon appears very different. In his time, however, many people believed that physical objects could be used to receive divine messages. These beliefs were based, in part, on biblical stories in which objects were used for divine purposes (see Numbers 17:1–10; 2 Kings 5; John 9:6). A revelation Joseph received for the organization of the Church explained that God “gave him power from on high, by the means which were before prepared, to translate the Book of Mormon” (D&C 20:8). Though the “means” included a seer stone as well as the Urim and Thummim, we can still discern the doctrinal message “that

God does inspire men and call them to his holy work in this age . . . ; thereby showing that he is the same God yesterday, today, and forever” (D&C 20:11–12).

Present assumptions distort the past

Because the past was different from our day, we must take special care not to make assumptions about the past based on our present ideas and values. We cannot assume that people in the past were just like us or that they would appreciate our culture or beliefs. We cannot assume that we now know everything, that we have read every source, or that our current understanding of the past will never change. Frequently, so-called problems with the past are actually just bad assumptions made in the present.

For example, Joseph Smith declared, “I never told you I was perfect.”¹ If we were to assume that prophets never made mistakes, then we might be startled to discover times when Joseph did. To “fix” this problem, we should neither stubbornly hold that Joseph was perfect nor charge the Church with deception. Rather, we can acknowledge Joseph’s humanity and see him in the context of other scriptural stories about prophets. As a result, we can adjust our assumptions to recognize that all

prophets are mortal and therefore have imperfections. We can feel grateful that God patiently works with each of us. Admitting the errors in our own thinking is sometimes the most difficult part of understanding history.

Learning history requires humility

As we encounter history that is incomplete, open to interpretation, and different than we assumed, we must “put [our] trust in that Spirit which leadeth . . . to walk humbly” (D&C 11:12). From our perspective today, we obviously know more than participants did about the outcome of the past, but we also know far less about their experience of living in it. The people who lived in the past belonged to their own times and places and circumstances. To have charity for their differences and empathy for their experiences, we must begin with humility about our own limitations. It requires humility not to judge people in the past by our standards. It requires humility to admit we do not know everything, to wait patiently for more answers, and to continue learning. When new sources are discovered that provide new insight into things we thought we knew, it requires humility to revise our understanding. ■

NOTE

1. *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 522.

A PATTERN FOR LEARNING BY STUDY AND FAITH

Faithful study of Church history can follow the pattern illustrated by Alma’s comparison of planting a seed (see Alma 32:27–42):

1. We *give place* for learning history by applying the principles outlined here.
2. We *plant* the seed in our minds and hearts through careful reading and reflection. (Is this a piece of the past or a story told later? Who created it and why? What is the main idea? What evidence supports it?)
3. We can *discern* the importance of our reading by considering how authentic and reliable the source is, placing our answers in proper historical contexts, and identifying eternal principles that can be applied to our personal circumstances.
4. Throughout our lives, we can *nourish* a faithful study of Church history through diligent reading, thinking, praying, sharing, and teaching.
5. By so doing, we will come to *reap* the fruit of faithful study as our understanding improves and our faith deepens, making us better learners and teachers, parents and children, disciples and Saints.

HEARTBREAK and HOPE



When a Spouse Uses Pornography

Seven ways the spouse of a pornography user can not only survive heartbreak but also see a promise of hope.

Amy made the choices every parent desires for a son or daughter. She was sealed in the temple after receiving a strong spiritual impression to marry her husband.

Prior to their wedding, her husband-to-be made a courageous choice as well, admitting to her that he had used pornography.

A short year later, Amy realized that his struggle with pornography was not in the past. Three years into their marriage—when they had an eight-month-old baby—Amy suffered the unimaginable pain of her husband's having an affair and being subsequently excommunicated from the Church.

How did Amy survive the heartbreak? How do the many other women and men with similar circumstances survive their pain?

Many spouses and other family members of pornography users have discovered helpful and hopeful behaviors common to their own and others' journeys. And they have courageously shared their stories.

The Church website
OvercomingPornography.org

terms seven of these common behaviors as “vital behaviors.” These behaviors—experienced at an individual pace and in an individual order—have proven to be, for many, vital to emotional, mental, and spiritual healing.

Vital Behavior 1: Address the Trauma of Betrayal

Learning about and addressing the trauma, self-blame, and other reactions a person has when discovering pornography use by his or her spouse.

When Eva found that her husband was involved with pornography, she felt “intense pain, anger, heartache, depression, and obsession.” Obsession is actually a common feeling for someone who experiences the trauma of betrayal of a spouse's pornography use, and Eva's behavior in response to these intense emotions is also not unusual. She began to obsess about her husband and his actions. Where was he? Who was he talking to? What was he doing? His pornography and sex addiction became the center of her life, and she desperately wanted to fix him, believing that if she could get his problem under control, they would be happy.

When Jamie learned of her husband's pornography use, she reacted with an understandable desire to control whatever she could. She thought she could arrange the life of her husband, Jon, so he wouldn't seek instant gratification through pornography, and he would, therefore, have no other option but to choose righteousness. She wrote daily lists for him: what he could do for fun and what chores he needed to complete.

A pivotal moment in Jamie's journey came when her bishop was inspired to emphasize, “Jamie, this is not your fault. Nothing you are doing is making him look at pornography. He is choosing.” And just as she was not the cause of his looking at pornography, she also could not be the cause of his stopping. Intellectually, she already knew what the bishop told her, but Jamie says that after the bishop's reminder, “the lists stopped. I gave up trying to control his behavior and trying to force him into righteousness—and I focused on myself.” In effect, Jamie gave herself permission to feel her own hurt and to work on her own recovery.

In addition to relying on the Lord, spouses can find help and support from family, friends, Church leaders, and professionals.

After Jamie's realization, Jon struggled and relapsed often, but he took responsibility for his own actions. And as they each worked on their own healing, Jon and Jamie found that they could heal better as individuals and as a couple.

Vital Behavior 2: Share Safely

Finding understanding, support, and validation through sharing appropriately.

Another turning point for Jamie and Jon came when one of their children needed a blessing. They called their home teacher, who bravely explained that he was seeking help to deal with his own struggles with pornography. He offered to find someone else to give the blessing. That openness lessened the shame Jon and Jamie felt about their own situation, and Jon finally felt safe enough to discuss his addiction with someone besides Jamie.

When the home teacher's wife offered to talk with Jamie, Jamie didn't see the point since her talking wouldn't fix Jon—and at that point, fixing him was her goal. Yet after she and the home teacher's wife visited, Jamie felt lighter. Nothing had changed. Jon still struggled, but she was relieved that someone else knew what she was going through and her world hadn't come crashing down.

Vital Behavior 3: Rebuild Spiritual Confidence

Feeling and following the promptings of the Holy Ghost and having restored trust in God.

When Amy faced her husband's excommunication, she knew that the Savior could provide the answer to the crushing weight she felt. However, she says, she wasn't sure how "to bridge that gulf between where I was and the healing power of Jesus Christ." How, she wondered, could she possibly find—or build—a bridge?

At first she tried to lessen her pain by vigilantly watching her husband and pleading with the Lord to heal him. But one day a spiritual prompting changed everything:

Amy realized that controlling someone else's behavior isn't part of Heavenly Father's plan and wasn't helping her come closer to the Savior. So, she says, the biggest thing she had to do was begin her own journey of healing—and turn her husband's journey over to him. She came to understand, through inspiration from the Spirit, that she needed to stop living her life as a reaction to pornography and trust in the enabling power of Jesus Christ and His Atonement to strengthen and bless her.

As she looks back, Amy says that at no point did any of her searching or investigating of her husband produce a feeling of peace. Life "was continual turmoil," she says. "And the only peace I found was when I recognized that Heavenly Father had a plan" for her husband and for her. When she used her own agency to turn to God and seek His help, "the help came" and the gulf between her pain and the Savior's help didn't feel quite so wide or the pain so weighty.

Vital Behavior 4: Get Help

Finding a pathway to healing through resources such as literature, a qualified therapist, a mentor, or a proven healing program.

After 25 years of marriage, Gina learned about her husband's pornography use and his infidelity. Traumatized, Gina called her bishop. She soon found



that he was an understanding listener who let her cry when she needed to—a blessing she acknowledges that not every spouse in her situation has.

Gina remembers that in one of their first meetings, her bishop “advised I get counseling immediately, not for my marriage or for my husband, but so I could have solid support as I faced the challenges ahead. He wanted me to feel cared for, and he knew that he did not have the background that might be needed. He saw my depression and anxiety and advised me to talk to my doctor about any medical help I might need.”

Over the next few years, Gina regularly attended support groups and counseling and sought the support of family—sometimes calling them to ask them to pray for her on her hardest days. She has learned, she says, that “Heavenly Father will never leave me in darkness.”

Vital Behavior 5: Be Open and Honest

Speaking with loved ones regularly about a personal journey of healing and recovery and doing so in an openly candid and authentic way.

Melissa decided to try one more time to save her marriage, which seemed distant and disconnected. That’s when her husband, Cameron, told her honestly about his pornography use. At her urging, he agreed

to tell the bishop, and eventually they both talked to their parents. But, as he explains, it “took two years to finally see that there was more to repentance than telling a few people and saying a prayer.” He had to learn that not looking at pornography wasn’t enough. To truly be in a state of recovery, he had to turn to God and find healthy ways to deal with the stress, fear, shame, and anxiety that triggered his craving to look at pornography.

After a relapse, Cameron agreed to attend an addiction recovery program and, over time, has come to understand that the Savior does not give up on us as soon as we make a mistake.

Through also attending a 12-step program, Melissa feels that her family finally has the tools to move forward. She remembers how difficult the 12-step meetings were in the beginning, but she was motivated by a facilitator who suggested that Melissa “try us for 90 days. If you don’t like us, we’ll refund your misery.” Melissa eventually realized that just as she felt hope from others’ stories, maybe she could help others feel hope by sharing her experiences.

Melissa used to believe that if she stayed married, she would only pretend to be happy. Her perspective changed when she realized that the Savior saw potential in her, in Cameron, and in all of Father in

Heaven’s children. He put all He is—the Light and the Life of the World—into saving us and giving us another chance. Because of the Savior, Melissa says, she can now smile in a genuine, I’m-happy-to-be-alive way.

Vital Behavior 6: Set Boundaries

Creating appropriate boundaries with the pornography user and establishing a structure that allows functioning and healing.

Well into their journey of overcoming pornography, Jon and Jamie discovered how helpful it was to set boundaries, and they still have them today—even after a good amount of sobriety—because of the peace of mind that boundaries provide. Jamie says that when she was most vulnerable, setting boundaries “protected my heart.”

She and Jon agreed that there were appropriate times and ways to discuss issues surrounding a relapse. They agreed not to have “text wars” but to speak in person. They also agreed that if a discussion was turning into an argument, they could take a break and talk later.

Many of Jon and Jamie’s boundaries relate to how they communicate, but some of their other boundaries take the form of if/then statements in which they agree that certain actions will lead to certain consequences. That, Jamie says, allows them both to feel that life isn’t quite so chaotic.

Prayer, scripture study, and temple attendance help struggling spouses receive the Savior's healing power.

Vital Behavior 7: Practice Self-Care

Engaging in daily routines that heal and nurture mind, body, and spirit.

Gina remembers that soon after she met with her bishop for the first time, he advised her to do a few things that seemed like the standard answers. “He gently urged me,” she remembers, “to get to the temple, read my scriptures, continue in prayer.”

In the challenging years that followed, Gina found that the “standard answers” were her means of caring for herself. The scriptures became her sanctuary. “I would read a verse, write it down, and try to ponder what it meant to my situation, and then write those thoughts down,” she explains. “I knew that, more than ever, I had to hear the Lord’s word and have it take deeper root in my understanding. I could make so little sense of the rest of my world, but for the time I was in the scriptures, I was making sense of something—one verse at a time.”

Likewise, prayer and temple attendance took on new meaning. “When I was done pouring out my heart,” Gina remembers, “I would say, ‘Heavenly Father, now it’s Your turn.’” And she would wait quietly and listen. “Even in the darkest hour,” she explains, she realized that her “spirit was growing.”

Living in Hope

No individual’s journey of healing is the same as another’s, and each one is a process—not a destination. Common in many stories, however, is a realization that no amount of pornography use is OK or normal. As a result, when someone engages in any frequency of use or any level of involvement, his or her spouse will experience feelings of heartbreak, betrayal trauma, rejection, shame, and questioning of self-worth. Pornography use damages the connection, trust, and communication essential to a healthy relationship—making it vital for a spouse to seek



hope and healing.

Also common is the comforting discovery that in this bitter experience, spouses can

come to know the sweet not by finally finding it on the far side of their trials but by turning with hope to Jesus Christ in the midst of them.

Today, Gina is divorced and focused on her healing and that of her children, and she often reaches out to help women in similar circumstances find hope. Melissa and Cameron remain married and work to live in recovery. So do Jamie and Jon, who actively help other couples find the healing they have found through the Savior and His Atonement.

Eva is divorced and regularly attending 12-step meetings, where she finds safety and validation as she works on her recovery. She has come to understand that while she once made her husband’s addiction the focus of her life, healing comes as she puts the Savior at the center of her life and efforts.

Amy and her husband are still married—although he continues to relapse. Amy, however, testifies that peace comes when she watches general conference thinking, “How can I heal my pain?” not, “I hope my husband hears this.” She knows that Jesus Christ’s healing power and her faith in the infinite nature of the Atonement provide hope—not only for her husband but also for her.

One sister affected by pornography may speak for all when she says, “The Savior doesn’t want us to try harder; He wants us to turn to Him sooner.” These seven vital behaviors help women and men in their efforts to do that. ■

TWELVE TRUTHS

In addition to working on the seven vital behaviors, many family members of those who use pornography have also found hope and healing by studying the following 12 truths, found in the Church's Addiction Recovery Program materials. For more information about the materials and support for spouses and family members, see addictionrecovery.lds.org.

1. *God "will console you in your afflictions" (Jacob 3:1).* Pornography use is serious, but we can find comfort in knowing that God is aware of us and our situations, that He will never abandon us, and that He will support us in our afflictions.
2. *"Shake off the chains with which ye are bound" (2 Nephi 1:23).* We are not responsible for another's actions or to blame for another's addiction. As children of God who understand our divine nature and destiny, we know that we are free to act and to exercise our agency to make choices for ourselves.
3. *"He will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people" (Alma 7:11).* As we give our burdens to the Lord, we understand that He can heal our deepest pain, that no blessing will be denied us, and that change takes time.
4. *"Draw near unto me" (D&C 88:63).* The Lord's help is essential, and we can find it by partaking of the sacrament, attending the temple, and seeking the companionship of His Holy Spirit.
5. *"Work out your own salvation" (Mormon 9:27).* We cannot control someone else and heal his or her addiction, but we can focus on our own healing, take care of ourselves, and gain understanding by learning about addiction.
6. *"Bear one another's burdens" (Mosiah 18:8).* In addition to relying on the Lord, we must seek appropriate help, including support from family, friends, priesthood and Relief Society leaders, mentors, support groups, and professionals.
7. *"In everything give thanks" (D&C 98:1).* Even as we experience discouragement, fear, and anger, we can also find joy as we acknowledge and express gratitude for the hand of God in our lives, recognize our own gifts and talents, and see the good in our loved one who is addicted.
8. *Be "firm and steadfast" (Helaman 15:8).* We can set appropriate limits to protect ourselves and our families—while not enduring abusive behavior of any kind—and seek the Lord's direction as to if and how a relationship should be preserved.
9. *We "have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty" (2 Corinthians 4:2).* Pornography use thrives in secrecy and can begin to be addressed only as we are honest with ourselves and with our loved one, establishing open and honest communication with him or her.
10. *"Lift up the hands which hang down" (D&C 81:5).* We can love and pray for our loved one, offering greater support as he or she is ready to accept it.
11. *"Bear all these things with patience" (Alma 38:4).* Recovery is a process, and while relapse should not be used as an excuse, it can be responded to with love and hope.
12. *"My peace I give unto you" (John 14:27).* As we exercise faith, we can find the peace the Lord promises, knowing that He will assist us as we extend forgiveness to those who have broken promises and hearts.

By Mireille Rouffet

It was 1973. Struggling with some challenges, I deeply desired to know God, so I decided to read the Bible. One day I read about Solomon's temple in 2 Chronicles 2–5, and I felt that such a holy place could be on the earth. So I fasted and prayed that I might be guided by the Holy Ghost to find it. I felt that if I found a temple, I would be able to tell one of the Lord's servants about my problems, and he would help me solve them.

So I set out to find a temple. At the time I lived in Fontenay-sous-Bois, a suburb of Paris, so I started driving toward the city to find a temple. I saw many buildings, including churches and synagogues, but I did not find a temple. Upon returning home, I prayed and wondered why I couldn't find a temple. Wasn't I pure enough? Or was I simply unprepared?

I SET OUT TO FIND A TEMPLE

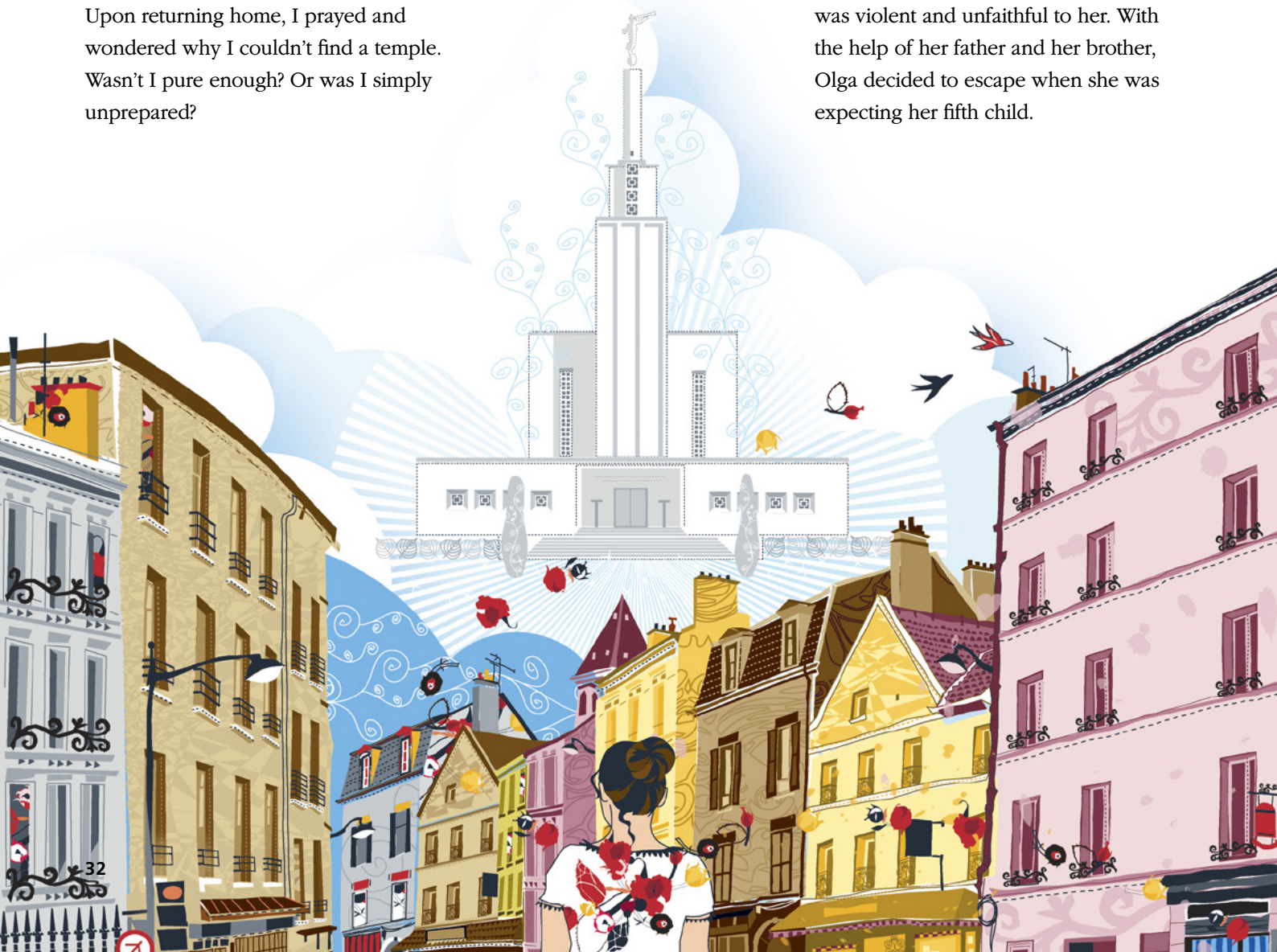
*I was searching for
a holy place and
ended up finding
a way to be part of
an eternal family.*

I forgot all about my failed search until sister missionaries for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints came to my home in February 1980. They taught me that the closest temple was in Zollikofen, Switzerland—the Bern Switzerland Temple.

I was baptized on April 12, 1980, and I went to the temple for the first time just over a year later, on May 5, 1981. There I was able to do the temple work for several women in my family, including my grandmothers, aunts, and cousins.

Of these women, the only one I had known was my cousin Olga.

Olga, who was from Italy, married at a very young age, but sadly, her husband was violent and unfaithful to her. With the help of her father and her brother, Olga decided to escape when she was expecting her fifth child.



She went to live with her parents and brother. After the birth of her child, Olga passed away. Olga's parents never recovered from the shock of her sudden death.

While I was performing the ordinances for Olga in the temple, one word kept coming to my mind: *mission*. But I was puzzled—I was busy raising three children by myself, and I couldn't possibly go on a mission.

The answer came several months later. One day my cousin Renzo told me that Olga's mother, my aunt Anita, had passed away. Suddenly I recalled that I had completed the temple work for Olga on a Tuesday, and her mother had passed away the following Friday. With great emotion, I felt impressed that Olga had been eager to receive her temple ordinances so she could welcome and teach her mother in the spirit world. Perhaps that was Olga's mission.

But I had a mission to help my own parents as well. I had tried to talk to them about the Church on several occasions, but they hadn't been interested. So after my mother and father died, I did the temple work for them as soon as I could.

When my parents were sealed, my heart was pounding, and my eyes filled with tears of love. I was then sealed to my parents. I could not stop thinking about my mother, and I wanted to embrace the sister who had been proxy for her. I thanked her for representing my mother. The sister too had tears in her eyes, and she thanked me for the experience. Even though I didn't know her, we felt like members of the same family.

My parents were then sealed to *their* parents, and Olga, whom I represented in the ordinance, was sealed to her parents, my uncle Marino and aunt Anita.

Every time I recall those experiences, I am overcome with emotion. I think about Olga, and I hope she is fulfilling her mission on the other side of the veil. Because of temple ordinances, I am no longer the only member of the Church in my family. I believe that my parents accepted the ordinances performed for them. I am filled with joy and thank the Lord for making it possible for me to establish an eternal family through the blessings of His holy temple. ■

The author lives in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, France.



FAMILY HISTORY^{AND} TEMPLE BLESSINGS

By Elder Dale G. Renlund

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

And by Ruth L. Renlund and Ashley R. Renlund





During their 2016 RootsTech presentation, Elder Dale G. Renlund and his wife, Ruth, and daughter, Ashley, reminded Latter-day Saints that real power comes from combining family history with temple blessings.

ELDER RENLUND: In December 1963, my family made the six-hour drive from Helsinki to the island of Larsmo, on the western coast of Finland. That's where my father grew up and where my grandmother Lena Sofia lived.

Years earlier, in 1912, Lena Sofia and my grandfather Leander listened to missionaries from Sweden preach the restored gospel. At that time there were fewer than 800 missionaries in the whole world.

Those missionaries taught the message of the restored gospel, and Lena Sofia and Leander were baptized the following day. They became members of a small branch, the first in Finland.

Just a few years later, Leander's mother, who had been living with them, died of tuberculosis. In 1917, Leander also died of tuberculosis, leaving Lena Sofia a widow and pregnant with their 10th child. That child—my father—was born two months after Leander's death. Lena Sofia eventually buried 7 of her 10 children. It was a very difficult struggle for her, an impoverished peasant woman, to keep intact what remained of her family.

For nearly two decades she did not get a good night's rest. She hustled at odd jobs during the day to scrape together enough food to eat. At night she nursed dying family members. Death literally hung over their heads. In those days timber was split and often put in the roof rafters to dry. Those timbers were then used to make coffins for those who died. It is hard to imagine how Lena Sofia felt.

On the day I met her in 1963, I had just turned 11 and she was 87. She was stooped from a lifetime of hard labor. She was so bowed over that when she stood from her chair, her height did not change. The skin of her face and hands was weather-beaten—as tough and textured as worn leather.

She stood as best as she could, pointed to a photo of Leander on the wall, and said to me in Swedish, “*Det här är min gubbe*” (This is my hubby).

I had enrolled in a Swedish-speaking school earlier that fall and was just relearning Swedish. I thought my grandmother had incorrectly used the present tense of the verb when she said, “This *is* my hubby,” because Leander had been dead for 46 years. I pointed out to my mother that Lena Sofia should have said, “This *was* my hubby.” My mother simply told me, “You don’t understand.”

She was right. I didn’t understand—not as I do now. Since then, I have reflected many times on the meaning of that experience and what my grandmother had taught me.

Think about the strength and comfort she must have gained from knowing about the sealing power! That power is given direction as we research and learn about our ancestors. Both family history and the blessings of the temple can be meaningful in our lives, but the real power comes when we combine them. It is not just randomly mixing two things together; rather, the one helps direct the other. The knowledge that these ordinances would someday be performed for her and Leander brought comfort and peace to Lena Sofia during the long years of her widowhood.

The True Value of Family History

ASHLEY: Without family history, the sealing authority can’t get where it needs to be to be used. And the true value of family history is realized only because of the sealing authority. The *real* power is in the combination.

SISTER RENLUND: I love this concept. We learn about both of these blessings everywhere in the scriptures.

Combining them brings more blessings and power into our lives. Let’s look at a couple of examples.

In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord tells us He sent Elijah to “plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers.” And this would turn the hearts of the children to the fathers. I think this is part, Dale, of what your grandmother planted in you. Then the Lord tells us that “the whole earth would be utterly



wasted at [the Savior’s Second] coming” if this turning did not happen (see D&C 2:2–3). That is a powerful message.

So even if we had all the family history records the world could offer and all that we could possibly collect, without the sealing authority restored by the prophet Elijah, the purpose of the Creation would have been thwarted and “wasted.” This is one of the first messages the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith in our dispensation.

ELDER RENLUND: You’re right, Ruth. Without even knowing it, I have felt the strength and power of stories and examples my whole life from my grandmother and other progenitors.

There’s a prophecy in Doctrine and Covenants section 128 where Joseph Smith quotes Malachi 4:5–6. He explains

the phrase “turn . . . the heart of the children to their fathers” in the context of the sealing power and baptism for the dead. Then he says, “And not only this, but those things which never have been revealed from the foundation of the world, but have been kept hid from the wise and prudent, shall be revealed unto babes and sucklings in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times” (see D&C 128:17–18).

Think of that! Joseph Smith foresaw that even children would understand and know things that the learned men and women of the world could not explain. Children and youth all over the world participate in these blessings every day, just as I did when I was 11, learning about these concepts from my grandmother and mother. People who never hear of the Savior while living on earth can have the opportunity to receive the same blessings as those who do have the opportunity in this life. This opportunity for blessings excludes no one.

Temple Ordinances and Individual Power

SISTER RENLUND: And the temple ordinances are central to individual power. In fact, the Lord has given us examples of this individual power. The early Saints were taught about the need for their endowments before they were able to further the work of salvation:

“It is expedient in me that mine elders should wait for a little season for the redemption of Zion—

“That they themselves may be prepared, and that my people may be taught more perfectly, and have experience, and know more perfectly concerning their duty, and the things which I require at their hands.

“And this cannot be brought to pass until mine elders are endowed with power from on high” (D&C 105:9–11).

So the Lord was teaching about the importance of preparing to receive temple endowments so that the elders might be blessed with power from on high. This blessing enabled the Saints to continue to be more perfectly taught to use that power well.

ELDER RENLUND: You can extend this understanding if you continue to section 109, the dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple. Joseph Smith prays, “And that all people who shall enter upon the threshold of the Lord’s house may feel thy power, and feel constrained to acknowledge that thou hast sanctified it, and that it is thy house, a place of thy holiness” (D&C 109:13).

ASHLEY: Yes, the temple ordinances are pure and powerful. But I can see how, when you add the temple to the work of studying and learning about your ancestors, the power is greater and takes our blessings to the next level.

SISTER RENLUND: Dale, do you think Lena Sofia understood that when she made her comment to you about Leander? Was her understanding more powerful because she was acknowledging the power of the temple along with her love for him and her family?

ELDER RENLUND: Yes, this is exactly what she was teaching. Lena Sofia knew that her long-dead husband was and would remain hers throughout the eternities. Through the doctrine of eternal families, Leander remained a presence in her life and part of her great hope for the future. Lena was like others, who “died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Hebrews 11:13).

In a blazing affirmation of her faith in the sealing authority, in 1938, Lena Sofia submitted the family records for her deceased children who were over eight years of age when they died. That way their temple work could be performed, although she herself would not get to the temple during her lifetime. These records were among the earliest submitted from Finland to a temple for ordinances.

Do you remember the challenge Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gave at RootsTech in 2014?

ASHLEY: He said, “Prepare as many names for the temple as baptisms you perform in the temple.”¹

SISTER RENLUND: And in 2015, he added eight words: “And help someone else to do the same.”²

Adding Spiritual Power

ELDER RENLUND: Exactly. I've been thinking about this apostolic challenge and how it can continue to grow. In light of our conversation, I believe we can add an element of spiritual power to this promise. Let's read in Ezekiel chapter 47:

"Afterward he [an angel] brought me [Ezekiel] again unto the door of the house [of the Lord]; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar.

"Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side.

"And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles.

"Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins.

"Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. . . .

"Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

"And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh" (Ezekiel 47:1-5, 8-9).

Ezekiel sees a river that increases as it flows from the house. The water that is moving forth from the temple

represents blessings that flow from the temples to heal families and give them life.

ASHLEY: But the water gets deeper as it gets farther away. That doesn't make sense to me.

ELDER RENLUND: Think of me (one person), my parents (two people), my grandparents (four people)—all the way back, and forward too. The growth of the river is similar to the exponential growth of our family through the generations.

The blessings of the temple are available to everything and everyone. And what blessings! "Every thing shall live whither the river cometh."

"She's Waited Long Enough"

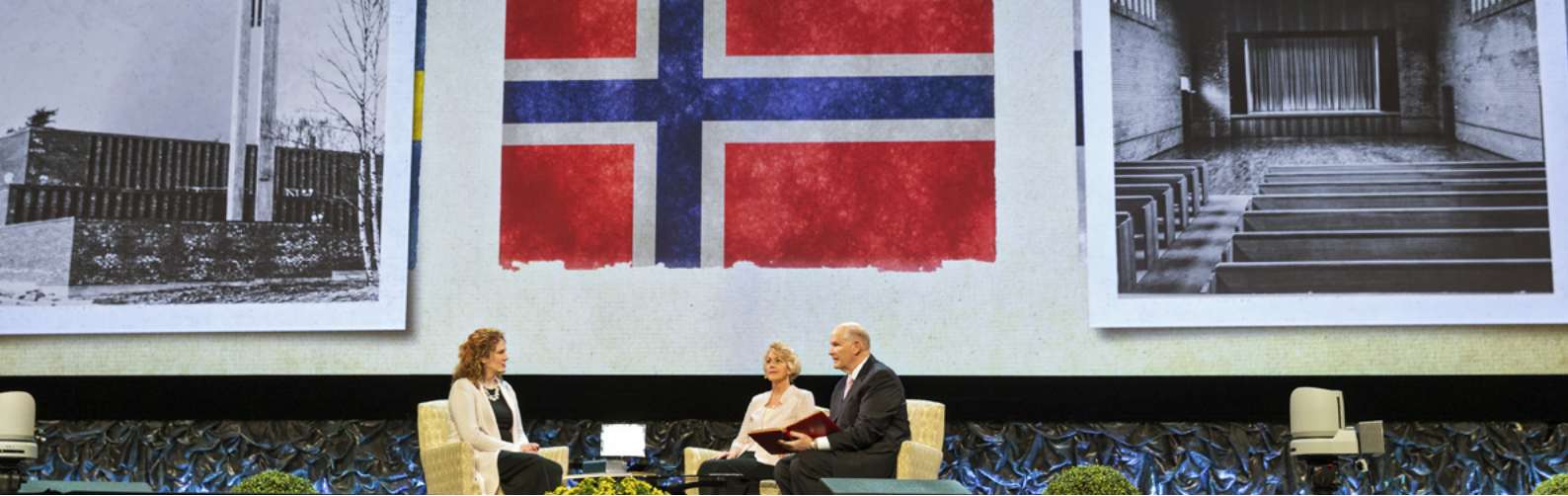
ELDER RENLUND: The Lord has a plan to overcome Lena Sofia's personal misfortune, our loss, your tragedy—in fact, everyone's calamity. He restored to the earth His priesthood and His sealing authority. Lena Sofia knew that, and so did my mom, Mariana.

SISTER RENLUND: You mean how she submitted Lena Sofia's name for temple work?

ASHLEY: I love that story. Shortly after Lena Sofia died in 1966, Grandma Mariana took her name in person to the Genealogy Department.³ The man behind the counter told her that Church policy stated that someone had to have been dead for at least a year before temple work could be done for that person. Grandma Mariana replied, "I don't like that answer. Let me talk to someone who can give a different one. She's waited long enough."

Grandpa Åke said that he tried to reason with her, but she gave him a look he knew very well—that another word on the subject would be pointless. Grandpa wrote in his journal: "I probably should feel sorry for the man downtown who said that nothing could be done for at least a year. That man just didn't know what he was up against. I could have told him, but he didn't ask."⁴

ELDER RENLUND: Less than two months later, with the authorization of the President of the Church, Lena Sofia's



and Leander's temple work was completed. Grandma Mariana and Grandpa Åke acted as proxies for Lena Sofia and Leander, who were sealed for time and all eternity in the Salt Lake Temple. And did you know that now it is Church policy that a person who has not been able to enjoy the blessings of the temple because of distance doesn't have to wait a whole year? That way, others like Lena Sofia can receive those blessings as quickly as possible. As Grandma Mariana told the man in the Genealogy Department, "They have waited long enough."

SISTER RENLUND: What a great day that was for your family! Think of the joy Leander and Lena Sofia felt, not to mention the joy their children felt. These blessings are the culmination of family history and temple work coming together, igniting the power we have talked about today.

I was recently reminded that Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles talked about this power. Years ago he started trying to encourage people to recognize the blessing of combining the two divine aspects of temple and family history.

Elder Bednar said: "Family history is not a program—and then we also worship in the temple. It's all gathered together in one in Christ. And there is a power in finding [your] own ancestors and taking your own family names to the house of the Lord. I've done that. I have worked with and spoken with hundreds and thousands of people who have done that work. And as good as it is as we're in the temple, it's even better when we have done the work to be able to perform those ordinances for our own kindred dead."⁵

ASHLEY: President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, also promised that we can see this power in our lives. He said, "While temple and family history work has the power to bless those beyond

the veil, it has an equal power to bless the living. It has a refining influence on those who are engaged in it. They are literally helping to exalt their families."⁶

A Promise of Protection

ELDER RENLUND: I feel grateful to add my testimony to theirs—to be one more apostolic voice in support of this temple challenge. I extend the promise of protection that has been offered in the past. Brothers and sisters, I promise protection for you and your family as you take this challenge to find as many names to take to the temple as ordinances you perform in the temple and to teach others to do the same.

If you accept this challenge, blessings will begin to flow to you and your family like the power of the river spoken of by Ezekiel. And the river will grow as you continue to perform this work and teach others to do the same. You will find not only protection from the temptation and ills of the world, but you will also find personal power—power to change, power to repent, power to learn, power to be sanctified, and power to turn the hearts of your family members to each other and heal that which needs healing. ■

From a presentation at the RootsTech 2016 Family History Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, on February 6, 2016. To watch a recording of the presentation in English, Portuguese, or Spanish, visit lds.org/go/217Renlund.

NOTES

1. Neil L. Andersen, "'My Days' of Temples and Technology," *Ensign*, Feb. 2015, 33; *Liahona*, Feb. 2015, 31.
2. Neil L. Andersen, in Ryan Morgenegg, "RootsTech 2015: Elder Andersen Adds to Temple Challenge," lds.org/church/news/rootstech-2015-elder-andersen-adds-to-temple-challenge.
3. Now known as the Family History Department.
4. Mats Åke Renlund, "Reflections," personal journal, 119.
5. David A. Bednar, in "The Turning of Our Hearts" (video), lds.org/topics/family-history/turn-our-hearts.
6. Russell M. Nelson, "Generations Linked in Love," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 93.



I followed my bishop's advice and paid the fine. I knew it was the right thing to do, but I was desperate to save money for a mission.

ILLUSTRATION BY ALLEN GARNIS

GIVING UP MY MISSION FUND

I joined the Church before my 21st birthday. I felt a strong desire to serve a mission, but I was in difficult circumstances. Because my father had left us, I was financially supporting my mother and three younger brothers. Almost all my money went to my family. At that time you needed at least £500 (U.S. \$615) before applying for a mission. After two years of saving, I still had only £250.

Financial setbacks occurred one after another. My younger brother got into trouble and was fined £240. My family was asking me to lend him the money—almost all I had. It seemed like a choice between a mission and my brother, even though he promised to pay me back when he could. I wrestled with it and sought counsel from my bishop. He advised me to help my brother. I followed his advice and paid the fine. I knew it was the right thing to do, but I was desperate to be able to go on a mission.

I thought it would take years to save the money again, but through humble

prayer, I received impressions about the future. The Spirit told me not to expect my brother to pay me back and that I would go on my mission the following year. It had taken two years to save the money I'd given to my brother, but the Lord was telling me I would have twice that by the end of the year.

I was doubtful but continued on, and every week for the next 10 weeks, a miracle occurred. A young single adult in the ward heard how I had given away my mission fund and gave me £100 for my mission. The next week another young adult gave me £100 for the same reason. I was humbled and started to repent for my unbelief.

Later, my employer was asking for voluntary redundancies (a financial incentive to employees who voluntarily resign). I volunteered but did not expect to be let go, as they had invested a lot of money in my training. My manager asked why I wanted to be laid off, so I explained about

my mission. He gave me a pay raise backdated for several weeks and accepted my submission for redundancy. He also gave me a bonus in my leaving package.

I found temporary work, which turned into a full-time job after two weeks. They also offered me weekend overtime. I accepted every Saturday. I submitted my mission papers shortly thereafter and was called to serve in the England London Bristol Mission. I had saved £2,500 in less than a year. I literally received 10 times the amount I had given away. In Luke 6:38 it reads: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

I know I was blessed for my obedience and faith in following my bishop's counsel. ■

Frederick John Holt, West Sussex, England

ILLUSTRATION BY JOSHUA DENNIS

FINDING PEACE IN THE SACRAMENT

As a young mother I struggled to find moments of peace during the hectic days when life revolved around caring for five active and demanding children. Five minutes here and 10 minutes there were all I managed to carve out, but I cherished each small slice of quiet.

Frequently I turned to my Heavenly Father in prayer, asking for strength, patience, and peace. Sundays were especially frantic with nursing a

baby, dressing a toddler, and supervising the older children in getting ready for church. Ironically, it was on a busy Sunday that I found my solution.

As I listened to the sacrament prayers that day, the words took on special significance: “. . . that they may always have his Spirit to be with them” (D&C 20:77).

I was entitled to have the Lord’s Spirit to be with me. How had I never

before realized the significance of that promise?

The sacrament became the quiet, contemplative moment in my otherwise noisy life. In the ordinance of the sacrament, I found the peace I had sought.

Though I might have left sacrament meeting with a squirming toddler after partaking of the bread and water, I made sure I was there for that special time of remembrance. I looked forward to those precious moments with a fervency I had never experienced before.

Now that my children are grown, I enjoy the luxury of many more quiet moments. Nevertheless, I still cherish those moments spent taking the sacrament. ■

Jane McBride, Colorado, USA

How had I never before realized the significance of that promise?



THE COMFORTING POWER OF CHRIST

Several years ago my friend Joseph was planning to drive from Utah to Washington, D.C., USA. He invited me to go with him for the road trip. Along the way we visited various Church history sites, and when we got to the East Coast, we drove to New York City.

We were there just two weeks after the tragic events of September 11, 2001. We felt strongly that we should visit the site where the Twin Towers had been destroyed.

We saw a soldier waving people through a crowded street as they

viewed the wreckage. He handed out tissues to dry people's tears.

Joseph and I could feel how deeply these events had hurt everyone, and we wanted to do something about it. We decided the best thing we could do was talk to people, listen to their stories, and perhaps share a message on the hope of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ with them.

On our way back to our hotel, we were traveling in the subway. Sitting across from me was a lady who was reading a book. I wondered what

was going on in her life. I introduced myself and told her that we were visiting New York. I said we were curious about her experiences with the recent events of September 11.

Her name was Maria, and she had lived in New York City for decades. She worked in a building a few blocks away from the towers. She told us that a few weeks before September 11, she had received a strong feeling that she should pray and ask if God was there. She said that up until that point in her life, she hadn't prayed much and



Maria told us that a few weeks before September 11, she had received a strong feeling that she should pray and ask if God was there.

TUTORED BY THE LORD: SINGLE PARENTHOOD

hadn't really felt like she needed to. She didn't feel an answer to her prayer until terrorists struck the towers on that fateful morning. Chaos and confusion ensued all around her, yet she suddenly felt calm. Maria told us that she felt this incredible peace and that, in spite of all the inexplicable destruction of the moment, she felt that God was there looking out for her.

After Maria shared this with us, Joseph and I told her that she had felt the Spirit of her Heavenly Father in the form of that special peace and comfort. We told her that she could always feel that peace, as she seeks Him in prayer and by searching the Book of Mormon. We gave her a copy of the Book of Mormon and told her that the book would bring her a continuation of the peace she had been seeking. She was very happy to receive it and thanked us.

I don't know what came next in Maria's story because Joseph and I had to get off at our stop, but I know that Heavenly Father loves each of His sons and daughters. I know He is in the details of our lives, especially when things seem to be going wrong all around us. He can provide unspeakable peace that comes from His Spirit, through the power of His Son, Jesus Christ. Christ's light can shine brightly through the thickness of any trial or tragedy because He has overcome it all. ■

Chris Deaver, California, USA

I had not planned on becoming a single parent of four children in my mid-20s and found myself reeling. I had a modest home to care for, four small children, and no post-high school education. I wondered how I would ever financially support my young family. My answers did not come in days or months but over many years of obeying one prompting after another.

Fortunately I had the habit of turning to the Lord in times of trouble. One night the answer came clearly: "Go to school." I wondered how this would be possible with the financial obligations I had, so I spoke to my parents and my bishop. They agreed that going to school was the right course, and within a few weeks I was enrolled at a local university, where I earned a degree in elementary education with a special education endorsement.

As a teacher, I was still not making enough money to meet the financial demands of my growing children. I continued to petition the Lord about the lack of funds. During a visit with my bishop, he recommended that I go back to school to obtain a master's degree. I went home, prayed about it, and enrolled back in school the following semester.

Several years later I was prompted to go back to school again. I scheduled the needed tests, interviewed for programs in educational

administration, and found myself enrolled, once again, in a master's program at another local university. Upon its completion, new employment opportunities opened up to me that have enriched my life with new relationships, fostered personal growth, and helped me discover new talents.

In the temple one night, I was sharing my frustration with the Lord that in spite of my efforts, I was still not able to consistently make ends meet. I felt the warmth of heavenly communication reminding me that all my family's needs had been met, either by my own work or by the generosity of others, and that as long as I remained obedient, we would be cared for. And as I am reminded by Alma 20:4, "I know, in the strength of the Lord [I] canst do all things."

I am so grateful to Heavenly Father for the promptings to complete my education and the consequent employment opportunities. I am also grateful for all those in my life who have been so thoughtful throughout the years. I've learned I can do more than I thought possible with the help of my Heavenly Father. Of equal significance, I've learned to receive graciously and to give generously. ■

Susan Kagie, Utah, USA

Finding Peace in **IMPERFECTION**

By Elizabeth Lloyd Lund

LDS Family Services

One of the misperceptions that we may struggle with during this earth life has to do with the concept of perfection. Many falsely believe that we must achieve perfection in this life in order to be saved or exalted.

As a therapist, I was once in a meeting with a woman when she burst into tears. She said, “How can I ever be good enough?” She went on to talk about how unworthy she was. As we explored her feelings, no great sin emerged from her past or present. She just felt she wasn’t good enough. She compared herself to neighbors, friends, and relatives, and everyone that she could recall was “better,” in her mind, than she was.

Thoughts Become Our Reality

I know that there are many who have had feelings of imperfection and insecurity, whether in a calling, as a

parent, or just in general. These feelings can cause us to hide our talents and hold back from others or feel discouragement, anxiety, or depression. Our thoughts about ourselves significantly influence our behaviors and feelings. Many of us say things to ourselves that we would never say to another person. This, in turn, holds us back from our true potential and diminishes our abilities and talents. President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) said, “Satan is increasingly striving to overcome the Saints with despair, discouragement, despondency, and depression.”¹

Fortunately, “the only opinion of us that matters is what our Heavenly Father thinks of us,” taught Elder J. Devn Cornish of the Seventy. “Please sincerely ask Him what He thinks of you. He will love and correct but never discourage us; that is Satan’s trick.”²

**To expect only
perfection now
would mean
denying ourselves
the opportunity
for growth.**

Imperfection Is an Opportunity

We are on earth to have joy, and part of that joy is what we create, what we believe, and what we accept. If we accept that we are flawed children of God who are learning as we go, we can accept our imperfections. Expecting immediate perfection would mean denying us the opportunity for growth. We would be



denying the gift of repentance and the power of Jesus Christ and His Atonement in our lives. Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “There was only one perfect being, the Lord Jesus. If men [and women] had to be perfect and live all of the law strictly, wholly, and completely, there would be only one saved person in eternity. The prophet [Joseph Smith] taught that there are many things to be done, even beyond the grave, in working out our salvation.”³ Our very imperfections may be a way through which God is preparing us to return to Him.

Weaknesses Can Become Strengths

Turning to our Heavenly Father in imperfection requires humility. This process is described in Ether: “If men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them” (Ether 12:27). When we are humble, our Father in Heaven will open His arms to us and help us learn from our weaknesses. An example of this is in the New Testament. As Paul struggled with the “thorn in [his] flesh,” he learned that this weakness had humbled him and brought him closer to God (see 2 Corinthians 12:7).

This humility and willingness to learn is exactly what we must apply to our own imperfections. We must learn from these weaknesses so they can become strengths.

There is also a difference between being humbled and feeling of little worth or value. Humility draws us closer to the Lord, while shame and guilt can drive us away from the Lord. God does not want us to denigrate ourselves and feel that we have little worth in His eyes. This is hurtful to Him and to us. It’s important to recognize that we are worth the time and effort it takes to change. Part of what this earth life is about is finding ways to change our weaknesses. Some weaknesses may be lifelong battles, while others can be overcome more quickly.

Several years ago I worked with a client, Rachel (name has been changed), who had a problem with drinking. It had become a crutch and a means to release the stress of her difficult life. She determined that she was going to overcome her addiction, and with some help and encouragement, she stopped drinking. Before fully overcoming her drinking problem, she didn’t belittle herself for her weakness. She recognized it. Then, with determination and the help of a good bishop, the Lord, and a few key people, Rachel determined that she would stop drinking. Last time I spoke with her, she reported no desire to drink.

In order to grow from our weaknesses, we must turn to the Lord with faith, hope, and an understanding that He will hold us in the palm of His hand. President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has counseled: “To the individual who is weak in the heart, fearful in the heart, be patient with yourself. Perfection comes not in this life but in the next life. Don’t demand things that are unreasonable. But demand of yourself improvement. As you let the Lord help you through that, He will make the difference.”⁴

Choose Happiness Now

In the midst of becoming better, we can choose peace and happiness now. Even in the midst of the darkest circumstances we can choose our attitude. Viktor Frankl, a well-known psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor, stated, “Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms—to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.”⁵

We are told, “Men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25). This does not mean that God will magically fill our lives with happiness. Happiness is a choice for most of us. It takes effort and the practice of gratitude, trust, and faith. The negative can take all the room in our lives if we allow it. We may not be able to change the circumstances in our lives, but we can choose

how we react to them. President Thomas S. Monson said, “We can’t direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails. For maximum happiness, peace, and contentment, may we *choose* a positive attitude.”⁶

As we choose to focus on the good, rely on the Lord and His Atonement, and accept and learn from our imperfections, we can remove unrealistic

expectations of ourselves and strive for goodness and happiness in our lives. We will be at peace with our imperfections and find comfort in God’s redeeming love. We will find joy in our hearts knowing that the plan of salvation can lead us back to our Heavenly Father as we make our best efforts, imperfect as they are, to be worthy to live with Him again. ■

NOTES

1. Ezra Taft Benson, “Do Not Despair,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1986, 4.
2. J. Devn Cornish, “Am I Good Enough? Will I Make It?” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 33.
3. Bruce R. McConkie, “The Seven Deadly Heresies” (Brigham Young University devotional, June 1, 1980), 6–7, speeches.byu.edu.
4. Russell M. Nelson, “Men’s Hearts Shall Fail Them” (video), mormonchannel.org.
5. Viktor E. Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning* (1959), 86.
6. Thomas S. Monson, “Living the Abundant Life,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Jan. 2012, 4.



Of choosing how to react to challenges, President Thomas S. Monson said, “We can’t direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails.”

Working Out Weaknesses, Sketching Out Faith

By E. Tracy Williams

It took me seven years to qualify to serve a full-time mission. When I first spoke with my bishop, Bishop Tapueluelu, about it, he gave me some guidelines to strive to live by. He said if I followed them and learned to be obedient, I would be blessed. The first few guidelines—daily scripture study and weekly church attendance—were pretty doable. “This is easy,” I thought. But I got offended when I was told to change certain “worldly” things in my life, and my pride and stubbornness got the best of me.

Hoping for an easier way out, I moved to four different wards and spoke with four different bishops. I even went back to school to pursue a medical degree. Then I felt prompted to drop everything and prepare once again to serve a mission. So I did. I went back to Bishop Tapueluelu and humbly asked for his help. I was told that

there was a weight requirement for missionaries—and I realized that I weighed over the limit. Immediately, feelings of discouragement and embarrassment cluttered my mind, but my bishop encouraged me. He expressed his love and faith in me and said, “My door is always open. We can work on it together! One weakness, one week at a time.”

So I visited with my bishop every week, working out one weakness at a time. I had no idea that I’d have to wait another four years, just trying to qualify to serve a mission.

Relying on the Savior

During those years, I strived to come closer to Christ and apply His teachings in my life. As challenges came, His Atonement became real to me. I relied on the power, comfort, and strength He gave me through His Atonement when my best friend

I had to learn how to rely on the Savior to overcome my weaknesses and build on my strengths, both while preparing for a mission and while I served.

passed away, when our family lost our home, and when I got into a car accident. When circumstances caused me to lose many of my friends, I fell into depression, but the Savior pulled me out. My Friday nights with friends were replaced with working out at the gym and studying about the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

I prayed every night for the people whom I would one day serve and even for my future companions!

I eventually qualified and was called to serve in the New Zealand Auckland Mission, Tongan-speaking.

Street Art and the Spirit

When I entered the missionary training center, I realized that there was more to learn about Jesus Christ and His Atonement and myself. Even though I'm of Tongan descent, I had never been to the South Pacific islands, and I struggled with the Tongan language. When I got to New Zealand, I had no idea what people were saying to me in Tongan. I had

so much to say, but because I couldn't speak the language, my words were few, simple, and broken. I nodded my head when people asked me questions. They laughed at me, and I laughed with them, but behind closed doors the laughter turned into tears of frustration and discouragement. I thought to myself, "I worked seven years to come out here for this?"

So I prayed to Heavenly Father. In Ether 12:27 we learn that our weaknesses can become strengths if we trust in Him. I told Him about my weaknesses and my trust in Him, and

I got back up again . . . and again . . . and again. I started to rely even more on Christ and also on my strengths.

I love this gospel and I love street art, so I decided to combine the two. I packed my scriptures, a sketchbook, charcoal pencils, permanent markers, and cans of spray paint in my backpack. My companions laughed and asked, "What are you doing with spray paint?" I explained, "I may not speak the language yet, but I can show others my testimony."

For the remainder of my mission, I used street art—on paper, not on buildings—and the Spirit to teach others about Christ. And as crazy as it sounds, it worked. Many people didn't want to hear my message, so I sketched it. Doors and eyes opened when I told them that I did graffiti. They didn't believe me. They timed me for three minutes, and I sketched the word *faith* while teaching them about it. Among them were many who felt judged and unloved. I could testify that with faith in Christ we can feel of His love and forgiveness, and He can help us change for the better. He did for me.

Seven years of preparation for my mission helped me find myself. That time allowed me to gain a testimony of Christ's Atonement and His power to help me overcome my weaknesses and use my strengths to share what I knew with others. In the end it was worth the seven years. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.





By Stephen W. Owen

Young Men General President

When I was 14, I made a decision that changed everything. I was walking down the street with some friends on a Friday night, and we were having a good time, just as we usually did. But tonight there was a problem, and I knew I had to do something about it. I just wasn't sure I could.

For the past couple of years, my friends had started experimenting with cigarettes and alcohol. It was slow at first, just a once or twice sort of thing, but by the time this Friday came, they regularly smoked and drank when we were out alone. I thought that as long as I just kept myself clean, I could still have a good time with my friends. Of course, my parents could tell something wasn't right with my friends. And my

friends could tell that my parents didn't approve of them. That left me in the uncomfortable middle: I found myself repeatedly defending my friends to my parents and defending my parents to my friends.

So there we were that Friday night, walking down the street. My friends started drinking and smoking, and I finally realized how uncomfortable I was with their behavior. So I made a choice. I walked to the other side of the road.

My friends laughed at me. They called me a "goody-goody." And they said that if I stayed over there, I wouldn't be their friend anymore. Well, we got to the end of the road. My friends turned left, and I turned right. I was two miles (3 km) from home, and they were the longest

At a CROSSROADS



with My FRIENDS

I found myself repeatedly defending my friends to my parents and defending my parents to my friends.

two miles I'd ever walked. You might think I would feel good about making such a courageous choice, but in that moment, I felt awful. I woke up the next morning with the terrifying realization that I had lost my friends and that I was now alone. For a 14-year-old, that was devastating.

A New Friend

Not too many days later, I got a phone call from a member of the Church I knew named Dave. He asked if I wanted to come to his house on Saturday night. He also invited me to join his family for dinner the next day. It sounded like a lot more fun than I was currently having with no friends, so I agreed.

Dave and I had a good time together—and, of course, there were no cigarettes or alcohol. As I listened to Dave's dad say the prayer at dinner, I felt so good. I began to think that maybe—just maybe—things were getting better.

Dave and I became best friends. We played football together, went to school together,

helped each other go on missions. When we got back, we were college roommates. We helped each other find the right women to marry and kept each other on the strait and narrow path all the way to the temple and after. All these years later, we're still good friends. And it all started with a simple phone call, right when I needed it.

A Mother's Influence

At least, that's how I thought it had all started. Imagine my surprise when, years later, I found out that it was my mom, working behind the scenes, who had orchestrated our friendship! Soon after I lost my old friends, she noticed something was wrong with me, so she

All along the road
are others who have
made their own diffi-
cult decision to be on
the Lord's side. They
will walk with you.

called Dave's mom to see if they could figure out a way to help. Dave's mom then coaxed Dave into contacting me and inviting me over. Sometimes promptings to help someone in need come from the Holy Ghost; sometimes they come from an angel—such as a mother—who “speak[s] by the power of the Holy Ghost” (2 Nephi 32:3).

I've often wondered how life might have been different—for me and for Dave—if my mom hadn't perceived my struggle and taken action. Doesn't that remind you of the way Heavenly Father blesses us? He knows about our every need, and He sends “blessings from above thru words and deeds of those who love” (“Each Life That Touches Ours for Good,” *Hymns*, no. 293).

We Walk Together

Ultimately, we are all responsible for our own choices. As President Thomas S. Monson has said repeatedly, “The choices we make determine our destiny,”¹ and many of those

choices must be made personally, individually. Often our decisions make us feel isolated, even lonely. But our Heavenly Father did not send us here alone.

The decisions I made at key moments blessed and guided my entire life. But those decisions were inspired and empowered by my mother's prayerful efforts and by Dave's support and friendship.

The test that we call earth life is different from the tests we often take in school—where you have to keep your eyes on your own test and you aren't allowed to help your neighbor. No, in this test, we can and must help each other; in fact, that's part of the test. So while your choices may at times take you to the lonely side of the road, please know that all along that road are others who have made their own difficult decision to be on the Lord's side. They will walk with you, and they need you to walk with them. ■

NOTE

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Choices,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2016, 86.



REACH OUT TO OTHERS

"I plead with you to have the courage to ... make certain everyone is included and feels loved and valued."

President Thomas S. Monson, "May You Have Courage," Apr. 2009 general conference



A photograph of the Salt Lake Temple, a large, light-colored stone building with a prominent central spire topped by a golden statue. The sky is blue with some clouds. The text "FIND, TAKE, TEACH:" is overlaid in large, black, sans-serif capital letters.

FIND, TAKE, TEACH:

Join the Temple
Challenge

*The challenge has been extended—
have you accepted it?*

By Carlisa Cramer

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has invited the youth to “prepare as many names for the temple as baptisms you perform in the temple, and help someone else to do the same.”¹ Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles also promised that participating in this Apostolic challenge can bring spiritual protection and healing for families.²

Think about it—Apostles of the Lord have encouraged everyone to join in family history work by taking their own family names to the temple. Wouldn't it be great if every ordinance you performed in the temple was for your own family? Elder Andersen has invited youth around the world to do just that *and* to help friends and family do the same.

As you accept this challenge, you can feel the Spirit, increase your testimony, and enhance your temple experience. Not sure how to start? Let's break the challenge down step by step:

FIND

First, find names to take to the temple and add them on **FamilySearch.org**. If you have over four generations complete, try FamilySearch's Descendancy view. Or if your family tree is pretty empty, you can start by checking out **FamilySearch.org/findnames**.

TAKE

After reserving and printing the ordinances through FamilySearch.org, then, with a recommend, you can take the names to the temple for baptisms and confirmations! Invite endowed family or friends to complete the rest of the ordinances, or submit them to temples through FamilySearch to have the work done.

TEACH

Share the joy of family history with those around you! Have a family history night with your friends, or sit down with your parents and siblings and fill out your family tree together. You can share your experience on social media using #TempleChallenge.

Are You Ready?

No matter your experiences with family history, there are many ways that you can participate in the challenge. Think about how you can help the Lord's work move forward today. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. Neil L. Andersen, “Is Anything Too Hard for the Lord?” (address at RootsTech conference, Feb. 14, 2015), [lds.org/topics/family-history](https://www.lds.org/topics/family-history).
2. See Dale G. Renlund, in “Opening General Session” (address at RootsTech conference, Feb. 6, 2016), [lds.org/topics/family-history](https://www.lds.org/topics/family-history).



“You are sons and daughters of God, children of the covenant, and builders of the kingdom. You need not wait . . . to fulfill your responsibility to assist in the work of salvation for the human family.”

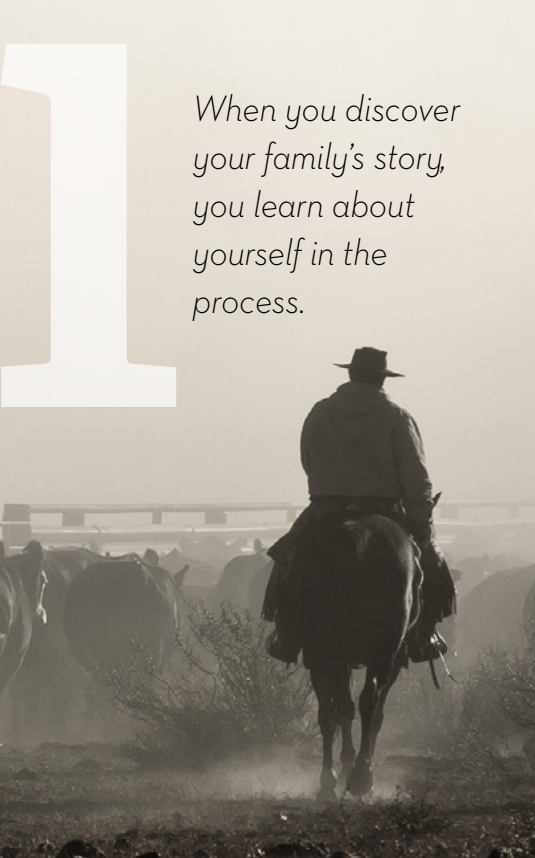
Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 26.

A CHALLENGE MET

“I'd heard the promises and blessings that would be given to me if I accepted the temple challenge, and so I decided to put those words to the test. I strongly felt the Spirit and I knew that on the other side of the veil, other spirits were just as excited.”

Wesley R., France

Accept, accomplish, and share the challenge at **[templechallenge.lds.org](https://www.templechallenge.lds.org)**. Share your experience with #TempleChallenge.



When you discover your family's story, you learn about yourself in the process.



THREE WAYS

TO BE INVOLVED IN FAMILY HISTORY

By Sally Johnson Odekirk
Church Magazines

When Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “Your fingers have been trained to text and tweet to accelerate and advance the work of the Lord—not just to communicate quickly with your friends,” he was talking about you! He then said, “I encourage you to study, to search out your ancestors, and to prepare yourselves to perform proxy baptisms in the house of the Lord for *your* kindred dead” (“The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 27).

Thousands of young men and young women all over the world have accepted his invitation to search out their ancestors and perform proxy baptisms for them. One young woman, Kaitlen D., discovered that when she takes family names to the temple, it becomes a more meaningful experience.

She says, “When I began doing family temple ordinances, I realized that in the midst of the raging world that I live in, the only time I was able to be still and settle myself was within the walls of that holy place. I also began to feel closer to those on the other side of the veil. When performing the baptisms and confirmations, I began to think of all those people who had been waiting for so long for this to happen. It’s a nearly indescribable feeling—full of love and hope—that has increased my testimony so much.”

There are many different ways to get involved in family history and temple work, so where do you start? Three youth share their experiences of learning about family stories, interviewing family members, and finding family names to take to the temple.

1

My Ancestors Are Good Examples to Me

By Kyle S., Texas, USA

My parents and I listened to Elder Bednar in the October 2011 general conference when he said that working on family history would give us protection against the adversary. We started working on our family history then. I keep learning and growing from family history; it's really fun.

I like finding out about where I'm from and about my ancestors. I learn from their experiences and use them in my life to help me be a better person. It's amazing to discover who they were, what they did for a living, what life was like, and how hard it was for them.

For example, I enjoyed learning about one of my ancestors who moved with his family from Tennessee to Texas, USA, in the 1870s to be a cattle rancher. He faced many challenges in his life, and from him I learned that life can be hard, so it's important to stand up for what you believe.

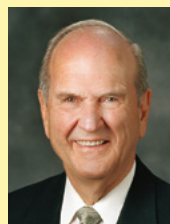
When I have challenges in my life, working on family history makes me feel like my ancestors are always with me and will help me through hard trials, just as Elder Bednar promised us.

How to Find Your Family Stories

Collect stories of what your ancestors liked to do.

Help make your ancestors come alive and find common ground with them. What sports did they play? What foods did they eat? What was their school like?

Talk to your parents and grandparents about stories from their lives. You can use the Church's *My Family* booklet to get started with gathering and sharing family stories. On FamilySearch.org, you can add photos, stories, sources of information, audio recordings, and documents to help others in your family get to know your ancestors. Visit FamilySearch.org and click "Memories" to get started.



HOW FAMILY HISTORY CHANGES US

"When our hearts turn to our ancestors, something changes inside us. We feel part of something greater than ourselves. Our inborn yearnings for family connections are fulfilled when we are linked to our ancestors through sacred ordinances of the temple."

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Generations Linked in Love," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 92.



Recording My Grandparents' Stories

By Matias M., Utah, USA

My grandparents live in Uruguay. When my maternal grandparents visited my family, I took the opportunity to interview them and learn about their story of how they became members of the Church. I had never heard their story before, so hearing the story from my grandparents was truly an amazing experience.

I took notes while interviewing them, and I also recorded them using my phone so that I could listen to it whenever I want to hear it again. I uploaded that audio file to FamilySearch so that others could benefit from listening to their story, both now and in the future.

A few months later I was able to record and upload an interview with my paternal grandparents. I learned so much that I hadn't known before, and they told me a lot more about their lives than what I expected.

It was so great to hear my own grandparents tell their story and to listen to some advice they had for me. I know that having just taken a few minutes to do these interviews will help me to “persuade [my] children . . . to believe in Christ” (2 Nephi 25:23) as the prophet Nephi in the Book of Mormon did for his descendants. I know that when my children hear my grandparents' testimonies, their testimonies will be strengthened also.

How to Interview Family Members

For a ward or branch activity, you and the other youth could interview older family members. Think of a question or two that you would like to ask your parents, grandparents, or other relatives. Then sit down with them, ask them a question about their lives, and film or record it on your phone. When you are done, you can upload it to the memories section of FamilySearch.org.

My Goal: Take 10 Family Names to the Temple

By Rajane S., Jamaica

I have always been fascinated by genealogy work, so when our Area Presidency gave the youth the goal of gathering 10 ancestors' names to do baptisms and confirmations for them at the temple, I was ecstatic.

I started my research without any help, but I wasn't getting anywhere. I had three names without any information, and at that point I felt stuck both spiritually and physically. I decided to ask my mother for help. She suggested that I call her mother. When I called my grandmother, she was more than happy to help. She even gave me permission to act as proxy on behalf of the names we talked about. I was overjoyed and grateful.

The temple trip was approaching, and I had no names from my father's side. A few hours before I was to leave home, I felt impressed to go to the cemetery and have my father call his aunt to come. We went to the cemetery, and as I watched my father and great-aunt walk around the cemetery, I felt myself being led toward some of my ancestors' headstones. I felt their willingness to be part of the gospel. With help from the Holy Ghost and from my family members, I had reached my target. I had the names of 16 temple-ready ancestors!

When I went to the temple, I could feel the enthusiasm and excitement of my ancestors who were ready and waiting. During the baptisms and confirmations, I could feel their souls filled with joy and peace. I felt amazing, and all I wanted to do was thank them for giving me the opportunity to be a part of something so special.

How to Find Your Family Names for the Temple

Try the Descendancy view at FamilySearch.org to help you look for ancestors who need to have their temple work done. Then take the youth temple challenge: see page 54 in this issue. ■

1 Corinthians 10:13

The Apostle Paul taught us how we are able to bear temptation.



TEMPTATION

“The adversary . . . knows where, when, and how to tempt us. If we are obedient to the promptings of the Holy Ghost, we can learn to recognize the adversary’s enticements. . . .

“Our success is never measured by how strongly we are tempted but by how faithfully we respond. We must ask for help from our Heavenly Father and seek strength through the Atonement of His Son, Jesus Christ.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2009 general conference.

GOD IS FAITHFUL

Faithful—trustworthy, loyal. We can trust God’s promises that He will help us bear and escape temptation.

A WAY TO ESCAPE

There’s always an escape—another choice, another place to go, another thing to do. When all else fails, follow the example of Joseph of Egypt and just run away (see Genesis 39:7–12).

ABOVE THAT YE ARE ABLE

We should try to avoid temptation. Sometimes we make it harder on ourselves by not rejecting temptation as soon as it arrives. As Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, “Of course Jesus noticed the tremendous temptations that came to him, but He did not process and reprocess them. Instead, He rejected them promptly. If we entertain temptations, soon they begin entertaining us!” (Apr. 1987 general conference).

13 There hath no temptation “taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be ^btempted above that ye are able; but will with the ^ctemptation also make a way to ^descape, that ye may be able to ^ebear it.

COMMON TO MAN

We may all have different temptations, but all are tempted. Temptation is necessary, for “it must needs be that the devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be agents unto themselves” (D&C 29:39).

ABLE TO BEAR IT

The scriptures give us some keys to help us in our responsibility to avoid temptation so we can bear it:

- Watch and pray always (see Matthew 26:41; Alma 13:28; 31:10; 34:39; 3 Nephi 18:18; D&C 31:12).
- Rely on Jesus Christ (see Alma 37:33), because “in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted” (Hebrews 2:18; see also Alma 7:11).
- “Humble yourselves before the Lord” (Alma 13:28) and “beware of pride” (D&C 23:1).
- “Hearken unto the word of God, and . . . hold fast unto it” (1 Nephi 15:24).

Editors’ note: This page is not meant to be a comprehensive explanation of the selected scripture verse, only a starting point for your own study.



**By Elder
Jeffrey R. Holland**
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

HOW TO CHANGE

When you have sinned and recognized the seriousness of your mistakes, your most crucial challenge will be to believe that you can change, that there can be a different you. To disbelieve that is clearly a Satanic device designed to discourage and defeat you. *Repentance* is not a foreboding word. It is, following *faith*, the most encouraging word in the Christian vocabulary. **You can change!** You can be anything you want to be in righteousness.

If there is one lament I cannot abide, it is the poor, pitiful, withered cry, “Well, that’s just the way I am.” If you want to talk about discouraging attitudes, that is one that discourages me. Please spare me your speeches about “That’s just the way I am.” I’ve

heard that from too many people who wanted to sin and call it psychology. And I use the word *sin* to cover a vast range of habits which bring discouragement and doubt and despair.

You can change anything you want to change and you can do it very fast. It is another Satanic falsehood to believe that it takes years and years and eons of eternity to repent. It takes exactly as long to repent as it takes you to say “I’ll change”—and mean it. Of course there will be problems to work out and restitutions to make. You may well **spend**—indeed, you had better spend—**the rest of your life proving your repentance by its permanence.** But change, growth, renewal, and repentance can come for you as instantaneously as it



did for Alma and the Sons of Mosiah.

Do not misunderstand. **Repentance is not easy or painless or convenient.** It can be a bitter cup from hell. But only Satan would have you think that a necessary and required acknowledgment of sin is more distasteful than permanent residence in it. Only he would say, “You can’t change. You won’t change. It’s too long and too hard to change. Give up. Give in. Don’t repent. You are just the way you are.” That, my friends, is a lie born of desperation. Don’t fall for it. ■

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on March 18, 1980.

OUR SPACE



TITHING AND AN UNEXPECTED BLESSING

I had been a member of the Church for only one month when I paid my first full tithe. I was the only member in my family, and tithing was difficult for my family to understand. My mother discouraged me from paying tithing and wanted me to give her the money instead.

One day before work, I realized that there was no food in the refrigerator and I'd have to buy something to eat. I didn't have any money with me, so I asked my mom to lend me money for lunch. She refused and said I didn't have money because I had paid my tithing.

I went to get my Book of Mormon and told her that this book would give me my nourishment for the day—spiritual nourishment. I opened it in front of my mother and found 100 pesos (enough to buy some lunch) tucked inside. It was a miracle—I hadn't put that money in my scriptures. I learned a great lesson: although challenges and temptations are everywhere, I will always be blessed as I pay a full tithe and keep the commandments. ■

Montserrat L., Federal District, Mexico

TIME FOR THE TEMPLE

As soon as I turned 12, I received my first temple recommend. I'll never forget that first temple experience. The peace I felt was so unique. Though my home in southern Taiwan was four hours from the temple, I decided to go once a month on our stake temple day. I went even if no one could accompany me.

Soon I started inviting my Church friends to go with me. Though they didn't show much interest at first, now they go every month. Many people

in the ward also started going to the temple. Now no matter how often our ward plans a temple trip, many people come—more than our stake has ever seen before.

Soon after my decision to attend monthly, my family decided to go every month. Even if we have tests at school the day after our temple day, my family and I attend regularly. I've been frequently attending the temple with my family for seven years now. The temple is the house of the Lord,

and we know the importance of going to the temple. ■

Chi-Yun Liu, Tainan, Taiwan

Submit your favorite scripture or faith-building experience at liahona.lds.org or email it to liahona@ldschurch.org. Include the name of your ward and stake and your parent's permission to publish it.

“How do I make time for Church activities, family home evening, and scripture study when homework takes so much time?”

Imagine eating nothing but ice cream every day. Sounds pretty great—until your body doesn’t feel so good. But can you be healthy by eating only broccoli? No, good health requires a balanced variety of foods.

Now think about the many activities in our lives. Our spirituality, relationships, and education are *all* key to our growth. So how do you prioritize the important things?

Look at what’s most important to you right now and pray to know what to focus on. Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles encourages, “Keep foremost in mind the sacred covenants you have made with the Lord as you write down your daily schedules.”¹ Everything works out when you put the Lord first.

Remember that “some things are better, and others are best.”² Seek the Holy Ghost to help you decide what is most important. You might comfort a crying sibling before doing homework, but going to Mutual may come before seeing a movie with your friends. You might also identify distractions in your life. How about spending time with the scriptures *before* your Facebook friends?

Above all, don’t forget to rely on the Lord for energy so that you can “walk, and not faint” (see Isaiah 40:31).

NOTES

1. M. Russell Ballard, “Keeping Life’s Demands in Balance,” *Ensign*, May 1987, 14.
2. Dallin H. Oaks, “Good, Better, Best,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 105.

Just Do It

If you just say, “Oh, I’ll do it when the time comes,” Satan will tempt you to never do it. Put time aside to do these spiritually uplifting activities, even if it means turning down other activities.

Allison R., age 20, Utah, USA

Make Time for Things That Matter

If we can’t make time for the gospel, it means that we are doing too much and need to cut back a little bit. We need to plan activities around the gospel and our duties. This way we will have time for the gospel and the things that truly matter.

Noah H., age 13, Arizona, USA



Study Scriptures First

I do scripture study before doing homework. When you do scripture study before your school studies, you’ll be more awake, and you’ll retain more of the information. With the weekly activities, you just need to plan those into your week first—then squeeze in everything else around them.

Elder Clark, age 20, Chile Concepción South Mission

Plan Your Time

It hasn’t been easy planning my time as a student. But I drew a timetable

to plan my weekly activities, which involves classes, morning devotionals with my roommates, personal scripture study, institute classes, and others. I also place them on a scale in order of importance. Planning my activities helped me overcome procrastination.

Daniel A., age 19, Edo, Nigeria



Remember the Eternal Things

I try to remember my mom's words: we should give priority

to eternal things, which last forever (unlike temporal things, which only last for a while). I have learned that when I give priority to God, all other things fall into the place where they ought to be. I am sure that when we do God's work, God will help us do our work.

Vaishali K., age 18, Andhra Pradesh, India

Work Smart

When I get home from school, I do my homework assignments so that I will not get behind and so I will have more time for Church activities. One thing that also helps is when my mother makes up a schedule with time slots for each thing that I will do every day. That makes it easier for me to participate in activities, do homework, and read the scriptures.

Rachel O., age 13, São Paulo, Brazil



Create a Schedule

When you first wake up, you can read your scriptures, even if it is just a few verses. That might mean waking up five minutes earlier to read your scriptures. For family study, set a time with your family during which you can all take a break from what you are doing and study together. As for youth activities, the time is already set, so just go and bond with the youth in your ward.

Elena F., age 15, Idaho, USA



Put the Lord First

Learning to set priorities helps us have time for everything we need to do, mainly for the things of the Lord. One of my main priorities was to attend seminary every day. If I attended seminary in the morning and then went to school, the day seemed to have more than



THE SOURCE OF STRENGTH

"Strength comes not from frantic activity but from being settled on a firm foundation of truth and light. It comes from placing our attention and efforts on the basics of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. It comes from paying attention to the divine things that matter most."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "Of Things That Matter Most," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 22.

24 hours. Schoolwork was easier, and reading the scriptures personally and as a family became a delight. Remembering to put the Lord first in our lives helps us see everything else with a new perspective and helps us set priorities and reach our goals.

Bianca S., age 19, Paysandú, Uruguay

UPCOMING QUESTION

"How can I ask my friends not to talk unkindly or inappropriately about others?"

Submit your answer and, if desired, a high-resolution photograph by March 15, 2017, at liahona.lds.org (click "Submit an Article") or by email to liahona@ldschurch.org.

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

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

WHEN THE PLAN

BECAME REAL

*Suddenly the plan of salvation was more than just a flow chart—
it was the source of my hope and comfort.*



By Alissa Holm

“Write down all of your talents, and pick one to tell us about,” Sister Jensen said to our Laurel class. I proudly explained that volleyball was my greatest talent and that our next season—my last year of volleyball—was going to be the best one yet.

“Talents come in many forms. Some are spiritual gifts,” Sister Jensen taught. “I think that Heavenly Father has blessed me to be able to love everyone around me.”

Sister Jensen radiated love everywhere she went and shared her testimony in everyday conversations. Her love was genuine, kind, and Christlike. She had become more than a Young Women leader to me—she felt like a second mother, a sister, or a best friend during my high school years. We went to concerts together, went shopping together, and made strawberry jam together. She brought me homemade pudding when I got my wisdom teeth pulled, and she liked to visit me at the snow-cone shack where I worked. She worked at my school, so she went to all my volleyball games too.

A few months later, near the end of summer vacation, I woke up at 3:00 a.m. to the phone ringing. My mom answered and then came to my bedroom. “The Jensens were in a car accident coming home from their family reunion,” she said. “The car rolled off the freeway, and Sister Jensen didn’t make it.”

My heart sank. “This isn’t real,” I thought. “She texted me earlier today. How could she be gone now?”

I felt shocked, confused, and sad all at the same time. After a few minutes, the tears came, and my mom held me while I cried. Sleep was impossible, so I lay there with my thoughts and tears for the rest of the night.

In the coming weeks, I dropped into a sadness I’d never felt before. Volleyball wasn’t a priority, and I no longer looked forward to starting the school year. Everything I was so excited about before was now buried by sadness. “I feel completely overwhelmed with grief,”

I wrote in my journal one night. “I can’t stop crying and I’m always tired.”

The night before the first day of school, I lay in bed crying and thinking about Sister Jensen’s death. I was sick of being sad, and I realized that I needed help to overcome the pain. I needed to pray.

“Please help me understand why she died and how I can cope with this,” I prayed.

I knelt there in silence, wondering if He would answer. After a few minutes, my mind started making connections between everything that had happened. My heart felt warm and my mind felt elevated. I realized that these thoughts weren’t my own; the Spirit was teaching me.

The plan of salvation—the flow chart I’d been taught since Primary—was *real*. Sister Jensen was born, she experienced happiness, she endured trials, she shared her love, and now she was in the spirit world. Her spirit still existed, and I *would* see her again. I realized that this plan, the plan of *happiness*, was designed to help us return to our Heavenly Father, to our families, and to our friends. In that moment, I wanted more than anything to live righteously so I could see her again.

During those first few weeks of school, I focused on trying to develop Sister Jensen’s talent of loving everyone. As I concentrated on loving other people, my pain began to slowly subside and I felt happier. I learned that we can show our love for others in many ways—by listening to them, by smiling at them, by taking them a treat, or by complimenting them. These are the small things that Sister Jensen did for me, so the best way to keep her memory alive was to spread her kind of love.

Although Sister Jensen died, I will always feel her love. As I strive each day to show a little more love for other people, I’m living the kind of life she did—and taking one step closer to seeing her again. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

Me? A Bully?

By Merillee Booren

Based on a true story

“Be ye kind one to another” (Ephesians 4:32).

It had been a great day at school. Jeff had spent all recess playing dragons with his best friend, Ben. After two years at his new school, Jeff was glad to finally have a best friend. Ben liked the same things as Jeff did, and they always had lots to talk about.

When Jeff got home, he saw Mom waiting for him. She didn't look happy at all. His smile faded away. “Jeff,” Mom said, “I got a call from the principal today. She said you’ve been bullying a boy in your class.”

“I have not!” Jeff said. He knew that being a bully was wrong. A bully made people sad and afraid. Jeff had never done anything like that.

“Are you sure?” Mom asked. She made room on the couch for Jeff. “The principal said you and Ben told Sam to go away, that he’s not in your club, and that he can’t join unless he jumps off the top of the slide.”

Jeff looked down. Sam asked to play with them almost every day. But *Ben* was his best friend, and they liked playing by themselves. That didn’t mean he had been a bully, did it?

“Is it wrong for Ben and me to play alone?” Jeff asked. It didn’t seem fair that someone called him a bully just for playing with his best friend.

“You two can still spend lots of time together. But when Sam is around, it’s wrong to make him feel left out and alone. The principal said you called Sam names for not jumping off the slide.”

“I did not!” Jeff said. But Ben had. And *he* had laughed.

“Remember how you felt when we first moved?” Mom asked.

Jeff nodded. School had been really lonely at first. He had prayed a lot to find a good friend.

“What do you wish people had done?” Mom asked.

“I wished they’d invited me to play games at recess. Or sit with them at lunch.”

“Isn’t it amazing that you have such a good friend now?” Mom said. “You can be someone who helps people who are lonely, like you used to be. I’m going to give you a challenge. Tomorrow I want you to find out three cool things about Sam. Then tell me after school.”

“I can probably do that,” Jeff said, staring at his shoes. He hadn’t meant to be a bully. He wanted to be kind like Jesus. Tomorrow he could tell Sam he was sorry. And he could tell Ben that he wanted Sam to play too.

“Hey,” said Mom. She tipped Jeff’s chin up. “You are a good, kind boy. Sam would be lucky to have you as a friend. And guess what? I bet you’ll find out you’re lucky to have Sam as a friend too.”

Jeff smiled a little. Ben could still be his best friend. It wouldn’t hurt to have another friend too. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

KINDNESS CHALLENGE

- ☐ Find out three cool things about someone you don’t know well.
- ☐ Think what Jesus would do. Hum a Primary song like “If the Savior Stood Beside Me.”
- ☐ You don’t have to be best friends with everyone, but you can choose to be kind. Do something nice for someone you don’t get along with.



Sharing Love with Friends

By Devan Jensen, Utah, USA

Hi!

My name is Rentalyn.

I live on the island of Weno in the Pacific Ocean.

It's one of many islands in the Chuuk Lagoon.

I show my love for my friends by dancing with them,
singing with them, and inviting them to church.



SONGS OF LOVE





My friends and I like to sing together. My favorite songs are "Kindness Begins with Me," "I Am a Child of God," and "I Love to See the Temple." I love my family, and I want to go to the temple to be sealed with them.

INVITING MY FRIENDS

I invite my friends Demina and Sina to church, and sometimes they go with me. I hope they will get baptized someday.



RENTALYN'S TIPS FOR SHOWING LOVE

-  Invite friends to church.
-  Have fun singing and dancing together.
-  Stay close to your family.
-  Become friends with the missionaries.

A DANCE ABOUT FRIENDS

My friends and I are learning ballet from Sister Hardy, one of the missionaries. We are practicing a ballet about a girl named Lily who got lost on an island and needs her friends to show the way.



VISITING MY COUSINS

I love my cousins! I travel by boat to visit them on the island of Romanum. My uncle and cousins drive the boat. They drive the missionaries between islands too.



HELP FILL THE WORLD WITH LOVE!

How do you follow Jesus by showing love? Send us a heart with your story and photo, along with your parent's permission. Submit it through liahona.lds.org (click "Submit an Article") or email liahona@ldschurch.org.

Multiplication Master

*The test was coming.
But Luca had a plan.*



By Jessica Larsen

Based on a true story

"Love the Lord and do your part"

(Children's Songbook, 9).

Nine times seven is 63. Six times eight is . . . 42? No, that's not right!

Luca furiously erased his answer.

"Time!" Luca's teacher called. "Everyone hand in your tests."

"Oh no!" Luca thought. "But I'm not even done!"

Luca sighed as he handed in his test. He had to get a 90 percent on his timed tests to pass his multiplication tables and become a class Multiplication Master, but he just didn't know how he was going to do it!

"Once I wanted to learn how to do the monkey bars, but I fell. So I tried again, but I fell again. I could only get to the third bar. I prayed to Heavenly Father to help me be brave. After my prayer, I felt ready to try again. This time I made it to the fourth bar! Then the fifth! I was getting better! I knew Heavenly Father would help me be brave enough to keep trying so I could get better."

Lily S., age 7, Arkansas, USA



That night during family scripture study, Dad read from the Doctrine and Covenants: "Therefore, if you will ask of me you shall receive; if you will knock it shall be opened unto you" (D&C 6:5).

Luca's head popped up. That was the answer! Prayer!

Luca started praying every day to do well on his timed multiplication test. This would work. It *had* to work. He would finally become a Multiplication Master!

On Tuesday, Luca came home from school and grabbed his basketball.

"Do you need help studying?" Mom asked.

"Nope! I've got it taken care of!" Luca said as he ran out the door. He believed so much in prayer that he didn't even take out his flash cards to practice his math.

On Friday, Luca knew he was going to pass the test. But when he sat down to take it, the answers just didn't come, and he did even worse than before!

Luca walked home from the bus stop with his head down. He had prayed so hard to be a Multiplication Master. Why didn't Heavenly Father answer his prayer?

When he got home, he shot baskets until Dad came home from work. Dad honked the car horn as he pulled up.

"How was school?" Dad asked.

"Not very good," Luca said, looking down. "I can't pass my multiplication test."

"I'm sorry to hear that," Dad said. He held up his hands for a pass.

"I should have passed!" Luca said. "I prayed and everything. Dad, you said that Heavenly Father answers prayers. He definitely didn't answer mine today!"

"Did you practice with your flash cards?" Dad asked. "No."

"Did you study at all?"

"No," Luca said. "But I prayed all week!"

Dad dribbled the ball and looked at Luca. "Well, multiplication is kind of like basketball. How did you get so good at basketball?"

"I practiced," Luca said.

"Yes, and so when we pray for Heavenly Father to help you before your games, we're not praying for Him to magically make you a better basketball player. What do we pray for?"

"For me to remember what I practiced," Luca said.

"That's right. Prayer works best when we do our part and also ask Heavenly Father to help us," Dad said.

"So my part is studying my flash cards?"

Luca asked.

"Exactly," Dad said, passing the ball back to Luca.

Luca heaved a big sigh and took a shot. The ball bounced off the rim. "OK. It's going to take a lot of work. But I guess I can study hard *and* ask Heavenly Father to help me."

"There you go!" Dad said. "So, are you ready for a little one-on-one?"

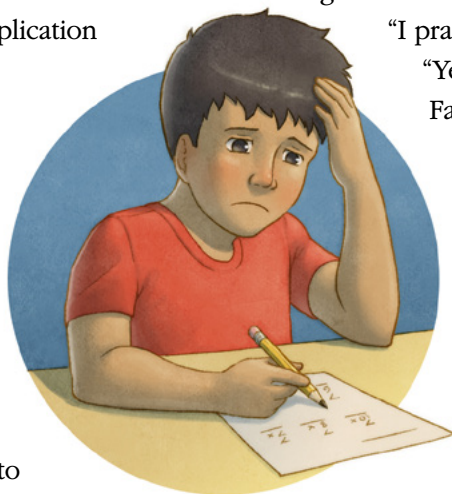
Luca grinned and stole the ball from Dad. "Sure! As long as you help me study at the same time."

"You're on," Dad said. "Six times eight is?"

"Forty-eight!" Luca said, taking another shot. This time it swished through the hoop.

Between practice and prayer, he would become a Multiplication Master after all. ■

The author lives in Texas, USA.





By Elder Gary E. Stevenson
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

What are priesthood keys?

Priesthood keys aren't keys you can touch or hold in your hand, like car keys. A priesthood key is the authority or permission to act in Heavenly Father's name. Priesthood keys let Church leaders direct how the priesthood is used on earth.



Jesus Christ has all of the priesthood keys. When the Church was restored, He gave priesthood keys to Joseph Smith to act as His prophet. The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have these keys today.



The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles direct how the priesthood is used to bless Heavenly Father's children. They delegate, or give, some priesthood keys to bishops and branch presidents.

Because priesthood keys are on the earth, we can be baptized and confirmed, receive a priesthood blessing when we are sick, and be sealed in the temple.



Locked Out!

It was freezing outside, and the cold air bit the cheeks and noses of the Stevenson family. After a fun day of skiing, they walked through the snow toward their car. They looked forward to getting in the car to warm up with the heater.

But when Elder Stevenson reached into his pocket, the car keys were gone! “Where are the keys?” he thought. Everyone anxiously waited for him to unlock the car. Without the keys, they were locked out! They couldn’t open the door or start the car. They couldn’t turn on the heater.

The first thing Elder Stevenson did was say a prayer. He asked Heavenly Father to help them find the car keys. Next he thought as hard as he could about where he might have dropped them. He then remembered a ski jump he had gone off earlier in the day. “Maybe the keys are there in the snow,” he thought.

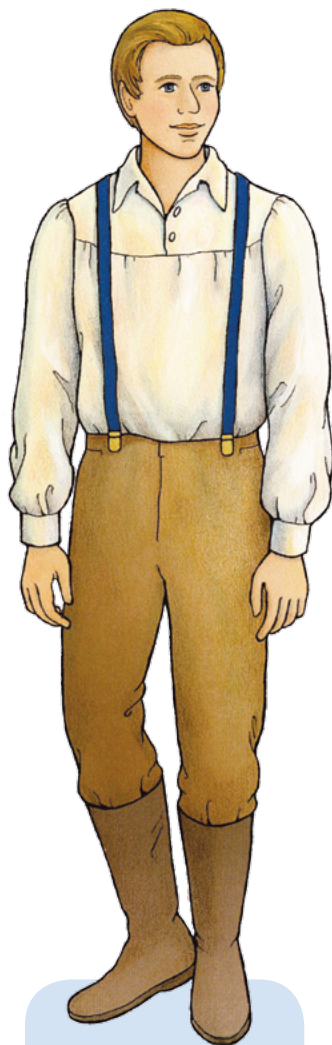
Some of the family went back with Elder Stevenson to the top of the ski slope and skied down the run. By the time they got to the bottom of the ski jump, the sun was starting to go down. They searched for the keys as it grew darker. To their amazement, they found the keys just before it got too dark!

Praying and finding the keys to their car reminded Elder Stevenson that Heavenly Father will not leave us standing in the cold. He gives priesthood keys and authority to leaders of the Church to help lead us all safely home to Him. ■

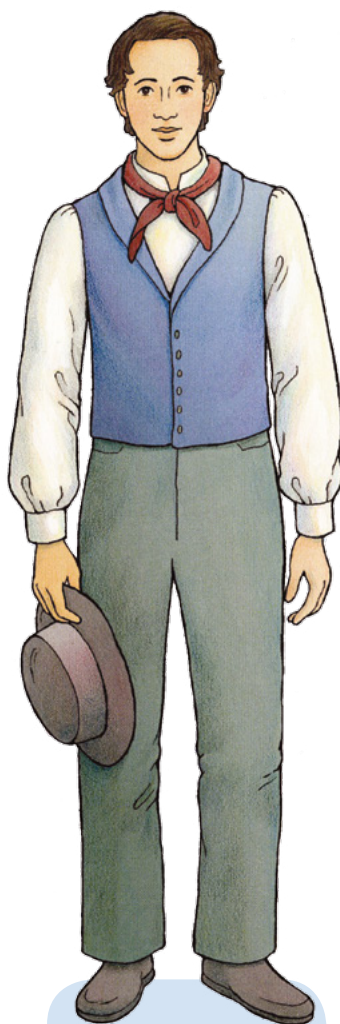


Baptism and the Priesthood Restored

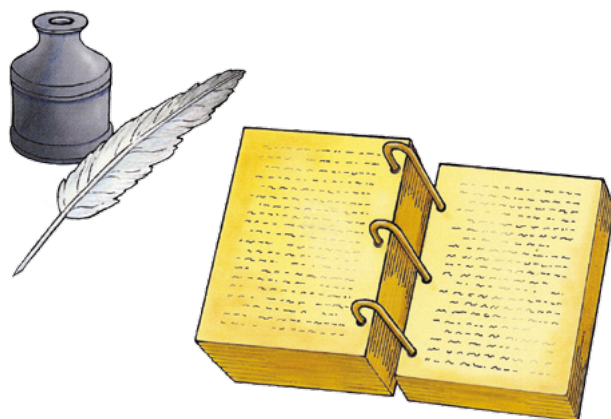
Use these scripture figures to share Church history stories!



Joseph Smith



Oliver Cowdery



Oliver Cowdery helped Joseph Smith translate the Book of Mormon. While Joseph Smith translated the scriptures out loud, Oliver wrote the scriptures down. When they read about being baptized, they asked God how baptisms were supposed to happen. In answer to their prayer, John the Baptist came and gave them the Aaronic Priesthood and taught them. Joseph baptized Oliver, and then Oliver baptized Joseph. Later, Peter, James, and John gave Joseph and Oliver the Melchizedek Priesthood.

CONFERENCE QUOTE CARDS

Here are some of our favorite quotes from October's general conference!

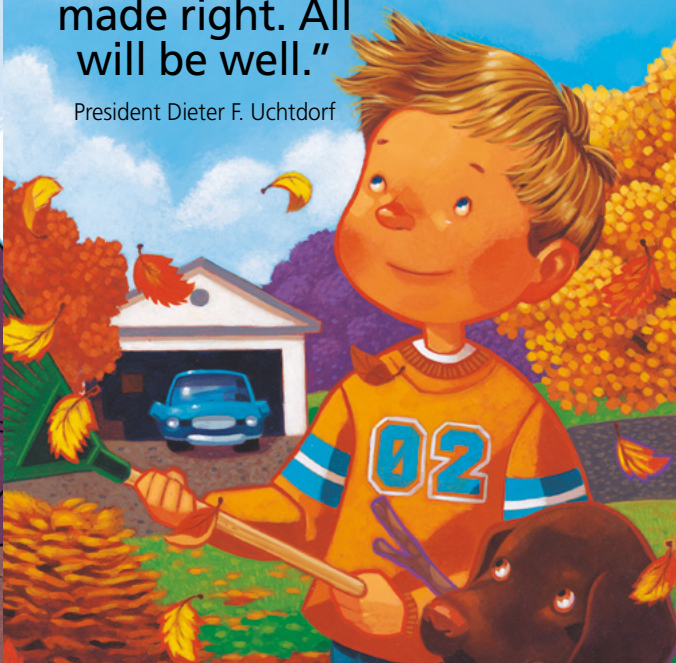
"Heavenly Father knows and loves each of you, and He is always ready to help."

Elder Ronald A. Rasband



"All will be made right. All will be well."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf



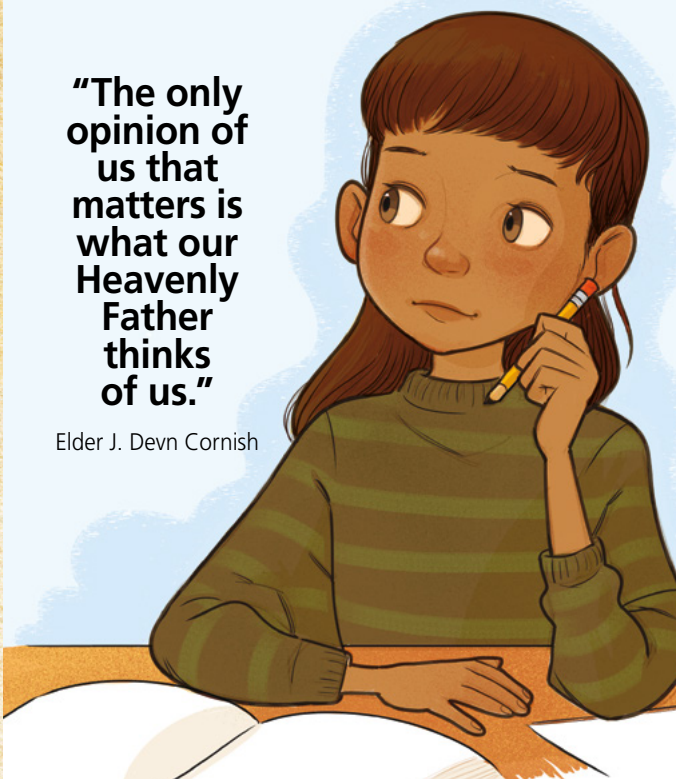
"Prayer is a gift from God. We need never feel lost or alone."

Sister Carol F. McConkie



"The only opinion of us that matters is what our Heavenly Father thinks of us."

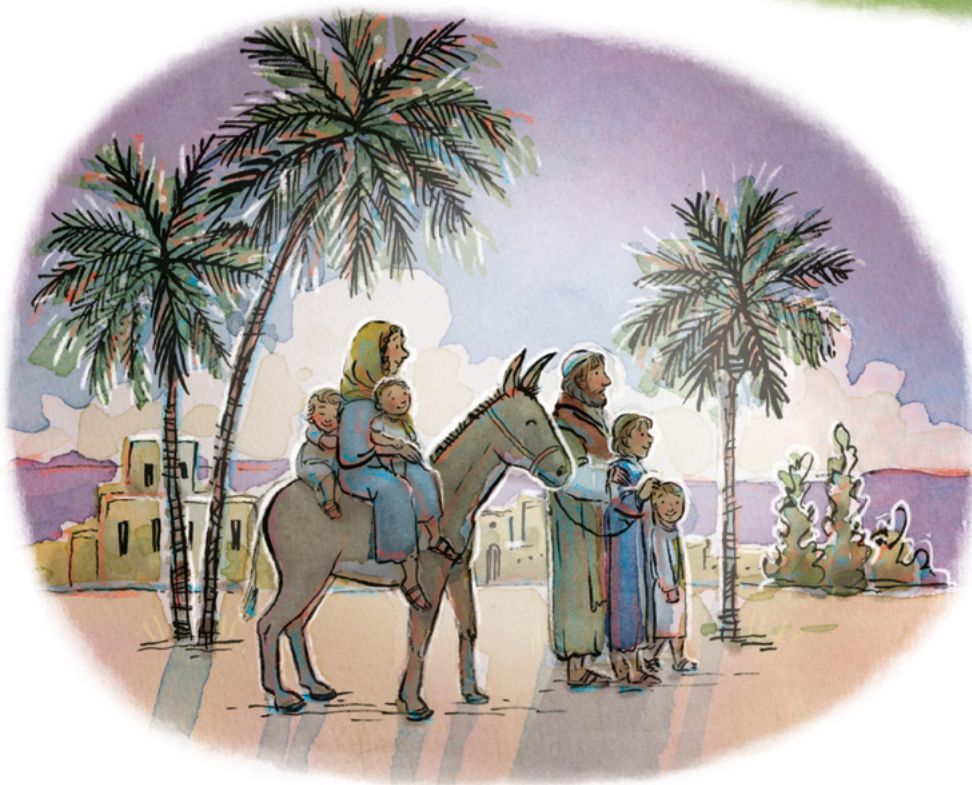
Elder J. Devn Cornish



When Jesus Was a Child

By Kim Webb Reid

When Jesus was a child, He lived with Mary, Joseph, and His brothers and sisters. He learned from His family and His Heavenly Father to be wise and strong.



Every year Jesus and His family went on a long journey to Jerusalem. They went there to celebrate a holiday called Passover.

One year, when it was time to go home, Mary and Joseph thought Jesus was traveling with friends. After a day, they noticed He was missing. Where was Jesus?



Mary and Joseph hurried back to the city to look for Jesus. They found Him at the temple. He was teaching men about the scriptures and answering their questions. The men were surprised that He was so wise.



Jesus said He had stayed at the temple to serve His Heavenly Father. We can learn about the scriptures and tell others about Jesus. Then we will be serving Heavenly Father too! ■

From Luke 2:41-52

I Can Show Love for Others





By Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933)

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

THE PARABLE OF THE UNWISE BEE

How many of us are wiser than the unwise bee?

Sometimes I find myself under obligations of work requiring quiet and seclusion. . . . My favorite retreat is an upper room in the tower of a large building. . . . The room is somewhat difficult of access and relatively secure against human intrusion. . . .

I am not always without visitors, however, especially in summertime; for, when I sit with windows open, flying insects occasionally find entrance and share the place with me. . . .

A wild bee from the neighboring hills once flew into the room, and at intervals during an hour or more I caught the pleasing hum of its flight. The little creature realized that it was a prisoner, yet all its efforts to find the exit through the partly opened casement failed. When ready to close up the room and leave, I threw the window wide and tried at first to guide and then to drive the bee to liberty and safety, knowing well that if left in the room it would die as other insects there entrapped had perished in the dry atmosphere of the enclosure. The



more I tried to drive it out, the more determinedly did it oppose and resist my efforts. Its erstwhile peaceful hum developed into an angry roar; its darting flight became hostile and threatening.

Then it caught me off my guard and stung my hand—the hand that would have guided it to freedom. At last it alighted on a pendant attached to the ceiling, beyond my reach of help or injury. The sharp pain of its unkind sting aroused in me rather pity than anger. I knew the inevitable penalty of its mistaken opposition and defiance, and I had to leave the creature to its fate. Three days later I returned to the room and found the dried, lifeless body of the bee on the writing table. It had paid for its stubbornness with its life.

To the bee's shortsightedness and selfish misunderstanding I was a foe, a persistent persecutor, a mortal enemy bent on its destruction; while in truth I was its friend, offering it ransom of the life it had put in forfeit through its own error, striving to redeem it, in spite of itself, from the prison house of death and restore it to the outer air of liberty.

Are we so much wiser than the bee that no analogy lies between its unwise course and our lives? We are prone to contend, sometimes with vehemence and anger, against the adversity which after all may be the manifestation of superior wisdom and loving care, directed against our temporary comfort for our permanent blessing. In the tribulations and sufferings of mortality there is a divine ministry which only the godless soul can wholly fail to discern. To many the loss of wealth has been a boon, a providential means of leading or driving them from the confines of selfish indulgence to the sunshine and the open, where boundless opportunity waits on effort. Disappointment, sorrow, and affliction may be the expression of an all-wise Father's kindness.

Consider the lesson of the unwise bee! ■

From the Improvement Era, Sept. 1914, 1008–9; punctuation and spelling standardized.

往前是人多許有必

我們望主
的殿能看
神的訓
我們的道
教訓是
行的循
律法必
出於安
寧
民國九年九月
於臺北
畫

畫



MANY PEOPLE SHALL GO (DEPICTION OF THE
TAIPEI TAIWAN TEMPLE), BY CHIN TAI CHENG

"And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the
God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the
law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (2 Nephi 12:3).

Also in This Issue

FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Finding Peace in **IMPERFECTION**

Often in life, we feel like we're not good enough. But our imperfections can allow us to choose joy through growing, progressing, and finding strength in weakness.



p. 44

FOR YOUTH



p. 54

FIND, TAKE, TEACH: TAKING THE TEMPLE CHALLENGE

You've thought about it. You've learned about it. Now is the time to dive into family history and temple work. Here are a few tips to get you started.

FOR CHILDREN

What are priesthood keys?

Priesthood keys aren't *real* keys. But they do unlock many blessings—like baptism, for example—for us! Read how.



p. 72