

FEBRUARY 2021

Liahona

Pointing Us All to Jesus Christ



THE WORTH
OF EACH SOUL
IS GREAT

ENCOURAGEMENT FROM LEADERS

Through Repentance and Baptism, We Can Experience Forgiveness and God's Love, pages 8, 16

PRISON MINISTRY

Messages for and about Those Who Are Incarcerated, pages 32, 36



Vestland, Norway

Small villages dot the coast of Vestland, a county in southwest Norway that is also home to Bergen, the second-largest city in the country. The Church has been in Norway since the first baptism took place in 1851.



4,564 members



20 congregations



2 stakes, 1 mission

Studying Together

"We love how *Come, Follow Me* helps us as we study the scriptures together," says Tor Martin Løvstad, shown with his wife, Tove. They are members of the Bergen Ward.





“Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God.”

DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS 18:10

Compassion for Those Affected by Crime and Incarceration

A woman in her 20s pulled her long hair into a tight ponytail. Across the back of her shirt was stamped the word *Inmate*. Upon introduction, she warmly invited me to call her Ella (name has been changed). As the prison Church services began, I wondered why she was in prison and why she decided to come to a Church meeting today. Over the next few hours I learned the answers to my questions.

Ella was incarcerated for selling drugs. Addicted at the age of 15 and arrested several times over the next five years, she was now serving a seven-year term. As a group we talked about our faith in Jesus Christ. I asked Ella why she had come to worship services today.

Her reply came quickly: "Sisterhood," she said. "I'm a daughter of God, these are my sisters, and this is my Relief Society group."

Ella's words brought tears to my eyes as I reflected upon the strength of her testimony and the love God has for her.

Over the years, I have visited with many people who are or who have been incarcerated. Many are trying to change and rebuild their lives upon the teachings of Jesus Christ. Through these visits, I have learned that anyone can discover God's eternal plan and feel inspired to grow.

In this issue, you can read how the gospel can still bless the lives of incarcerated members (see pages 32, 36). The digital version of this issue also includes a few personal stories on this topic.

As you read, I hope you will feel the love God has for all His children and discover for yourself how you can increase in your compassion for those who are in prison, their families, and others affected by crime.

Sincerely,



Doug Richens

Church Manager of Prison Ministry



“It is wonderful to know that our Heavenly Father loves each of His children. We are of great worth to Him.”

—*Brother Jan E. Newman, page 16*

FEATURE

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

February 2021
Vol. 45 No. 2
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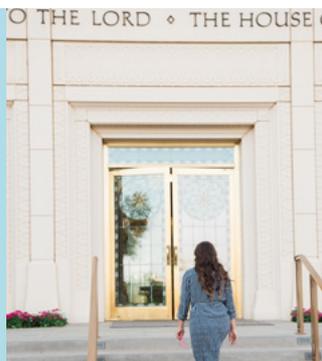
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God Told Us to Be Baptized

Jesus Christ set an example of being baptized by someone with God's authority.



While we don't have a lot of details about the personal life of Jesus Christ, we do know that He was baptized when He was about 30 years old (see Luke 3:23). Here are some things we learn about baptism from His example.

For Every Person

If we are old enough and mature enough to tell the difference between right and wrong, Heavenly Father wants us to be baptized (see Doctrine and Covenants 18:42). Jesus was perfect, but He still chose to be baptized to follow God's commandments (see Matthew 3:13–17; 2 Nephi 31:7). Even those who already died can accept baptism. We offer it to them by being baptized for them in temples. (See Doctrine and Covenants 128:15–18.)

Done by Authority

Jesus didn't get baptized by just anyone. He specifically went to His cousin John, who had priesthood authority from God. After Jesus died and His disciples were killed, that priesthood authority was lost from the earth. Then, in 1829, John the Baptist appeared to Joseph Smith and gave him authority to baptize in God's name. Because of that restoration, we can be baptized with that same authority today.

A Two-Way Promise

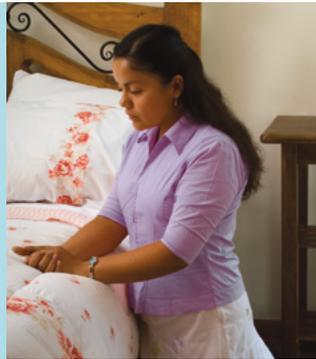
Baptism includes a two-way promise, or *covenant*, between us and God. We promise:

1. To take upon ourselves the name of Christ.
2. To always remember Him.
3. To keep His commandments.

In return, God promises that His Spirit will always be with us. The words of the sacrament prayers remind us of this covenant each week. (See Doctrine and Covenants 20:77, 79.)

HELPS FOR PARENTS

If you are helping a child get ready to be baptized, see the article on page 22.



Receiving the Holy Ghost Is an Important Part of Baptism

After Jesus was baptized, the Holy Ghost appeared in the form of a dove (see 2 Nephi 31:8). Today, after people are baptized, they are *confirmed*. This means they receive a special blessing in which they are invited to receive the spiritually cleansing gift of the Holy Ghost (see 2 Nephi 31:17). The Holy Ghost can warn us of danger, comfort us, guide us to make good decisions, and help us feel God's love (see Doctrine and Covenants 39:6).

We Can Always Repent

God knew that we would make mistakes every day. Despite our best efforts, we would sin and fall short of living up to our baptism promises. So He gives each of us the chance to repent. (See Doctrine and Covenants 18:13.) Every day we can do our best to apologize and right any wrongs. We can pray and ask for God's forgiveness. Then, when we take the sacrament with a humble heart, we can have the Holy Ghost with us (see 3 Nephi 18:11).

What Do Scriptures Say about Baptism?

Parents should help their children prepare for baptism (see Doctrine and Covenants 68:25).

Those younger than eight years old don't need to be baptized (see Moroni 8).

When we are baptized, we promise to "mourn with those that mourn; ... comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places" (Mosiah 18:9). ■

WORDS TO REMEMBER

We hope you've enjoyed learning about *baptism*. Here are other gospel words from this issue:

Repentance: When we turn away from sin and choose to follow God instead. (See pages 8, 10.)

Calling: Through inspiration, Church leaders ask members to help with an ongoing assignment. (See page 25.)

Three Witnesses: Three people who heard the voice of God and saw the gold plates that Joseph Smith was translating into the Book of Mormon. (See page 28.)



The Gift of Forgiveness

The Savior stands with open arms to forgive all who truly repent of their sins and come unto Him.



By Elder Neil L. Andersen

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

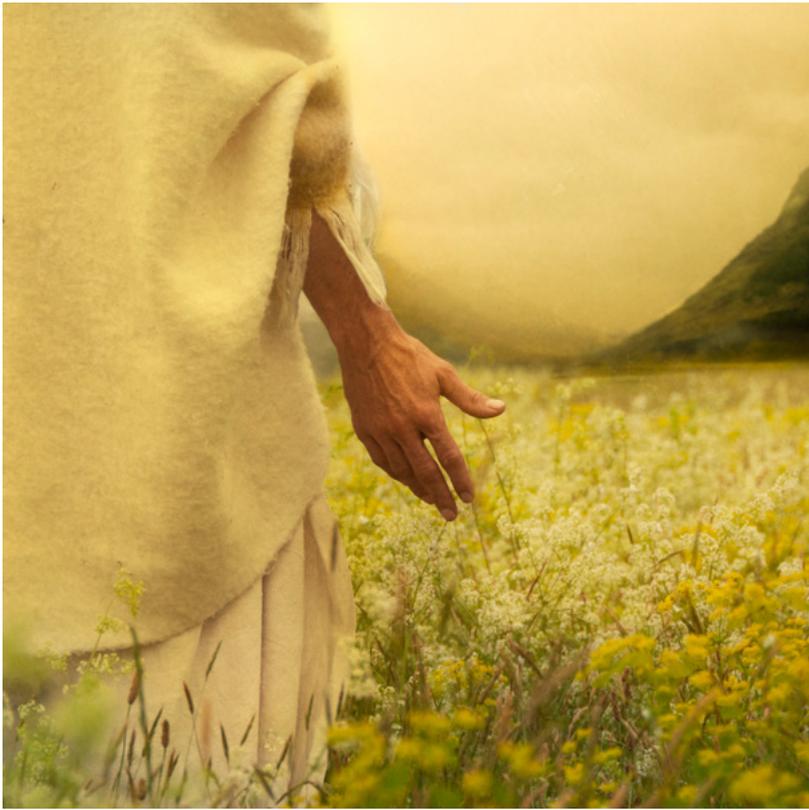
Lasting happiness and joy come through faith in our Heavenly Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ. All that is good and beautiful, all that is holy and sacred, comes from Them. That includes forgiveness, which refreshes our soul and confirms where we stand with Them.

In our premortal world, we rejoiced with the opportunity to come to earth, receive a mortal body, and become more like our Heavenly Father (see Job 38:4–7). We knew, however, that we would experience disappointment, sickness, pain, injustice, temptation, and sin.

These challenges were anticipated in the Father's plan of redemption, and He called upon His Only Begotten Son to be our Redeemer and Savior. Jesus Christ would come to earth like no other, and through His righteousness, He would break the bands of death. As we choose to follow Him and repent of our sins, He eliminates, through His infinite Atonement, our mistakes and sins found in the book of life.

Prayer and Faith

Our repentance, followed by forgiveness from the Savior of the world, is the foundation of our prayers and efforts to return to our heavenly home. For each of us who has faith in Jesus Christ, our daily prayers, our efforts to follow the Savior, and our partaking of the sacrament regularly as we willingly take His name upon us combine with our desire to leave behind the pulls of the world and step by step come closer to our Savior.



As Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: “If we choose . . . the course of discipleship, we will . . . move from what may be initially a mere acknowledgment of Jesus on to admiration of Jesus, then on to adoration of Jesus, and finally to emulation of Jesus. In that process of striving to become more like Him . . . , we must be in the posture of repentance.”¹

Repentance becomes a continual thought, a constant effort. President Russell M. Nelson has said:

“Nothing is more liberating, more ennobling, or more crucial to our individual progression than is a regular, daily focus on repentance. . . .

“. . . Experience the strengthening power of daily repentance—of doing and being a little better each day.”²

In prayer we review the happenings of the day, asking, “Where did I see the Lord’s hand in my life? How did my actions reveal honesty and unselfishness? What more could I have

done? What thoughts and emotions do I need to control? How could I have better followed the example of the Savior? How could I have been more kind, more loving, more forgiving, and more merciful toward others? In what ways was I less than my Heavenly Father would want me to be?”

Then we pause and listen. Our personal prayers open the window to personal revelation from our Heavenly Father.

With faith in Jesus Christ, we openly acknowledge to our Heavenly Father our mistakes, oversights, and unthoughtful actions toward others. We humbly ask for forgiveness, listen to the quiet impressions of the

Spirit, and promise our Heavenly Father that we will be more attentive to those things we can improve. We confess our sins and we forsake them (see Doctrine and Covenants 58:43). We restore that which we can restore to those we have hurt or offended. It may be an apology to a spouse or a child, a message to a friend or coworker, or a resolve to follow a neglected spiritual impression.

Our partaking of the sacrament and our frequent attendance at the temple, when possible, magnify and bolster our faith in Jesus Christ and our desire to follow Him.

“Come unto Me”

In 3 Nephi, it is amazing how often the resurrected Savior Jesus Christ connects the word “repent” to the words “come unto me.”

“*Repent* of your sins, and *come unto me* with a broken heart and a contrite spirit” (3 Nephi 12:19; emphasis added).

“*Repent* of your sins, and be converted. . . .

“. . . If ye will *come unto me* ye shall have eternal life. Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will *come*, him will I receive; and blessed are those who *come unto me*” (3 Nephi 9:13–14; emphasis added).

“Whoso *repenteth* and *cometh unto me* as a little child, him will I receive. . . . Therefore *repent*, and *come unto me* ye ends of the earth, and be saved” (3 Nephi 9:22; emphasis added).

Jesus also spoke of those who, by choice or circumstance, no

longer attend places of worship. He said, “Unto such shall ye continue to minister; for ye know not but what they will return and *repent*, and *come unto me* with full purpose of heart, and I shall heal them” (3 Nephi 18:32; emphasis added).

President Nelson has declared, “Jesus Christ . . . stands with open arms, hoping and willing to heal, forgive, cleanse, strengthen, purify, and sanctify us.”³

We, of course, will want to do all we can. Our remorse, our resolve to change, and our broken heart, contrite spirit, and godly sorrow are all important. We will desire to change our behavior and make restitution to those we have hurt.

Forgiveness Is a Gift

We must remember, however, that the divine gift of forgiveness can never be earned; it can only be received. Yes, commandments must be obeyed and ordinances observed to receive forgiveness, but personal effort, no matter how great, pales in comparison to the cost of redemption. In fact, there is no comparison.

Forgiveness is a gift, and the only One who can give the gift is the Redeemer and Savior of the world, Jesus Christ (see Romans 5:1–12 and especially 15–18; see also Romans 6:23; 2 Corinthians 9:15; Ephesians 2:8). He offers His priceless gift willingly to all who turn to Him to receive it (see Doctrine and Covenants 88:33).

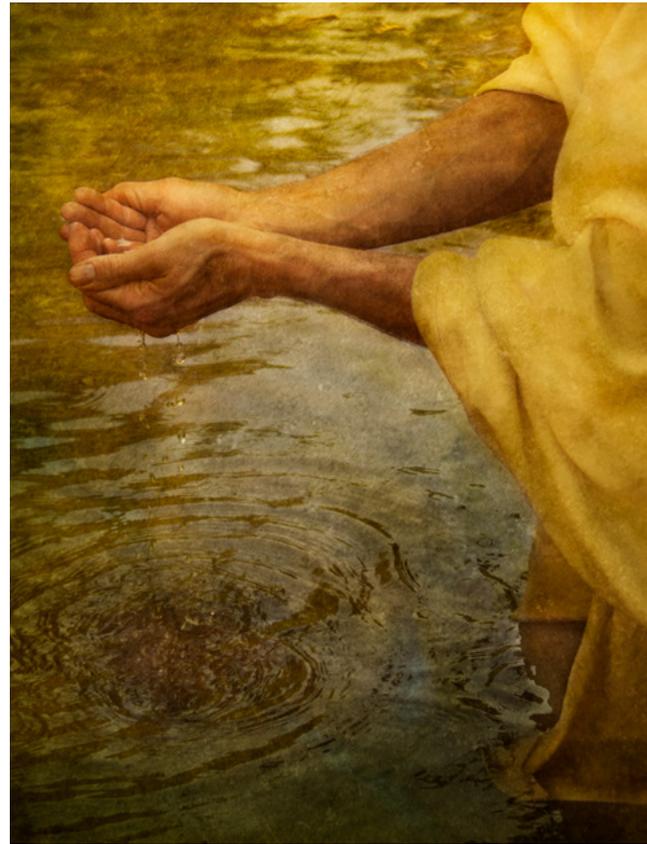
As President Nelson has said, “[The Savior’s] Atonement [is able to] redeem every soul from the penalties of personal transgression, on conditions that He [has] set.”⁴

Let us rejoice in the journey! Our Heavenly Father has given us these words of truth: “If ye will repent, and harden not your hearts, then will I have mercy upon you, through mine Only Begotten Son; . . . [and you] shall have claim on mercy through mine Only Begotten Son, unto a remission of [your] sins; and [you] shall enter into my rest” (Alma 12:33–34).

As one of the Lord’s Apostles, I promise you that these words of our Father are true. As you embrace them in your life, the Savior will shape forever the divine destiny awaiting you. ■

NOTES

1. Neal A. Maxwell, “Testifying of the Great and Glorious Atonement,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2001, 12.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “We Can Do Better and Be Better,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 67.
3. Russell M. Nelson, “We Can Do Better and Be Better,” 67.
4. Russell M. Nelson, “The Creation,” *Ensign*, May 2000, 84.



THE PROMISE OF CHRIST’S ATONEMENT

“Save for the exception of the very few who defect to perdition, there is no habit, no addiction, no rebellion, no transgression, no apostasy, no crime exempted from the promise of complete forgiveness. That is the promise of the atonement of Christ.”

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Brilliant Morning of Forgiveness,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 20.

A Fulness of Joy

Name withheld, Utah, USA

It is hard to describe the amazing joy that filled my soul as I left the clinic that day.

While sitting in a medical clinic waiting room, I noticed a mother with her daughter. The child wore a face mask and coughed many times. Her eyes were sunken, and her face was pale. I couldn't help but feel sorry for her. Her mother looked worn-out.

The waiting room was small, so I heard everything she said. After she paid her co-pay for their visit, the receptionist reminded her of a

past-due balance that was more than double what her current visit cost.

The woman explained, with difficulty controlling her emotions, that she would not have any spare money until the following month. She said she barely had enough to pay her rent. The receptionist told her she should try to pay off her balance as quickly as possible. The woman and her child were then ushered into the back for their appointment.

As I sat there, I couldn't stop thinking about the woman and her situation. I am by no means wealthy, but when I thought about how good the Lord has been to my family and me, I felt an overwhelming desire to help this woman and her daughter.

I approached the receptionist, wondering if what I wanted to do was

even possible. I explained that I had overheard the woman's predicament and wanted to pay her remaining balance. The receptionist was surprised but also delighted to honor my request.

I asked her to tell the woman that the balance had been paid and that she no longer need worry about it. I also told the receptionist not to say who had paid it. Then I paid the balance and continued with my appointment. I did not see the woman or her daughter again, but I prayed that things would soon improve for them.

It is hard to describe the amazing joy that filled my soul as I left the clinic that day. No wonder the Savior speaks about having a fulness of joy (see Doctrine and Covenants 11:13). More than ever before, I knew that I wanted to be more like my Savior and to experience more often the joy that comes from serving Him. ■





Karina Guerra

Oregon, USA

"I know I just need to keep moving forward and get closer to Heavenly Father each day. This is the way I'm going to be with my children forever."

DISCOVER MORE

- Read Karina's story at ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/22113.



Finding the Strength and Courage to Fly

By Cristian Gabriel Iraheta Portillo, San Salvador, El Salvador

As children of God, our divine nature gives us the potential to fly spiritually.

A short while ago, a pair of doves began building a nest in a tree in my garden. I watched as they gathered small branches to create what would eventually become their home.

A few days later, I saw empty eggshells on the grass. Two beautiful chicks had hatched. They grew so fast that soon they were almost as big as their mother.

One morning I watched as one of the chicks, standing at the edge of the nest, made several attempts to fly. Finally, the baby dove took off, flying to the roof of our home. Within a few days, this brave dove was taking flight with its mother.

The other chick, meanwhile, would watch from the nest. Perhaps thinking that one day it would join them. I had my doubts. This baby dove didn't seem to have a desire to fly.

To my surprise, however, a few days later I found the chick walking in the grass below the nest. Apparently, it had tried to fly. For several days afterward, the chick made many clumsy attempts to fly. Finally, it succeeded, flying back to the nest and from there into the sky.

As children of God, our divine nature gives us the potential to fly spiritually. We may, however, make the mistake of measuring our progress the way I initially measured the progress of the reluctant baby dove with the progress of its sibling. When we compare our spiritual

efforts to others we consider more valiant, we may think we are not making progress.

The adversary also wants us to think that we can't progress spiritually. He wants us to believe that only temporal things matter, so he tempts us with distractions such as the fashions and vain things of the world.

During our earthly probation, we go through many trials, tribulations, and failures. But our Heavenly Father has told us, "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest" (Joshua 1:9). When we fall short, the Lord expects us to keep trying, to remember our potential, and, like the chick, to keep our sights on heaven. ■

What If I Hadn't Gone?

By Patricia E. Brockett, Oregon, USA

The experience cemented in my mind and soul the reason I needed to be there that evening.

I almost talked myself out of going that evening. I knew that a night of remembrance might help me cope with the loss of my mother, but I also knew that the evening would bring tears as I continued to grieve and mourn her passing.

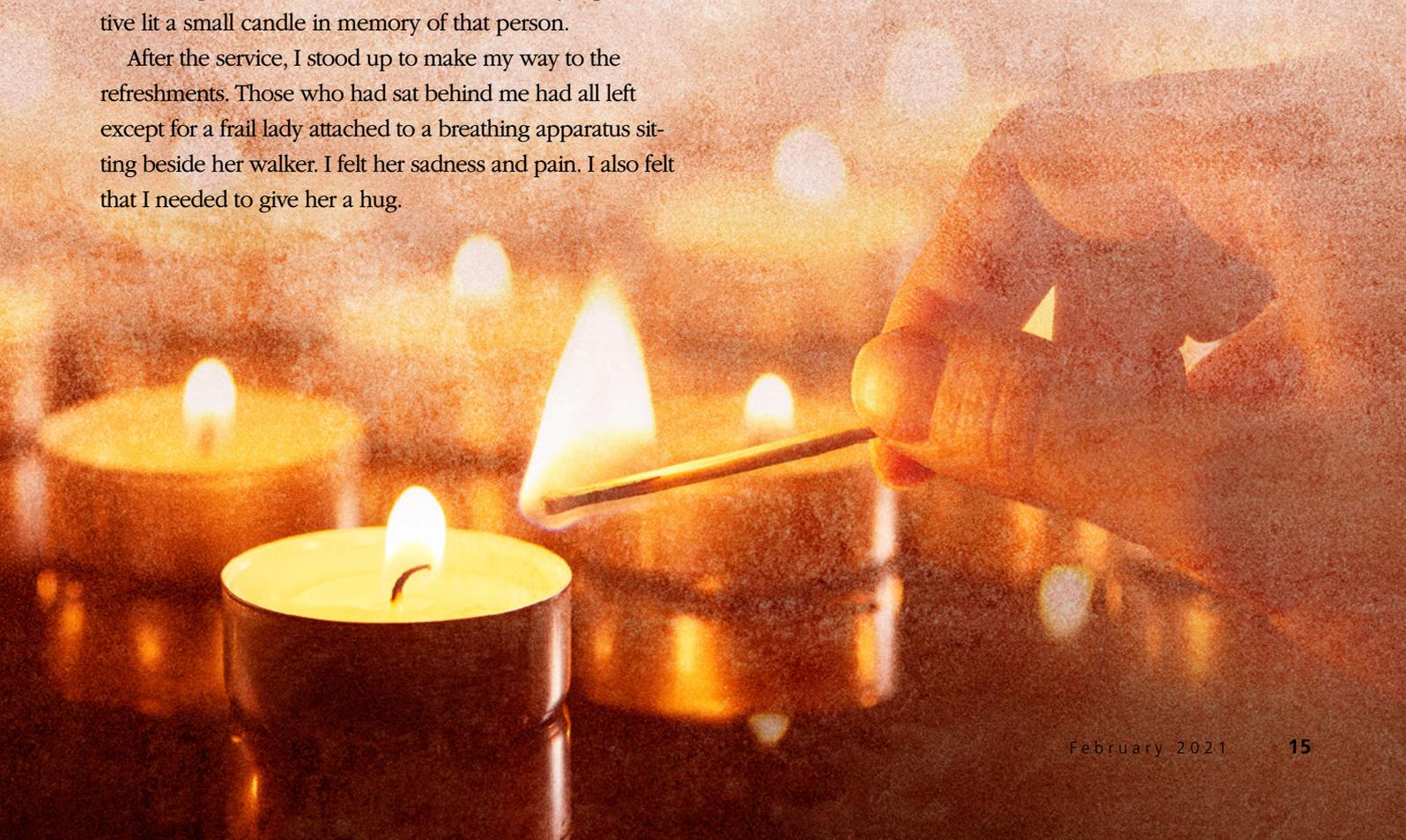
As the hour for the night of remembrance drew near, I found myself getting ready to go despite my earlier hesitations. I had decided that being there would be good for me.

The night of remembrance, which honored several people who had recently passed away, was held by the funeral home that handled my mother's burial arrangements. Other than the funeral home director and his family, I knew none of the people in the room. During the evening, each deceased person's name was read, and a family representative lit a small candle in memory of that person.

After the service, I stood up to make my way to the refreshments. Those who had sat behind me had all left except for a frail lady attached to a breathing apparatus sitting beside her walker. I felt her sadness and pain. I also felt that I needed to give her a hug.

I did not know how she would feel about a stranger giving her a hug, but I followed this simple prompting. I came up to her with my arms outstretched. She reached both her arms toward me and pulled me down to her. She kissed my cheek and said, "Thank you for knowing I needed a hug. You are an angel." We then visited for a few moments.

This experience cemented in my mind and soul the reason I needed to be there. Would someone else have given this woman a hug that evening if I had not gone? I will never know, but I do know that I was prompted to hug her, and because I did so, we were both richly blessed. ■





**By Brother Jan E. Newman**Second Counselor
in the Sunday
School General
Presidency

The Worth of Each Soul

Why are we of so much value to our Heavenly Father?

Recently I felt impressed to reconnect with a family whom my companion and I had taught and baptized when I was a young missionary nearly 40 years ago in Brussels, Belgium. It had been quite some time since I had spoken to any of them.

Through the marvel of today’s technology, I looked up the mother of this family on social media. I was able to have a wonderful video chat with her. We reminisced about the sacred experiences we had shared years ago as her family learned about the restored gospel.

She was not in the best of health, and circumstances had separated her from her family. As we talked, I sensed the deep love that Heavenly Father and the Savior have for this good sister. I sensed her great eternal worth, even though she has somewhat drifted from the Church. I expressed my love for her and testified that God loved her and was mindful of her. Tears filled our eyes as we expressed our love for each other. We committed to communicate

more often. I was so grateful an all-knowing and loving God had inspired me to reach out to my dear friend that day.

The “Why” of God’s Love

When Nephi was questioned by an angel concerning the condescension of God, he humbly replied, “I know that he loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things” (1 Nephi 11:17). I have often wondered how Nephi came to understand this simple, beautiful truth: God loves His children. It is clear that he knew the doctrine of Christ as taught by his “goodly parents” (1 Nephi 1:1). But he also knew the “why” of the Savior. And what is that “why?”

Why was God willing to let His Son serve as a sacrifice? *Why* did He send us here to be proven and tried? Because, as taught in an equally beautiful truth, “the worth of souls is great in the sight of God” (Doctrine and Covenants 18:10).

Why are we of such great value to Him? Naturally, because we are His children, He loves us. But in the next several verses, He describes the great gift given to each of us because of His love for us—His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. He sent His Son to suffer “death in the

flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him. And he hath risen again from the dead, that he might bring all men unto him, on conditions of repentance” (Doctrine and Covenants 18:11–12). He tells us, “This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

Repentance and Joy

No wonder Heavenly Father feels great joy when we repent. Our willingness to repent is evidence of our deep gratitude for the magnificent and unmatched gift of the Savior and Redeemer of the world. It is only by and through Jesus Christ that we can become worthy to stand with confidence in the presence of God (see Doctrine and Covenants 121:45).

President Russell M. Nelson explained: “Too many people consider repentance as punishment—something to be avoided except in the most serious circumstances. But this feeling of being penalized is engendered by Satan. He tries to block us from looking to Jesus Christ, who stands with open arms, hoping and willing to heal, forgive, cleanse, strengthen, purify, and sanctify us. . . .

“Nothing is more liberating, more ennobling, or more crucial to our individual progression than is a regular, daily focus on repentance. Repentance is not an event; it is a process. It is the key to happiness and peace of mind. When coupled with faith, repentance opens our access to the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.”¹

Invited to Assist

Many times in the latter-day revelations, the Lord invites His children-servants to assist Him and His Son with the work of salvation and exaltation (see Doctrine and Covenants 18:14). Think of that! In our imperfect state, the God of the universe

extends an invitation to us to help His children, who are of great worth, to return to Him. He knows the work is challenging. There will be many who will not accept our invitation to “hear Him.” However, He affirms that He is the God of the “one.” “And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be *one* soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!” (Doctrine and Covenants 18:15; emphasis added).

You may ask yourself, “What can I do to help someone come unto Christ, repent, and be blessed by His atoning sacrifice?”

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gave this counsel about participating in the work of salvation and exaltation: “Understand that it’s not your job to convert people. That is the role of the Holy Ghost. Your role is to share what is in your heart and live consistent with your beliefs.

“So, don’t be discouraged if someone does not accept the gospel message immediately. It is not a personal failure.

“That is between the individual and Heavenly Father.

“Yours is to love God and love your neighbors, His children.

“Believe, love, do.

“Follow this path, and God will work miracles through you to bless His precious children.”²

On Both Sides of the Veil

The invitation to come unto Christ through repentance is not reserved just for those who live upon this earth. “The dead who repent will be redeemed,



“It’s not your job to convert people. That is the role of the Holy Ghost. Your role is to share what is in your heart and live consistent with your beliefs.”

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf



Each of us has a sacred responsibility to minister to Heavenly Father's children on both sides of the veil.

through obedience to the ordinances of the house of God” (Doctrine and Covenants 138:58). Temple and family history work are important aspects of gathering scattered Israel on both sides of the veil. We can feel great joy as we do the work for those who have gone to the spirit world knowing that in that realm, as President Wilford Woodruff (1807–98) said, “there will be very few, if any, who will not accept the Gospel.”³ Undoubtedly, they will look forward to the day when the saving ordinances are performed for them in the house of the Lord.

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “When we gather our family histories and go to the temple on behalf of our ancestors, God fulfills many of these promised blessings simultaneously on both sides of the veil. Similarly, we are blessed when we help others in our wards and stakes do the same. Members who do not live close to a temple also receive these blessings by participating in family history work, collecting the names of their ancestors for temple ordinances to be performed.”⁴

It is wonderful to know that our Heavenly Father loves each of His children. We are of great worth to Him. Each of us has a sacred responsibility to minister to His children on both sides of the veil and help them realize their great worth.

Help Them See Their Worth

I invite you to reach out to those who have been a part of your life and may have been forgotten for a time. Reach out to those who have

left the covenant path. Minister to those in need of Christlike love. Connect with those on the other side of the veil through temple and family history work, including indexing. Help others feel God's love through you.

As promised, my dear Belgian friend and I spoke every Sunday for over four months. I invited her to download the Gospel Library app. The local branch president was made aware of her, and the full-time missionaries visited and gave a priesthood blessing. The next week, for the first time in over 30 years, she attended sacrament meeting. The last time we spoke, she was filled with joy to have reconnected with the body of the Church of Jesus Christ.

She also told me her oldest daughter was still involved in the Church. I immediately reached out to the daughter via video chat. She introduced me to each of her four beautiful children, then told me the full-time missionaries were coming to their home that night for dinner. What a blessing it was to see that she was still a faithful member of the Church!

As I visited with her, I understood, in some small measure, the message of this scripture: “And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!” (Doctrine and Covenants 18:16).

The worth of *each* soul is great! ■

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “We Can Do Better and Be Better,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 67.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Missionary Work: Sharing What Is in Your Heart,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 17.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* (2004), 191.
4. Dale G. Renlund, “Family History and Temple Work: Sealing and Healing,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 49.

Your Worth Is Great

Dear Parents,

God loves us and values us more than we can imagine. The Church magazines this month give a variety of articles and activities that can help you teach your children about repentance, baptism, the restoration of the priesthood, and that their soul is of great worth both to you and to their Heavenly Father.

GOSPEL DISCUSSIONS

Hear Him and See Worth

Show the image and quote from the Savior on page 2. As a family, think of examples from the scriptures when the Savior saw the worth of one person's soul. On pages 32 and 36, you can find modern examples of how the Lord feels about those whom society sees as less valuable. Share how the Savior has helped you see your own worth or the worth of someone else.

Showing Others You Value Them

One way to help others feel valued is to serve them. Study Brother Jan E. Newman's article on page 16, looking for his invitations to you. Prayerfully discuss as a family whom you feel inspired to serve. Make plans on how and when you will reach out in love to the person.

Or after reading about incarceration on page 32, talk about how you might use the ideas in the article to help those who are incarcerated or how you might offer support, love, and friendship to their families.

Preparing Children for Baptism

You can use this issue to help prepare your children for their baptism. "Helping Children Prepare for Baptism" on page 22 provides ideas for parents. You can find answers



to common questions about baptism in "Gospel Basics" on page 6. You will find more ideas in this month's *Friend* magazine.

Come, Follow Me Support

See page 26 for supporting material for your weekly *Come, Follow Me* study.



FAMILY STUDY FUN

Circle of Worth

Doctrine and Covenants 10–19

Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer were counseled to remember that “the worth of souls is great in the sight of God” (Doctrine and Covenants 18:10). As we help others to see their own worth, we bring them nearer to Christ while becoming closer to Him ourselves.

1. Invite family members to sit in a circle.
2. Each person will take a turn standing in the middle of the circle.
3. Everyone sitting in the circle will tell the middle person, “You matter to me because _____,” and share specific details of why that person is of worth to them.
4. The middle person will then choose their own statement of personal worth: “I matter to God and myself because _____.”

Discussion: Why is it important to remember our own worth as well as the worth of those around us? If Christ were in the circle, what would He say about us? Read Doctrine and Covenants 18:10–13 and discuss what Christ went through because of how much He loves and values us. ■

Idea contributed by Mitzi Schoneman



IN THIS MONTH'S FOR THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH MAGAZINE

Questions and Answers

Share with your teen these youth responses on how to get more out of the scriptures.

Line upon Line: Fear Not

This feature teaches youth how to analyze a *Come, Follow Me* scripture passage. The topic will help them have confidence when times are hard.

Home Evening Object Lesson

Try this object lesson as a family. It's a fun activity to learn about how we can receive a change of heart.

The Story of the Witnesses

This comic-style story is a great way to help younger readers learn about the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon.

Park Bench Promptings and Learning to Recognize the Spirit

Do your youth ever struggle to recognize the Spirit? In these two stories, individuals describe how they learned.



IN THIS MONTH'S FRIEND

All about Baptism

This month's *Friend* is a special issue focusing on baptism. Find stories, activities, and lesson ideas to help your child prepare to be baptized or remember the special covenants they made at baptism.

Scripture Time Fun

Find weekly activities to help your family study *Come, Follow Me*, including a section with ideas especially for toddlers.

Scripture Story for Young Readers

Read to your children the story of how the Aaronic Priesthood was restored by John the Baptist.

Helping Hands around the World

Read how Raiarii from Tahiti is following Jesus, and help your children participate in this month's invitation.

Finding a Testimony

The story “Finding Sabrina's Testimony” can help your children discover that they have more of a testimony than they realize.

Helping Children Prepare for Baptism



We can be prayerful, intentional, and patient as we help our children take this step along the covenant path.

By Lucy Stevenson Ewell
Church Magazines

Being baptized and confirmed is an exciting milestone for children in the Church. While many look forward to these ordinances, it's also common for children to feel nervous or afraid.

As a writer for the *Friend*, the Church's magazine for children, I've heard many stories of children who fear they aren't ready to make this covenant. Some worry that they don't have a strong enough testimony. Some are afraid of water. And some feel an incredible amount of pressure to be perfect.

Here are a few ways to help your child feel prepared and confident to take their next step on the covenant path.

Intentionally Teach

It can be easy to think of baptism as a rite of passage or just something that happens when your child turns eight. But really, baptism is a sacred choice, which means they need to understand *why* it's important. Intentionally teaching them can help make baptism more meaningful (and less frightening). Teach them the way you would any person learning about the Church before getting baptized.

It's important for us to teach children about the covenants they will make at baptism. And the good news is, this isn't something we



have to (or should) try to do overnight or in one week. Studying the gospel over time as a family is the best way to help your child prepare to make this covenant. There are a few things that are especially helpful to focus on as your child's baptism approaches:

- In simple terms, discuss how being baptized means promising to follow Jesus Christ.
- Read about baptism in the scriptures, such as Mosiah 18:8–10. Explain the verses so your child understands and can teach the ideas back to you. For example, one recently baptized girl in Hawaii, USA, described “bear one another's burdens” as “help everyone whenever they need help.”
- Make sure to talk with them about the gift of the Holy Ghost, and share experiences you have had when the Holy Ghost has blessed your life.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY BRYAN BEACH

Some children may worry about baptism because they don't think they have a strong enough testimony. Help your child remember the good feelings they have had while doing something kind, singing in Primary, or talking about the gospel. Encourage them to think of ways they know that Heavenly Father loves them. Explain that all of these are the beginnings of a testimony and that their testimony will grow over time as they keep making good choices.

Show What to Expect

If your child is nervous about getting baptized—or even if they don't seem to be—it can be helpful to talk about what to expect. A good place to start is preparing them for the interview they will have with their bishop or branch president. Helping your child answer questions like, “Why is baptism important?” and “What does it mean

to take upon you the name of Christ?” can help them be prepared for this discussion. Help your child remember that the bishop is there to help them be ready, not to quiz them or put them on the spot. And remember, you can always accompany your child in the interview, if desired.

Another thing to prepare your child for is what to expect physically on the day of the baptism. Show them how to stand when they are in the font. You could even invite the priesthood holder who will be baptizing your child to practice the physical motion of baptism while out of the water, so your child knows what it will feel like to be dipped down and lifted back up. Explain what will happen during the confirmation.

If your child is afraid of going underwater, prayerfully consider ways you can help them overcome that fear as their baptism approaches. Maybe you and your child could watch someone else be baptized to see how briefly they are underwater. Perhaps you and your child could practice plugging your noses and putting your faces in the water together for a few seconds at a time. There might be someone in your area who teaches children to swim who would have some advice. Whatever you do, make sure you do it with love and patience.

The more prepared a child feels about the physical details of baptism, the more they will be able to relax and focus on the spiritual covenant they are making.

Focus on Progress, Not Perfection

Sometimes, maybe because we talk so much about the cleansing aspect of baptism, children misunderstand and think they're supposed to be perfect after the ordinance. One of the most common stories we hear at the *Friend* is the panic a child experiences when they make a mistake for the first time after being baptized. After feeling so clean and pure, arguing with a sibling or forgetting to do a chore can make them feel like they've ruined that good feeling forever!

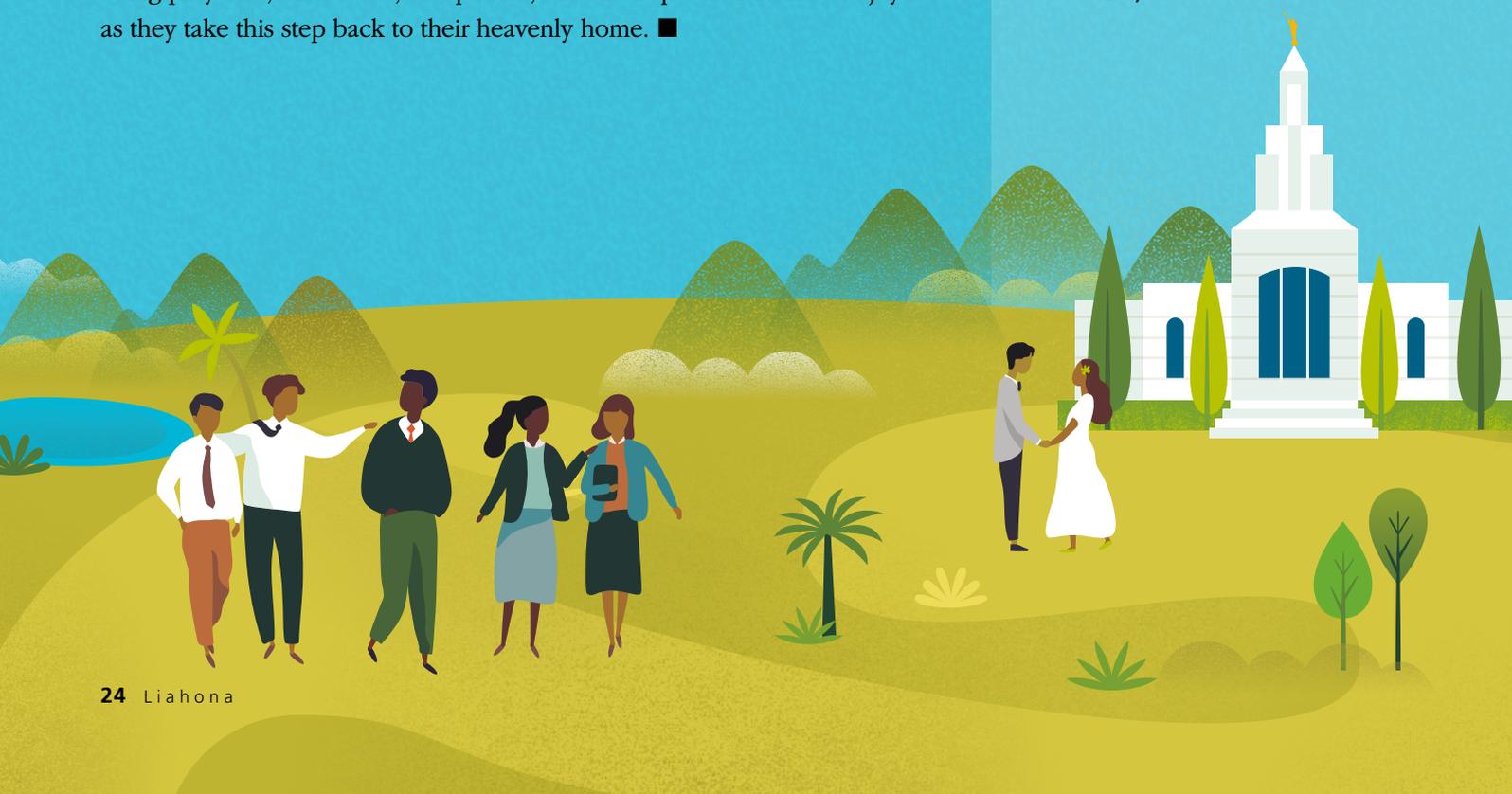
As parents and leaders, it's crucial that we help our children understand the principle of repentance. Do our children understand that recognizing our mistakes and learning from them is part of how we learn and grow here on earth? Do they know that they can pray for forgiveness at any time? and that when they take the sacrament each week, they renew those covenants they made at baptism? Testify that the chance to repent is a blessing and a gift. Baptism isn't about being perfect now but rather about entering the covenant path and taking daily steps to become more like Jesus Christ.

A Beautiful Beginning

Instead of seeing baptism and confirmation as the destination, we can help our children see it as a beautiful beginning—the start of a new life as a covenant disciple of Jesus Christ. Whether your child feels excited, nervous, or a little of both, you can make sure they don't walk this path alone. By being prayerful, intentional, and patient, we can help our children feel joy as they take this step back to their heavenly home. ■

You and your child can read all about baptism in this month's issue of the *Friend* magazine! Here are some resources you might find especially helpful:

- "Finding Sabrina's Testimony." As her baptism approaches, Sabrina learns that she has more of a testimony than she thought. (See page 4.)
- "Repenting and Trying Again." A boy learns that he doesn't have to be perfect to be baptized. (See page 20.)
- "Make Your Own Baptism Book." Have your child cut out and color the pages of this booklet to help them remember the special parts of their baptism. (See page 24.)



Eliza Spoke with Authority

By Jennifer Reeder

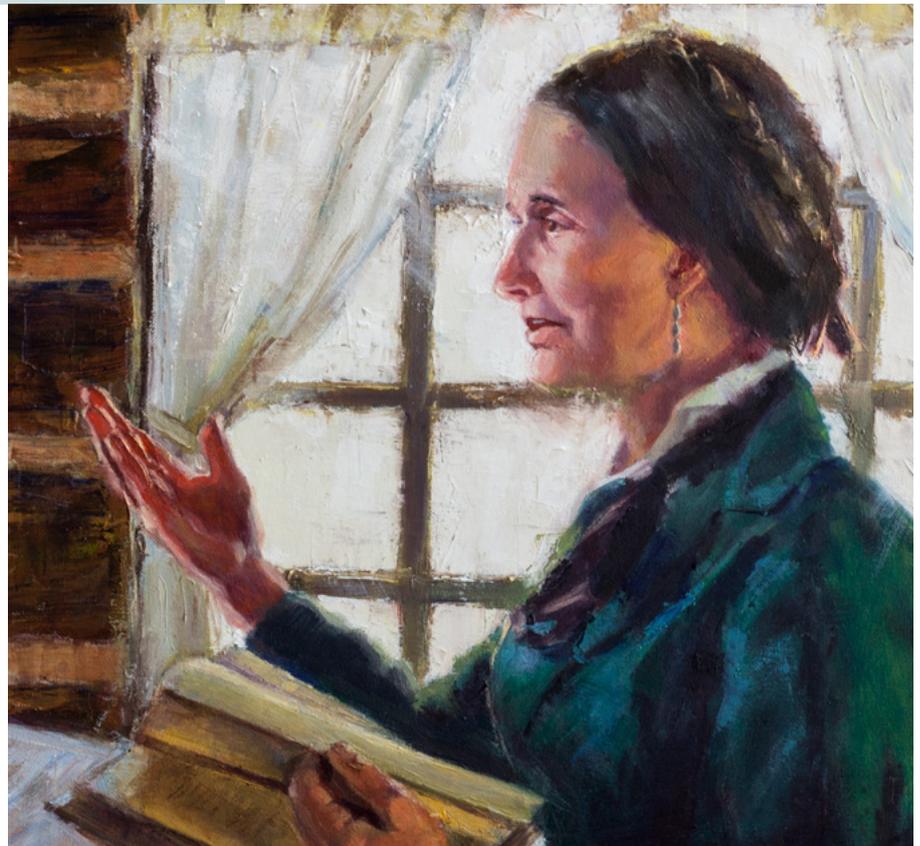
Church History Department

We, like Eliza R. Snow, can face our fears and speak with courage.

On April 18, 1884, an aging woman with a careworn face stood to speak to Relief Society sisters in Utah. This was Relief Society General President Eliza R. Snow, and a newspaper would report that, although 80 years old, she “spoke with great power and earnestness, and her voice seemed strong and filled the large building.”¹

When Eliza was baptized, she promised God that she would “ever praise His name in the congregation of the saints.”² She stayed true to that promise, giving more than a thousand sermons in her lifetime. Yet those who had the privilege of hearing her might be surprised to learn that public speaking made her very anxious. Even while teaching school in Nauvoo and recording the minutes of the Relief Society meetings there, she hesitated to speak up.

An invitation to face her fears came in 1868, when President Brigham Young asked Eliza to help



organize Relief Societies throughout Utah. “I want you to instruct the sisters,” he said. The idea was so frightening that Eliza described her heart skipping a beat.³ But she found the courage to do her best, and over time she learned that accepting challenging callings filled her with strength beyond her own.

To one group, Eliza explained that the President of the Church had called her to go on a mission, and she testified that it is easiest “to do at [once] what is required of us.”⁴ To another group, Eliza confessed that she didn’t feel competent to speak. “But with your faith and prayers and the spirit of the Lord, I may be able to say something that will comfort and bless you.”⁵ She learned through experience to seek the Spirit to enable her to speak with power.

Eliza encouraged women to find the courage to stand and share their testimonies: “By speaking your best thoughts they will be increased and strengthened.”⁶ Not only did she learn to speak with authority herself, but she taught others to face their fears and open their mouths. ■

NOTES

1. “Editorial Notes,” *Woman’s Exponent*, vol. 12, no. 23 (May 1, 1884), 180.
2. Minutes of the Senior and Junior Co-operative Retrenchment Association, June 22, 1872, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
3. See Eliza R. Snow, “Sketch of My Life,” 35.
4. American Fork Ward Relief Society minutes and records, Oct. 29, 1868, Church History Library.
5. Lehi Ward Relief Society minutes and records, Oct. 27, 1868, Church History Library.
6. Alpine Ward Relief Society minutes and records, Oct. 29, 1868, Church History Library.

Learn more about Sister Snow in this issue in the Gospel Library app and at iahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.



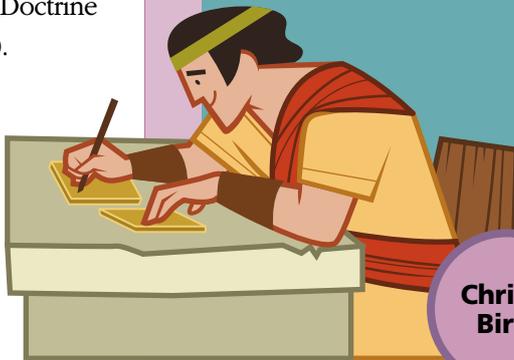
How does the Lord’s wisdom bless our lives?

When Martin Harris lost 116 manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon, the Lord told Joseph Smith, “Remember that it is not the work of God that is frustrated, but the work of men” (Doctrine and Covenants 3:3).

Take a look at this time line to see how the Lord had compensated for the pages He knew would be lost.

600 B.C.— Nephi’s Record

The Lord inspired Nephi to write a second record (the small plates of Nephi). He did not understand why, but Nephi had faith that it was “for a wise purpose” (1 Nephi 9:5).



Christ’s Birth

400 A.D.—Mormon’s Abridgement

The Lord inspired Mormon to include Nephi’s small plates with his abridgment of the large plates of Nephi. Although both plates included much of the same material, he also had faith that it was “for a wise purpose” (Words of Mormon 1:7).



600 BC

0

400 AD

1000

1800

2000

1828–29— Revelation to Joseph Smith

The Lord told Joseph not to retranslate the missing 116 pages because “Satan hath put it into [wicked men’s] hearts to alter the words” to discredit Joseph’s work (see Doctrine and Covenants 10:10–13). The missing pages and the small plates covered the same time period (600–130 B.C.)

DISCUSSION

How has the Lord’s wisdom compensated for your weaknesses or mistakes? When have you seen His wisdom bless your life?



2021—The Lord Prepares a Way

Just as God compensated for the lost pages, He has prepared ways today to thwart Satan’s efforts to weaken our faith. Our role is to be “faithful and continue on” so “the gates of hell shall not prevail against [us]” (Doctrine and Covenants 10:3, 69).



Doctrine and Covenants 12–13

FEBRUARY 8–14

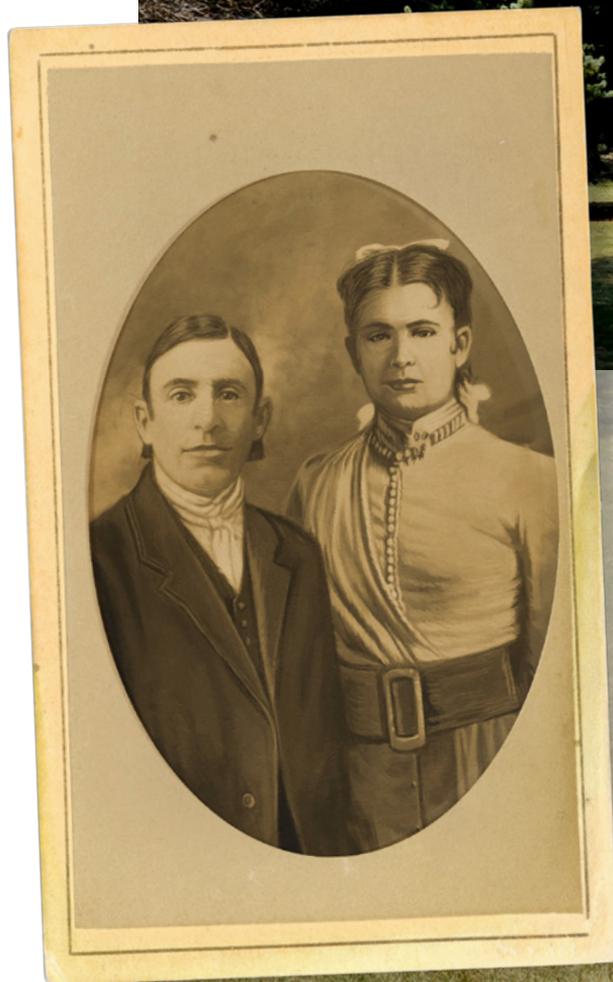
What can we do to follow the prophet?

Joseph and Polly Knight believed in Joseph Smith's prophetic calling from the beginning. They supported Joseph while he translated the gold plates, and they were among the first to be baptized.

Their property was often destroyed, and they lost many friends, but the Knights believed in the gospel and dedicated their lives to following the prophet and establishing the Church.

A Revelation for Joseph Knight

In 1829, Joseph Smith received a revelation on how Joseph Knight could assist with God's work. Joseph Knight was instructed to "seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion" with humility, love, faith, and temperance (see Doctrine and Covenants 12:6–8). How do these qualities help us follow the prophet and assist in God's work?



Lifelong Devotion

The Knights never lost their faith in the gospel and steadfastly stood by Joseph Smith. Their lives were a testimony to what they knew was true. Of Joseph Knight, the Prophet Joseph Smith said: "He has been faithful and true, and even-handed and exemplary, and virtuous and kind, never deviating to the right hand or to the left. Behold he is a righteous man" (*History of the Church*, 5:124).

DISCUSSION

How can you and your family follow the living prophet, like the Knights, even when times are hard?



Who was David Whitmer?

The Lord chose Three Witnesses who would see the Book of Mormon gold plates so they could “testify to the truth of the book and the things therein” (2 Nephi 27:12). One of these witnesses was David Whitmer.

A Helping Hand

David heard about the gold plates while visiting Oliver Cowdery, who was acting as scribe as Joseph Smith translated. Oliver later wrote to David, asking if he and Joseph could stay with him and finish the translation.

David traveled 100 miles (483 km) to Pennsylvania to bring Joseph and Oliver to his parents’ home in New York. David’s interest grew as he watched Joseph translate the Book of Mormon.

1829



DISCUSSION

We may not see the gold plates, but we can still be a witness. How can you be a witness and testify of gospel truths?



Always a Witness

Along with Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris, David was shown the plates by an angel and heard the voice of God command them to testify of what they had seen.

Unfortunately, David left the Church a few years later and never returned, but he never denied his testimony. Near the end of his life, David wrote: “I have never at any time denied that testimony or any part thereof, which has so long since been published with [the Book of Mormon], as one of the three witnesses. Those who know me best, well know that I have always adhered to that testimony. And that no man may be misled or doubt my present views in regard to the same, I do again affirm the truth of all of my statements, as then made and published” (*An Address to All Believers in Christ* [1887], 8–9).



Doctrine and Covenants 18–19

FEBRUARY 22–28

What is the gospel of Jesus Christ worth to you?

Martin Harris had one of the finest farms in Palmyra, New York. When the time came for the Book of Mormon to be published, Martin considered mortgaging his farm to pay the printer. But there was a huge risk involved.

A Moment of Decision

If Martin helped publish the Book of Mormon and it did not sell well, he would lose his farm. Martin had a hard choice to make.

What helps you make important decisions? Does knowing what the gospel of Jesus Christ is worth to you affect your decisions?

A Willing Sacrifice

Joseph Smith received a revelation telling Martin not to covet his property but to give it freely for the printing of the Book of Mormon (see Doctrine and Covenants 19:26).

This would be a sacrifice, but the Lord reminded Martin that no one has sacrificed more for God's children than He has (see Doctrine and Covenants 19:18).

Why is sacrifice a part of the gospel of Jesus Christ?



An Honorable Act

Martin mortgaged his farm, allowing the first 5,000 copies of the Book of Mormon to be printed. President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has said, "One of Martin Harris's greatest contributions to the Church, for which he should be honored for all time, was his financing the publication of the Book of Mormon" ("The Witness: Martin Harris," *Ensign*, May 1999, 36).



THE MARTIN HARRIS FARM, BY AL ROUNDY
FIRST FRUITS, BY JEFFREY HEIN

Ministering to Those with Financial Challenges

How can we help when economic times are tough?

Oh Jin Sook, a sister in the Chumdan Ward in South Korea, went through a difficult divorce after many years of heartache. Throughout the divorce, her ministering sisters stayed close to her, offering their support. The Relief Society president and bishop began helping Sister Oh develop options for becoming self-reliant. They suggested that in order for her to be able to take care of her immediate needs, like food, clothes, shelter, and so forth, she might need to move to a smaller, more affordable living space.

While participating in a self-reliance group on starting and growing your business, Sister Oh considered putting her talents to use by opening a beauty salon. Her leaders and ministering sisters encouraged and supported her as she tried to start her salon.

At first, the changes seemed overwhelming. However, Sister Oh trusted God, worked hard, and eventually opened her own shop using the little money she had.

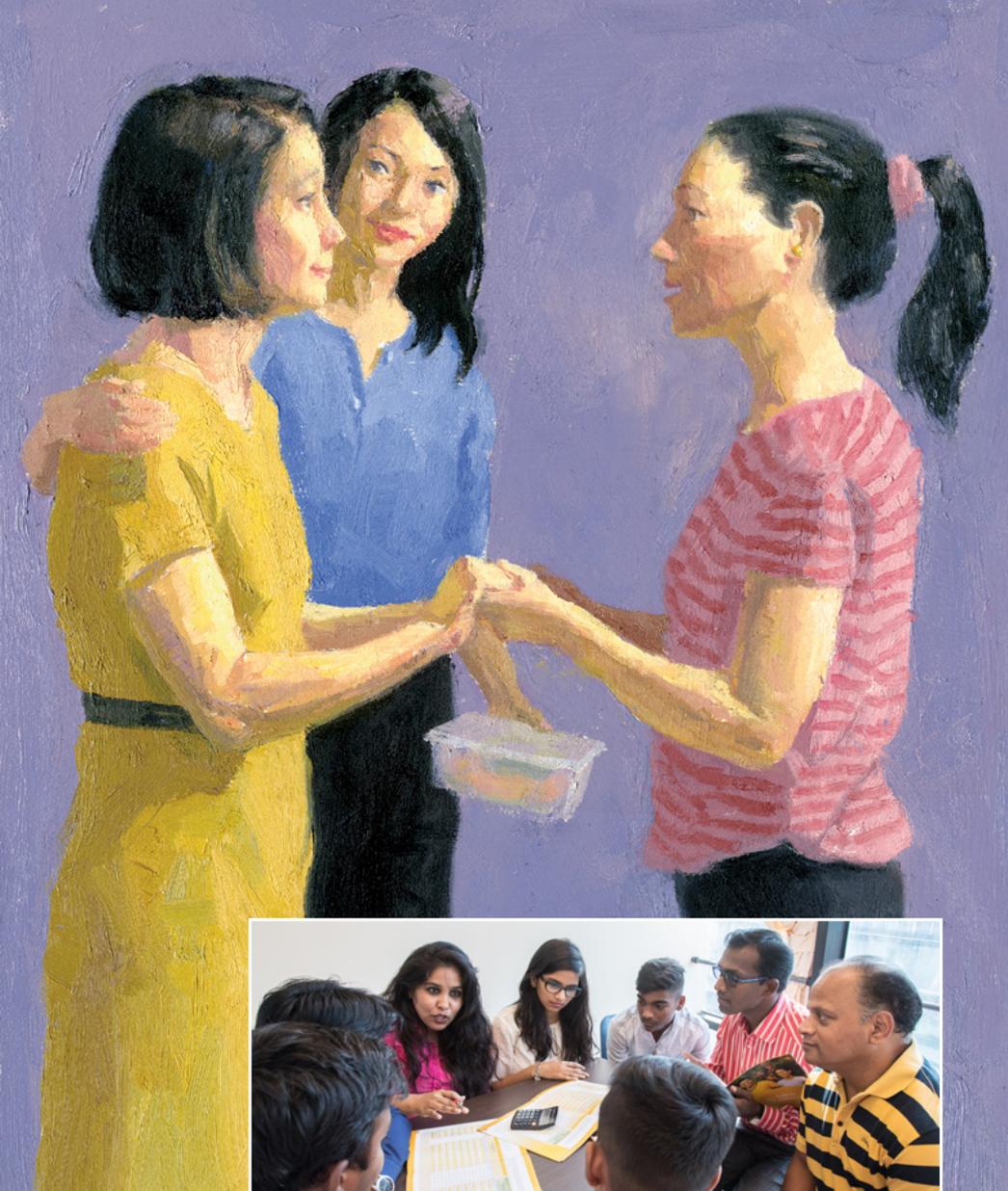
At first, the income wasn't enough to support her family. But the beauty shop was crucial in giving her the confidence and courage to know she could be independent and self-reliant.

Sisters brought meals to her, called her to speak words of comfort, and counseled with her on her new business, lovingly ministering in many different ways. One brother printed and distributed thousands of fliers to advertise for her shop. Other ward members reached out to her children with love, friendship, and support.

She had few worldly possessions, yet she reported that it became the happiest period of her life. The source of her happiness was her faith in Jesus Christ and the members who showed her Christlike love. Even during her trials, she felt the Lord's great love for her through the examples and ministering of her ward family.

Suggestions for ministering to those who have financial challenges:

1. Be loving and nonjudgmental. Be mindful of King Benjamin's warnings about judging people who struggle financially (see Mosiah 4:17–19).
2. God wants to bless us temporally as well as spiritually. Showing faith by doing things His way will change our lives and those around us.
3. In your efforts to minister, be careful not to do for them what they could do for themselves or take away opportunities to become more self-reliant.
4. Giving money isn't the answer to every financial problem. Often time, love, or other acts of service are more meaningful solutions. For example, offering to help watch children or work in the yard can save on childcare or yard care expenses. Inviting them to share a meal can save on food costs. In addition, the personal connection can be supportive and healing.
5. In your desire to serve, consider your own financial circumstances. The Lord will bless us for sacrificing



A self-reliance course in Mumbai, India.

to bless others, but we are counseled not to do more than we are able to do (see Mosiah 4:26–27). Participating in a Self-Reliance group to learn more about personal finance may improve your ability to help others.

6. Be sensitive, and don't cross boundaries you shouldn't by trying to force your help on others, however well-meaning. Allow them to

say, "No, thank you," if that's what they feel is best for them.

7. Serve without expectations of gratitude. People so easily feel humiliation and shame for financial struggles, which can make it difficult to express thanks. Offer your love and service without pressure. Sometimes anonymous help will be kinder toward the tender sensibilities of others. ■

RESOURCES

- The Church's self-reliance courses are powerful resources to help individuals become more self-reliant. Offering to attend one of these groups with someone who needs help might get them past their fear or uncertainty. Find information about these courses on the Church's self-reliance website, srs.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
- Read "The Spiritual Foundations of Church Financial Self-Reliance," by Bishop Gérald Caussé in the July 2018 *Ensign* or August 2018 *Liahona*.
- Read "Bearing One Another's Burdens," in the December 2015 *Ensign* for the story of how a woman learned that as we bear another's burdens, we are blessed, but that she didn't have to do it alone.
- Read "How the Spirit Can (and Will) Help You Minister," in the September 2019 *Ensign* or *Liahona*.
- The Church offers two helpful forms for assessing your ability to face a crisis and for helping others through a crisis. Go to ChurchofJesusChrist.org and search "Facing Challenges: A Self-Help Guide" and "How Can I Minister to Others During a Crisis?"



*The worth
of a person's
soul is not
diminished
by crime.*



MINISTERING TO Those Who Are Incarcerated

By **Marissa Widdison**

Church Magazines

Right now, more than 10 million people are being held in jails or prisons worldwide.¹ Jesus Christ, who loves each person and understands every difficulty, asks us to minister to all of Heavenly Father's children—including those who are incarcerated. "Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee . . . in prison, and came unto thee?"

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:37–40).

How can we do what the Savior asks and safely minister to those who are incarcerated? This article provides basic principles as a starting point. Prayerfully discuss with local Church leaders what is appropriate and wise for your area.

Fellow Children of God

While justice systems differ, the challenge of incarceration is shared across nations and

cultures. Doug Richens manages outreach for incarcerated members of the Church. He also coordinates with other faith and community groups to help those impacted by incarceration, regardless of their background or religious views.

"A common stereotype of those who are incarcerated is that they are all untrustworthy, violent, and dangerous," Brother Richens said. "However, I've found that most are not like that. Most feel remorse for their actions. They are trying to rise above the bad choices of the past and live good lives."

In some countries, as many as half of all citizens have an immediate family member who has been incarcerated.² These incarcerated siblings, parents, and children are—apart from being defined by any earthly relationship—fellow children of God.

Mortal and Eternal Judgment

Although life requires us to make judgments, Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are the only ones who can perfectly judge someone based on their situation, actions, and desires (see 1 Samuel 16:7). That perfect judgment will surely take into consideration circumstances people are born into that make incarceration more likely, such as family trauma, generational poverty, a culture of drug use, etc. Many other factors can influence a person's ability to make good choices, including their health and well-being.³ While it's important for society to enforce laws that keep communities safe, we can do so with compassion and an

God makes powerful promises to all who choose to follow Him, whether we first learn about Him in Sunday School or in a prison.

eternal perspective, realizing there is much we don't understand.

"Think about how you would feel if you were judged for the rest of your life based on the worst thing you had ever done," said Tanja Schaffer, a member of the Church who worked at a legal office before founding a prisoner-advocacy group. "It is up to God to forgive whom He will forgive, but He commands us to forgive everyone" (see Matthew 18:21–22).

The principle of God's perfect judgment can also be a source of comfort for victims of crime. Sometimes people who hurt others never face punishment on earth. Victims may suffer long after the prison terms of perpetrators have ended. Many people impacted by incarceration have been both a victim and a perpetrator at different times, reminding us that life is a complicated web of relationships and decisions that affect others. We can find comfort in trusting that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ understand it all. Their judgment will be perfect. The healing They offer—for both the innocent and repentant—will be complete (see Revelation 21:4).

The Loving Example of Leaders

Elder Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described a meeting where everyone around him was dressed in white. There was singing and praying, and God's love was abundant.⁴ Contrary to what many of us might be picturing, this wasn't a temple meeting. This was a ministering visit at a prison where white jumpsuits were the standard uniform.

"The leaders of the Church care about all who have been impacted by crime and

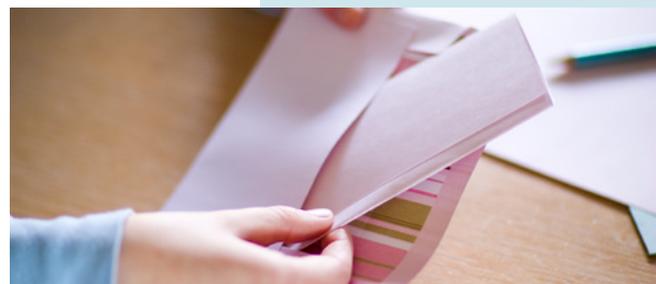
incarceration," Brother Richens testified, describing how one leader gives his own copy of a Church magazine to someone he visits in prison each month. "They frequently visit the incarcerated, support their families, and tenderly care for victims."

Correctional ministries are the responsibility of the stake president, working with ward leaders to address the needs of those in their area. What are stake leaders doing to minister to and share uplifting messages with incarcerated members? In some places, Church members may be called to visit and teach incarcerated people. Brother Richens said that often those members called to provide support are nervous at first, but then they find the calling so meaningful that they never want to be released.

"It's pure religion," he said (see James 1:27).

While we shouldn't feel pressured to visit incarcerated people we don't know, there are other ways we can safely minister. Here are a few:

- Include incarcerated people in your prayers, especially any you know by name. Prayer is powerful!
- Check with local prisons or jails to see if they need donated items. Reading, crafts like crocheting, art projects, and family history research are allowed in many facilities.
- If you know someone who is incarcerated, consider writing them uplifting letters. Make safe, wise choices while communicating. Follow the Spirit and maintain appropriate boundaries.
- Treat the family members of those who are incarcerated—especially children—with love, respect, and inclusion. Remember that family members are generally innocent victims too. The Holy Ghost can help us know how best to minister to all members of the family.



The Holy Ghost Is Not Limited

Incarceration can be an incredibly difficult time in a person's life. But the Holy Ghost isn't limited by walls, bars, or chains. Prayer, scripture study, and humility can invite His comforting presence just as quickly within a jail cell as outside of one. Because of this, prison can become a place of miracles.

Portia Louder, a member of the Church who wrote blog posts while incarcerated, described it as a difficult journey of faith and self-discovery. "I've been through some pretty serious struggles in my life, but I can feel myself being healed through a love that is indescribable," she wrote from prison. "Whatever challenge you are facing right now, wherever you're at on your own journey, please don't give up!"

Garff Cannon, who served as branch president in a jail, described how the Spirit prompted him to speak kindly to a hard-hearted incarcerated man who had led a difficult life. "What you just said to me were the kindest words ever spoken to me in my life," this man said. "I don't recall ever being spoken to with kindness and caring. Thank

you." They ended their visit with the first prayer this man had heard in years.

"Yes, the Holy Ghost is definitely in the correctional facilities," Brother Cannon testified. "God's children are there, and He wants them back."

God makes powerful promises to *all* who choose to follow Him, whether we first learn about Him in Sunday School or in a prison. As Ezekiel 36:26 says, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you."

Reentering Society Is Extremely Challenging

The worth of a person's soul is not diminished by crime (see Doctrine and Covenants 18:10). When someone desires to change for the better, do we allow them to grow and be forgiven?

"God's grace and compassion are tremendous," Brother Richens said. "Sometimes incarcerated individuals feel forgiven by the Lord long before they are forgiven by the government, society, or even some members of the Church."

Returning to society after incarceration is difficult. Those who have been incarcerated often have trouble getting jobs or housing. We can help them find security in wholesome places and pursue healthy hobbies. Perhaps the most important thing we can do is to be a positive, strengthening friend. When Joseph Smith spoke about prison reform while running for president of the United States, he taught that "rigor and seclusion will never do as much to reform the propensities of men as reason and friendship."⁵

Compassion Makes a Difference

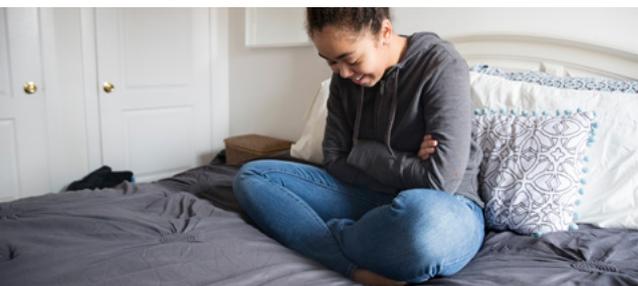
Jude encouraged the Saints to "have compassion" (Jude 1:22). His words echo the Savior's plea to remember those who are in prison. How will we respond to these invitations? Let's make an effort to nourish those who experience incarceration—and their families—with the goodness of God. Our compassion can make a difference. ■

For additional resources on this topic, visit prison.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

Read another experience from Garff Cannon in this issue on the Gospel Library app or at liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

NOTES

1. See "World Prison Population List: Eleventh Edition," National Institute of Corrections, [nicic.gov](https://www.nicic.gov).
2. See "Half of Americans Have Family Members Who Have Been Incarcerated," Dec. 11, 2018, Equal Justice Initiative, [eji.org/news](https://www.eji.org/news).
3. See "Traumatic Brain Injury in Criminal Justice," University of Denver, [du.edu/tbi](https://www.du.edu/tbi).
4. Priesthood and Family Department Christmas devotional, December 2019.
5. "Joseph Smith as a Statesman," *Improvement Era*, May 1920, 649.





A Message of Hope for Those Who Are Incarcerated

God's light can be a part of your future.

By Douglas G. Richens

Church Manager of Prison Ministry

Years ago, I was visiting a prison when I met a man named Eric. He had been incarcerated for 17 years. During this time, Eric rarely missed church. He prayed often with others and helped many people learn about the scriptures. When I met Eric, he was suffering from serious health challenges. I was able to visit with him in his prison hospital room.

As we talked, Eric told me how grateful he was for the many Church members who had supported him over the years. He shared his testimony and faith in Jesus Christ. Then, in a whispered voice, he said there were still many days when he felt forgotten and alone. We talked for a while longer, prayed together, and parted as friends. A few hours later, I learned that Eric had passed away.

Eric's journey through life had been rough. But he had eventually come to know and love Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and himself. And *that* is what matters. In the eternities, I don't think it will matter where or how we came to know Jesus. What will matter is what each of us did with our life after we found Him.

The circumstances and choices that led to your incarceration do not need to define your life. You may have made mistakes, large and small. You may have committed a crime once or many times. This is part of your past, but your past does not decide your future. You have the

power to make choices that will invite happiness, even during difficult times.

Your True Identity

Sister Joy D. Jones, Primary General President, has visited prisons several times. She once told me this story:

"I remember the first time I visited the prison near where I live. As I spoke with a group of inmates, it felt like I was in a holy space because I knew they earnestly wanted to change and come to Christ. We talked about our divine identity as children of God.

"At one point, I told them about my two-year-old granddaughter who came to me one day, smiling. She enthusiastically announced, 'Grandma, I'm a child of God!' Then one person quietly said, 'I wonder what my life would be like today if someone had told me when I was young that I was a child of God.'

"The good news is that we are all God's children," Sister Jones continued, "whether we learn it as a child or later in life. It is *never* too late. You are *not* forgotten. God knows you. He loves you. His Son, Jesus Christ, is our Savior. He atoned for each and every one of us. Because of that, Jesus understands our lives perfectly, and we can be completely forgiven of our sins. He said, 'Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. . . .

Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me' (1 Nephi 21:15–16)."

Believing that you, and everyone you know, is a child of God can be a source of inner strength. As you accept this truth and let it guide your life, you will find greater peace and become an example of good for others.



Rebuilding Trust

Throughout life it can be difficult to know whom to trust, but you can always trust your Heavenly Father. The scriptures teach that God knows you perfectly. He loves you and cannot lie.¹ If trusting others—including God—is difficult for you, pray about it. Ask your Heavenly Father, “Do You love me? Can I trust You?” Then listen for an answer. It may come as a peaceful feeling or calm thought. It may take time. But God *will* answer your prayers.

In addition to knowing whom you can trust, it is important to become someone who can be trusted. It may not be appropriate for you to have contact with those you have harmed. But you can still consider past events from their point of view, develop compassion for them, and pray for them. You can choose to be a trustworthy person in the new relationships you form.

It can be a long road. I’m grateful for this encouragement from Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Keep loving. Keep trying. Keep trusting. Keep believing. Keep growing. Heaven is cheering you on today, tomorrow, and forever.”²

Parenting While Incarcerated

You may be tempted to think that you can’t be a parent during your season of

incarceration. Resist this thinking. Whenever possible, find ways to support your family and children.

In recent years, Church leaders have emphasized how important it is to teach the gospel to one another in our families. Ask yourself, “How can I help my family receive the blessings of the gospel?” Here are four ideas:

- You can *always* pray for your family. Prayer is a powerful type of spiritual work that is not limited by walls or distance.
- If you are allowed to communicate with your children, find appropriate ways to express your love. Teach them about the spiritual lessons you are learning.
- Make an effort to reconnect with trustworthy friends. Build relationships with those who would be a good influence on your family.
- Change for the better. Every effort you make to improve yourself and take responsibility for your choices will help you be a better father or mother.

Moving Forward

Our prophet today, President Russell M. Nelson, said that the quest of this life is to prepare to meet God by following the example of Jesus Christ. “And we do *that* as we repent daily and receive His cleansing, healing, and strengthening power,” he taught. “Then we can feel enduring peace and joy, even during turbulent times.”³

Repentance is an important part of healing. It starts as you sincerely pray to God, telling Him what you have done wrong and asking for His forgiveness. You will begin to feel at peace as you learn more about the gospel and follow the example of Jesus Christ. These feelings, and your changing behavior, are evidence that you are beginning to heal.

Church leaders are there to help you walk this path back to God. Through Jesus Christ, it will always be possible to return to your Heavenly Father. Although you may feel forgiven by God long before you are forgiven

by family, society, or even some members of the Church, don’t despair. Just continue to move forward. Trust God’s promises and His timing.

God Will Help You Heal

Remember that any sort of healing—including from addiction, abuse, or other trauma—takes time. The Bible tells the story of Jesus healing a blind man whose vision returned in stages. He first saw “men as trees, walking.” Then Jesus “put his hands again upon his eyes,” and that was when the man finally saw everything clearly (Mark 8:24–25). Similarly, when Jesus healed a woman who had an issue of blood, it was after she had suffered with a health problem for 12 years (see Mark 5:25–34). These stories remind us that physical, spiritual, and mental healing often happen over time. If you feel like your healing isn’t happening as quickly as you’d like, try to identify small successes. Pray and talk to God about your feelings, including thanking Him for whatever progress you do notice.

Whether you are already a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, learning more about the gospel, or returning to Church membership, please know that we care about you. No matter what your past has been like or how long the road is ahead, your future can be filled with God’s light. The gospel path gives us strength. It brings us comfort. It leads to more happiness in this life and joy in eternity.

Your Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ know and love you perfectly. They will never abandon you. They will never harm you. They will never forget you. ■

NOTES

1. See, for example, Hebrews 6:18; Enos 1:6; Ether 3:12; Doctrine and Covenants 62:6.
2. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Tomorrow the Lord Will Do Wonders among You,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2016, 127.
3. Russell M. Nelson, “Opening Message,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 6.

Blessings and Challenges of Marrying Later in Life

By Christy Monson

Getting married later in life can involve some unique twists and turns. But as couples walk this path with faith, they can discover great joy and develop Christlike qualities. Here are three life lessons from those who found romance in their older years, followed by three tips for blending families. I hope that sharing this will help older newlyweds—or those still waiting for marriage—realize that they are not alone in their journey. These short principles can prompt ideas for strengthening any marriage, whether you've been together 50 years or 5 months.

Keep an Eternal Perspective

Mona (names have been changed) didn't think she would ever find an eternal partner after two failed marriages. Then she moved to a retirement center and met Bob. They became friends, and she introduced him to the gospel. About the time they became engaged, Bob was diagnosed with cancer. He asked Mona if she still wanted to marry him.

"Of course," she said. "I'm marrying you for eternity, not just for this life."

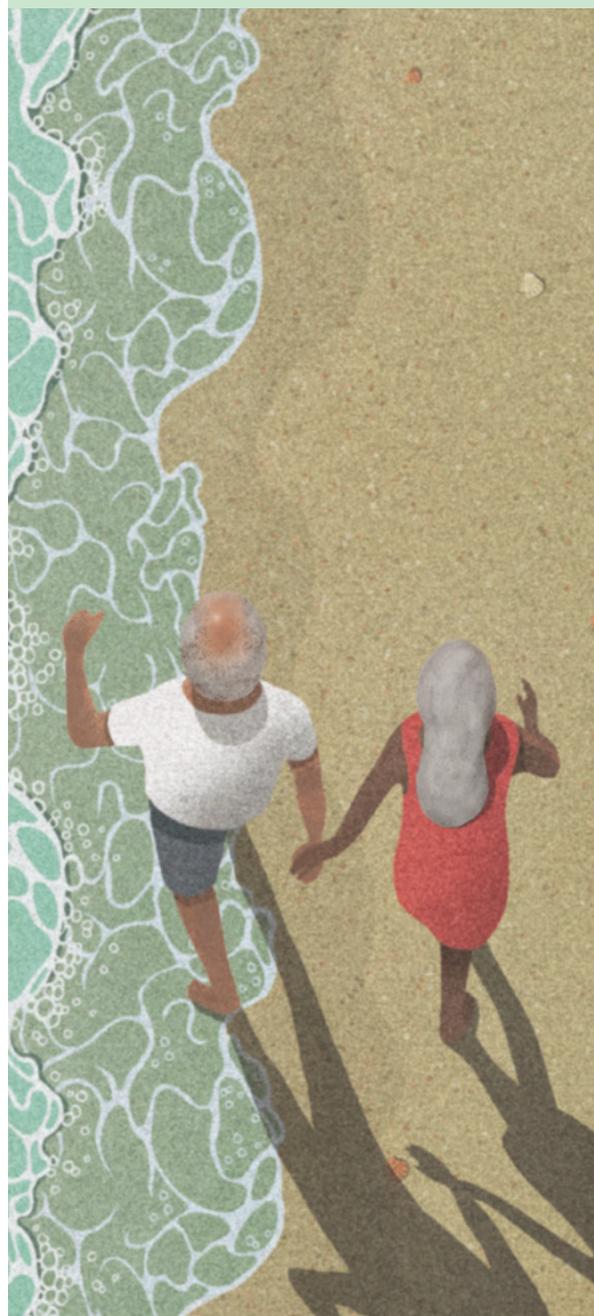
The couple married, and Bob was baptized. They were both in wheelchairs as they were sealed in the temple. Mona said there was a celestial light about Bob that day. He lived another six months, rejoicing in each day with his sweetheart. Now Mona can't wait until they are together again.

Practice Communication

When Cassie fell in love with Albert, she worried about falling into the same negative communication patterns she had seen in her first marriage. So they took a marriage class together, where they learned to:

1. Practice listening skills.
2. Honestly share feelings.
3. Cooperate, not compete.
4. Agree to disagree when needed.
5. Discuss money management.

A few stories and tips for strengthening marriage at any age.





“Building a successful marriage takes practice, but we love each other enough to make it work,” Cassie said.

Navigate Changes with Love

Amanda puzzled over her patriarchal blessing. It said she would be a great influence on her children and grandchildren, but she was past childbearing years and had never married. Then she met Patrick, a pilot. They enjoyed listening to music and playing golf together. After a while, they got married.

Patrick’s first wife had died, with whom he had three daughters. Although they grieved the loss of their mother, they eventually warmed to Amanda’s love. Years passed.

One day, Patrick went flying and never returned. After weeks of searching, the plane was found in a nearby lake. Amanda realized that she was the only living parent Patrick’s daughters had left. She made an extra effort to support and communicate with them, especially through their grief.

Now she and her stepdaughters have a strong bond. They call her for advice and turn to her after a stressful day. With humility and gratitude, Amanda realizes that her patriarchal blessing is being fulfilled after all.

Three Tips for Blending Families

1. **Play together.** Terry and Lucinda are both in their second marriages. Terry’s stepson loves to golf, so they plan a golf date each week. Lucinda set up a special area with books, games, and puzzles for the grandkids when they visit.
2. **Be patient.** After Cassie and Albert married, Cassie’s children refused to visit for Christmas. The couple decided to drop presents off anyway, give the grandkids a hug, and let everyone know they were welcome anytime. It wasn’t long before the entire family grew to love Albert and started gathering for holidays.
3. **Try extra hard to connect.** Amanda reads stories to her new grandchildren over the computer and even prepares easy science lessons for them. Another mom hosts an online chat once a month with family members scattered around the country.

Loving those who come into our lives—like new spouses and children—may not be easy, but marriage and new families can replace loneliness with joy. As we ask Heavenly Father to bless us with charity, we can, at any age, prepare to meet our Savior with our family. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.





3

STRATEGIES FOR **NAVIGATING** LIFE CHANGES

Changes in life can bring a lot of stress and anxiety, but I've found that these 3 strategies can help.

By Jody Moore

It's one of the most remarkable tools ever created. It's faster and more efficient than any computer, and it changes based on the things it learns about the world. It's something that everyone, regardless of wealth or status, has access to, and you can't buy it in a store or online. It's more complicated than we know, and I have very good news for you:

You have one. Heavenly Father gave it to you. It's your brain.

The human brain is amazing. For example, think about when you brush your teeth. I have young kids who I am still trying to get to brush their teeth consistently, but I myself have it mastered. I do it without anyone reminding me to because my brain has programmed it in as part of my routine. When I brush, I don't have to Google which end of the toothbrush to put the toothpaste on—my brain automatically puts it on the bristly end. I can brush my teeth while listening to a podcast, negotiating with my children, or reading a book because my brain automatically knows what to do.

This ability to function on autopilot serves us very well most of the time, but what about when we are going through changes that are a part of this life? Sometimes we experience changes we hadn't planned

on, like divorce or the unexpected death of a loved one, but even when life is right, we still face changes in life like new towns, new jobs, graduating college, getting married, having babies, and more.

The truth is, for some of us our brain doesn't like change. It requires a lot of energy to deal with change because we can't operate as unconsciously as we're used to. Combine this with the emotions that often accompany change, and it can sometimes feel unbearable.

Luckily, we can take what we know about the brain and work with it to minimize anxiety and feelings of overwhelm. Over the years, I have identified three strategies that help people navigate anxiety and change that I would like to share with you.

STRATEGY 1: Narrow your view.

Change means unknown. Sometimes the brain becomes overwhelmed if there are too many unknown variables. It fears the unknown because it believes there could be danger ahead.

Thanks, brain, for keeping us alive.



The best way to navigate change, I've found, is to narrow your view to what you do know. The more emotional and extreme the change is, the narrower your view needs to be. If you unexpectedly lose a job, your brain might want to figure out all sorts of things. How will you pay your bills? How will you find another job? When will you find one? How painful will that process be? What will people think?

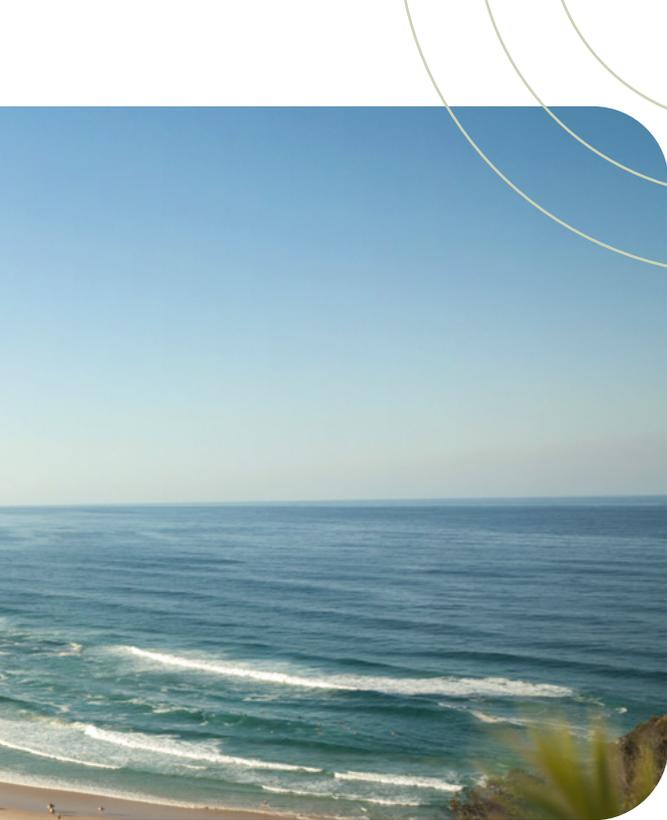
Many of these questions we don't have answers to right now, but we don't really need to. What's next? Are you going to make it through the end of the week? That's all you really need to know right now.

Sometimes when we're in deep emotional pain, we just need to focus on one day at a time. What will you make for breakfast? Let's just begin there.

Narrow your view to get to peace, and from there you will find answers. The Lord will guide you if you seek Him and trust in Him. "Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers" (Doctrine and Covenants 112:10).

STRATEGY 2: Focus on the future, not the past.

The brain likes to go to the past because it has memories to pull from, but your future is going to be different than your past, and that's a good thing. Ruminating on what



went wrong or even reminiscing about “the good old days” at the expense of today is easy to do, but not useful.

When I had my first baby, I was overjoyed about having this little person in my home and couldn’t believe how much I loved him. But I also felt overwhelmed with how much care he required and my inability to live my life as freely as I had before. I kept thinking about how life used to be simpler. I thought about how I used to be able to shower and do my hair each morning. I thought about how I used to like my body better. I thought about how I used to be more well-rested and therefore more fun. I felt awful when I focused on my past like this.

Eventually I realized I could not find answers in the past. I had to focus on the future. I had to start visualizing myself doing the things I wanted to in my life, but with a baby. I had to tap into the person I wanted to become, not the person I used to be. This is not always easy, but it’s available if you’re willing to open yourself up to possibility.

The Lord has told us:

“Ye are little children, and ye have not as yet understood how great blessings the Father hath in his own hands and prepared for you;

“And ye cannot bear all things now; nevertheless, be of good cheer, for I will lead you along. The kingdom is yours and the blessings thereof are yours, and the riches of eternity are yours” (Doctrine and Covenants 78:17–18).

STRATEGY 3: Be compassionate with yourself.

Change can put the best of us in a spin. You may be feeling a lot of emotions. Some of the most toxic things we can tell ourselves are thoughts like, “I wish I wasn’t so emotional; I should be dealing with this better,” or, “I am so sorry that I’m not stronger.”

Wishing that you were less emotional does not make change easier. It only adds shame or guilt on top of the other challenges you are already facing. Self-compassion is the key.

Compassion says, “Of course this is challenging! It’s OK to struggle,” and, “I love you anyway.” Please say these things to yourself. Don’t add to your pain by thinking you shouldn’t be in pain.

Heavenly Father sent us here to earth to help us become more like Him, which I can only imagine means we need a tremendous amount of growth. If I want to grow my muscles, I must lift heavy weights. The resistance of those weights causes my muscles to break down just enough that when they rebuild they come back even stronger.

Our spirits are like this too. We require a certain amount of resistance so we can come back stronger than we were before.

The Lord explained it this way: “My people must be tried in all things, that they may be prepared to receive the glory that I have for them, even the glory of Zion; and he that will not bear chastisement is not worthy of my kingdom” (Doctrine and Covenants 136:31).

Change is one way that this life molds us so that we can become more like our Father in Heaven. Be nice to yourself in times of change. This human thing is tough to do sometimes. ■

Moving Forward with Hope during Unexpected Times

When we feel fear and uncertainty about moving forward in life, our hope and faith in Christ can light the way.

By Natalie Smith

None of us could have expected the worldwide impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It's as if everything in the world was put on pause, and all for an indefinite amount of time, causing uncertainty to cloud our thoughts about the future.

I returned home from my mission in Arizona, USA, just as the pandemic started spreading across the globe. During the last few weeks of my mission, I had been creating a vision for where I wanted my life to go once I returned home. I made specific plans and goals and was ready to get started! I planned to go to nursing school, to start new hobbies and find new friends, and to seize so many opportunities that come during young adulthood. I felt a sense of peace and assurance that God was guiding me and had great things in store for me after my mission.

That changed soon after I got home.

One by one, my plans were canceled because of COVID-19. I began to question and doubt the decisions and goals I had made. I chose to start looking for a job while waiting for online classes to start instead of moving to another state to begin school like I had originally planned. After a while, I felt I had lost my purpose and was wasting so much time. I was used to always having a jam-packed schedule as a missionary, and so I suddenly felt lonely, bored, and useless.

I wasn't looking forward to the future. I didn't want to face this life transition. I wanted to go back in time, to return to past friendships and places that had once made me happy. The vision and plans I had for my life just a few weeks before had disappeared, and I felt like I was paralyzed by darkness, fear, and discouragement. I didn't feel like myself at all. I had just finished the most amazing experience of serving the Lord for 18 months, but now I felt lower than I ever had in my life.

I wondered why everything was going wrong and where the Lord's promised blessings were. The reassurances I had felt in the final weeks of my mission seemed to have disappeared.

Then general conference came, and I realized how much I was lacking in one specific area of life—hope.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gave a talk titled “A Perfect Brightness of Hope” (April 2020 general conference), and it especially stood out to me. I realized that because of my faith in Christ, I *could* and *should* hope for better things to come. Because Christ lives and is constantly working in my life, I realized my future will be just as miracle-filled and bountifully blessed as my past has been.

Because the Savior felt and overcame everything I will ever face, I could believe, despite every reason not to believe, that things were going to get better—even if my plans were sometimes skewed.

I have come to realize that if I want to have joy, success, and fulfillment in life, I must hold on to and move forward with hope, even when facing uncertainty. It’s easy to give up and be miserable. It’s hard to bear our afflictions with patience and the confident, unwavering assurance that God is in control and things will get better. But just as President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) counseled, “May we ever choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong.”¹

Trust that God is building you up even when you feel you are tumbling down. Trust that in the

end, everything will work out because “all things work together for good to them that love God” (Romans 8:28).

When dark clouds are around us and we feel fear and uncertainty about moving forward into these paths life takes us on, our hope and faith in Christ can light the way and enable us to take even just one small step forward. Because of Him, it is possible for us to have joy in the now even when our circumstances are not what we wanted or expected.

If you are finding yourself caught in between life transitions or things aren’t quite going the way you wanted them to, remember that Heavenly Father has a plan for you that you might not even be able to imagine. Even if He may seem silent at times, He is actively working in your life. He sees the end from the beginning. If you rely on Him and continue forward, doing the best you can with your current circumstances, your life will be infinitely better than you ever thought it could be.

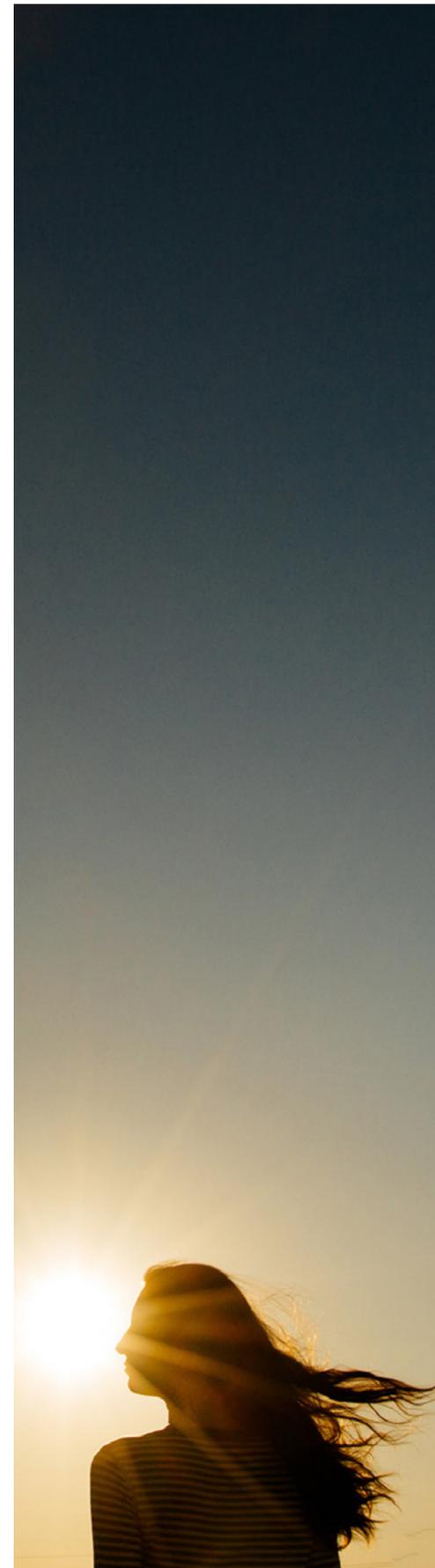
Don’t give up. Keep trying even when you can’t see the results of your efforts and nothing seems to be getting better. Keep going even when things don’t go according to plan. Look for the Lord’s hand in your life and recognize His goodness. Seek the guidance of the Spirit with the intent to act upon His words. Do your best, whatever that looks like today. Keep holding on. Keep moving forward. And keep hoping that, with His guidance, things will get better. ■

NOTE

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



Natalie Smith was born and raised in Washington, USA. She recently returned from her mission in Arizona, USA, and is currently attending college. She is a healthy foodie and study nerd who loves spending time in the mountains, running, taking pictures, and collecting pine cones.



MORE FOR YOU!

You can find more articles specifically for young adults in the digital version of the February *Liahona* at **liahona.ChurchofJesusChrist.org** or in the Gospel Library.

This month, you'll find more articles about navigating life changes, from becoming a missionary to post-mission life, from adjusting to life as a student to learning how to handle grief and loss.

DIGITAL ARTICLES

Adjusting to Change after My Mission

By Milka Gajardo Flores, Antofagasta, Chile

Covenant Living: A Guide for Returned Missionaries

By Sadie Taylor-Jenks, Indiana, USA

5 Tips to Thrive as a University Student

By Marisa Hoover, Utah, USA

My Advice for Job-Seeking after College

By Goodluck Isioma Ugbah, Nigeria

Choosing Change Can Be Hard and Scary, but It's Worth It

By Chakell Wardleigh Herbert, Church Magazines

Being OK with Not Being OK: Navigating Seasons of Grief

By Jensen Parrish-Hall, Idaho, USA

Finding My New Normal

By Breanne Su'a, Utah, USA

Finding Strength in Christ to Finally Change My Life

By Ryan Ehrgood, Washington, USA

YA WEEKLY

You can also find new articles each week in YA Weekly, located in the Young Adults section of the Gospel Library app.

From the Mission Field:

Serving a Mission When My Parents Got Divorced

By Nathan Newell, Utah, USA

Life Skills:

Life Lessons from Building Our Tiny House

By Tanner Wright, Texas, USA



PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK BRUNSON

Printing the Book of Mormon

After Joseph Smith was turned down by three other publishers, Egbert Grandin in Palmyra, New York, agreed to print the Book of Mormon. Its printing was a great endeavor, more than double the size of other printing jobs at the time.

Two manuscripts:

- **Original Manuscript:** Written by at least three scribes as Joseph Smith translated and dictated.
- **Printer's Manuscript:** A copy of the original was made by Oliver Cowdery and two other scribes.

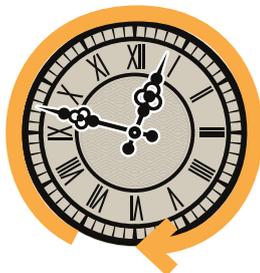
Typesetting: John Gilbert, compositor for the Book of Mormon, added paragraphs, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling corrections.



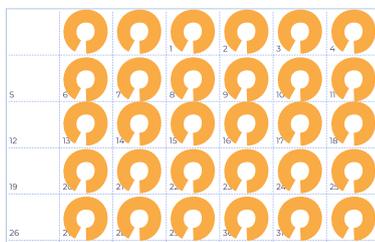
Length of first edition: **590 pages.**

The first edition was **made by hand.**

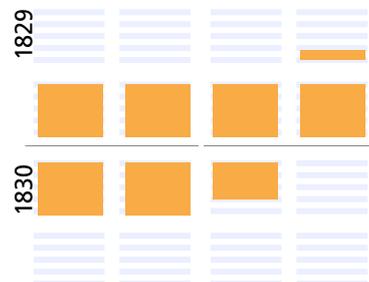
Printing speed: four sheets on one side per minute. **185,000 sheets** to print 5,000 copies of the book.



The busy printing staff worked **11 hours a day, six days a week.**



Printing time: **seven months.**



Average print run for a book in the United States in the 1820s: roughly **2,000 copies.**

First edition of the Book of Mormon: **5,000 copies.**

1981: the Church had printed an estimated **27,249,000 copies** of the Book of Mormon.

2011: the Church had printed over **150,000,000 copies** of the Book of Mormon in 110 languages.

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