

Liahona

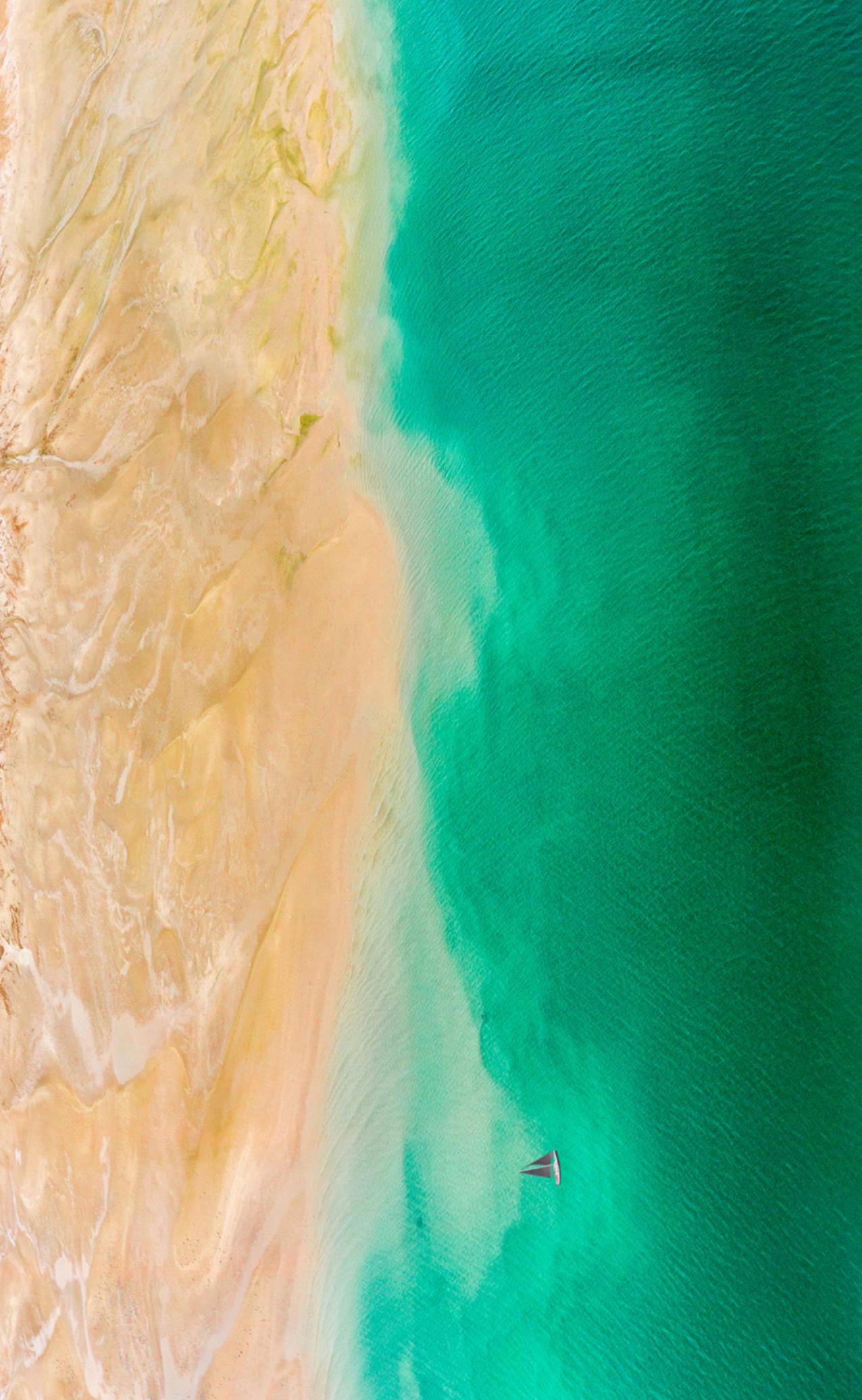


**Howard W. Hunter:
Father, Lawyer, Musician,
Prophet, p. 18**

**The Power of the
Book of Mormon to Change
Your Life, pp. 24, 40, 56, 68, 72**

**Gaining a Knowledge of
the Godhead, p. 32**

**Struggling to Build Your Life?
Try God's Blueprint, p. 62**



"I will prepare the way before you, if it so be that ye shall keep my commandments; wherefore, inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall be led towards the promised land; and ye shall know that it is by me that ye are led."

Coastline near Dubai, United Arab Emirates; on the eastern side of the Arabian Peninsula. Lehi and his family traveled south from Jerusalem on the western side of the peninsula.



MESSAGES

- 4 **First Presidency Message: Happiness for Those We Love**
By President Henry B. Eyring
- 7 **Visiting Teaching Message: The Family—A Proclamation to the World**

FEATURE ARTICLES

- 18 **Howard W. Hunter: My Father, the Prophet**
By Richard A. Hunter
A son's perspective of a latter-day prophet.
- 24 **The Converting Power of the Book of Mormon**
By Elder Kevin S. Hamilton
There is one key to obtaining a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- 28 **Come, Follow Me: Teaching the Basics at Home**
By Alicia Stanton and Natalie Campbell
Ideas for learning about the monthly youth topics as a family.
- 32 **Knowing the Godhead**
By Elder Jeffrey R. Holland
We ought to strive to be one with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as Jesus prayed we would be.

DEPARTMENTS

- 8 **October 2015 Conference Notebook**
- 10 **What We Believe: We Believe in Being Positive**
- 12 **Our Homes, Our Families: Our Best Defense against Pornography**
By Kerry Hanson Jensen
- 14 **Reflections: Not the Miracle We Wanted**
By Brittany King
- 15 **Serving in the Church: Pray about It**
By Taryn Taylor
- 16 **News of the Church**
- 40 **Latter-day Saint Voices**
- 80 **Until We Meet Again: The Parable of the Owl Express**
By Elder James E. Talmage

ON THE COVER

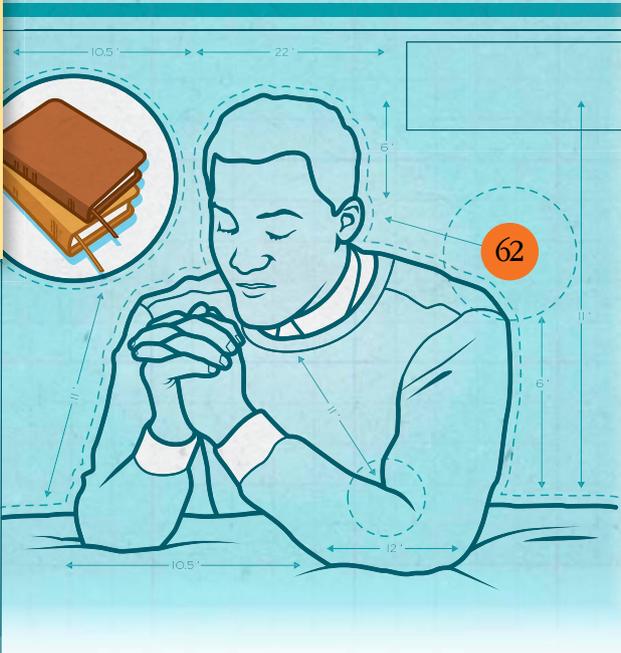
Front: Photograph of President Howard W. Hunter with granddaughters Kathleen and Anne. Inside front cover: Photograph by Abrar Mohsin. Inside back cover: Photograph by Robert Casey.



44

44 Revealed Realities of Mortality
 By Elder Paul B. Pieper
We must reject Satan's lies in order to experience the fulness of mortality that leads to eternal happiness.

See if you can find the Liahona hidden in this issue. Hint: What kind of journeys have you been on?



50 2016 Mutual Theme: Press Forward with a Steadfastness in Christ
 By the Young Men and Young Women General Presidencies

52 Line upon Line: 2 Nephi 31:20

53 Poster: Press Forward

54 Learning of Heavenly Father: A Study of Epic Proportions
How well do you know your Heavenly Father?

56 Moroni, My Mom, and a Lesson for My Life
 By Louisa Hoe
Learning the gospel at home was a great blessing for me.

58 Our Space

60 Answers from Church Leaders: How to Press Forward
 By Elder Neil L. Andersen

61 To the Point

62 Let God Be Your Architect
 By David Dickson
God has a better plan for your life than you could possibly dream of.



71

66 Children Who Stand Tall: Standing Tall in Ethiopia
 By Amie Jane Leavitt

68 Reading Better Every Day
 By Marissa Widdison and Sonia Quenallata
The Book of Mormon helped Joseph learn to read better!

70 Answers from an Apostle: How Can I Get My Own Testimony?
 By Elder Robert D. Hales

71 Wilford's Fast Offering
 By Elder Chi Hong (Sam) Wong
Wilford didn't make any money, but he still wanted to share what he did have.

72 The Book of Mormon Teaches about Jesus Christ
All the prophets in the Book of Mormon taught about Jesus.

74 Book of Mormon Hero: Nephi Was Obedient

75 I Can Read the Book of Mormon

76 For Young Children: A Journey in the Wilderness

79 Coloring Page: I Can Choose the Right

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

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

The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

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

Editor: Joseph W. Sitati

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

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

Managing Director: David T. Warner

Director of Operations: Vincent A. Vaughn

Director of Church Magazines: Allan R. Loyborg

Business Manager: Garff Cannon

Managing Editor: R. Val Johnson

Assistant Managing Editor: Ryan Carr

Publication Assistant: Megan VerHoeft

Writing and Editing: Brittany Beattie, David Dickson, David A. Edwards, Matthew D. Flitton, Lori Fuller, Garrett H. Garff, LaRene Porter Gaunt, Jill Hacking, Charlotte Larcabal, Mindy Anne Leavitt, Michael R. Morris, Sally Johnson Odekirk, Joshua J. Perkey, Jan Pinborough, Richard M. Romney, Paul VanDenBerghe, Marissa Widdison

Editorial Intern: Alicia K. Stanton

Managing Art Director: J. Scott Knudsen

Art Director: Tadd R. Peterson

Design: Jeanette Andrews, Fay P. Andrus, Mandie Bentley, C. Kimball Bott, Thomas Child, Nate Gines, Colleen Hinckley, Eric P. Johnsen, Susan Lofgren, Scott M. Mooy, Mark W. Robison, Brad Teare, K. Nicole Walkenhorst

Intellectual Property Coordinator:

Collette Nebeker Aune

Production Manager: Jane Ann Peters

Production: Connie Bowthorpe Bridge, Julie Burdett, Katie Duncan, Bryan W. Gygi, Denise Kirby, Ginny J. Nilson, Gayle Tate Rafferty

Prepress: Jeff L. Martin

Printing Director: Craig K. Sedgwick

Distribution Director: Stephen R. Christiansen

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

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

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

© 2016 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America.

Text and visual material in the *Liahona* may be copied for incidental, noncommercial church or home use. Visual material may not be copied if restrictions are indicated in the credit line with the artwork. Copyright questions should be addressed to Intellectual Property Office, 50 E. North Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150, USA; email: cor-intellectualproperty@ldschurch.org.

For Readers in the United States and Canada:

January 2016 Vol. 40 No. 1. LIAHONA (USPS 311-480) English (ISSN 1080-9554) is published monthly by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 50 E. North Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150. USA subscription price is \$10.00 per year; Canada, \$12.00 plus applicable taxes. Periodicals Postage Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah. Sixty days' notice required for change of address. Include address label from a recent issue; old and new address must be included. Send USA and Canadian subscriptions to Salt Lake Distribution Center at address below. Subscription help line: 1-800-537-5971. Credit card orders (American Express, Discover, MasterCard, Visa) may be taken by phone or at store.lds.org. (Canada Post Information: Publication Agreement #40017431)

POSTMASTER: Send all UAA to CFS (see DMM 707.4.12.5). NONPOSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES: Send address changes to Distribution Services, Church Magazines, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.

Family Home Evening Ideas

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



"Come, Follow Me: Teaching the Basics at Home," page 28: This article has teaching and learning ideas for six topics. You might use the idea for January's youth topic, the Godhead, in a family home evening. You could also review as a family the learning methods described in the article and discuss which ones have been particularly helpful for your family. You might invite family members to use these methods to prepare future family home evening lessons based on the gospel topics in this article.

"A Journey in the Wilderness," page 76: Consider setting up a small obstacle course in your home, perhaps rearranging furniture and tying string across hallways. Blindfold each family member except one who will instruct the rest of the family how to pass through it. Afterward you might discuss how Heavenly Father guided Nephi and his family to the promised land. You could then discuss the ways Heavenly Father has provided for you and your family to help you make it safely home to Him.

IN YOUR LANGUAGE

The *Liahona* and other Church materials are available in many languages at languages.lds.org. Visit [facebook.com/liahona.magazine](https://www.facebook.com/liahona.magazine) (available in English, Portuguese, and Spanish) to find family home evening ideas, Sunday lesson helps, and articles you can share with friends and family.

TOPICS IN THIS ISSUE

Numbers represent the first page of the article.

Agency, 4, 44

Attitude, 10, 50

Book of Mormon, 12, 24, 40, 41, 42, 43, 66, 68, 72, 74, 75, 76

Callings, 15

Children, 14, 15, 44

Conversion, 40

Eternal life, 50, 52

Faith, 50, 58, 60, 62, 80

Family, 7, 12, 14

Family home evening, 12, 28, 54

Fast offerings, 71

Godhead, 28, 32

Heavenly Father, 32, 54, 70

Holy Ghost, 4, 28, 32, 50, 52, 70

Hope, 50, 52, 60, 62

Hunter, Howard W., 18

Jesus Christ, 28, 32, 50, 52, 70, 72

Joy, 4, 10

Kindness, 18, 71

Love, 4, 32, 50, 52, 60

Marriage, 18, 44

Missionary work, 12, 58, 66

Obedience, 4, 32, 60, 62, 70, 74

Plan of salvation, 28, 44

Prayer, 14, 15

Priesthood, 28, 50

Prophets, 18, 28

Sacrifice, 18, 71

Scripture study, 12, 54, 56, 58, 70, 72, 75

Teaching, 28

Testimony, 32, 42, 58, 66, 70

Work, 44

Youth, 50, 58



By President
Henry B. Eyring

First Counselor in
the First Presidency

Happiness

FOR THOSE
WE LOVE

All of us want happiness for those we love, and we want as little pain for them as possible. As we read the accounts of happiness—and of pain—in the Book of Mormon, our hearts are stirred as we think of our loved ones. Here is a true account of a time of happiness:

“And it came to pass that there was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people.

“And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness; and surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God.”

Then we read:

“And how blessed were they! For the Lord did bless them in all their doings; yea, even they were blessed and prospered until an hundred and ten years had passed away; and the first generation from Christ had passed away, and there was no contention in all the land” (4 Nephi 1:15–16, 18).

Loving disciples of Christ pray and work for such a blessing for others and for themselves. From accounts in the Book of Mormon and, for many of us, from our own experience, we know that the gift of happiness is attainable. We know that the path to happiness is well marked. We also know that maintaining happiness is not easy unless, as with the Nephites after the Savior’s visit, “the love of God” dwells in our hearts.

That love was in the hearts of the Nephites because they kept the law that made it possible. A summary of that law is found in the sacramental prayers, which begin with a heartfelt plea to our loving Heavenly Father. We pray with a heart full of faith in, and with a deep love for, our personal Savior. We commit with real intent to take upon us His name, to remember Him, and to keep all His commandments. Finally, we exercise faith that the Holy Ghost, the third member of the Godhead, may always be with us, testifying to our hearts of the Father and of His Beloved Son. (See D&C 20:77, 79.)

With the companionship of the Holy Ghost, our hearts can change so that we want and welcome the love of our Heavenly Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ. The way to get the love of God into our hearts is simple, as is the way to lose the feeling of that love in our hearts. For instance, someone may choose to pray less often to Heavenly Father or not to pay a full tithing or to stop feasting on the word of God or to ignore the poor and the needy.

Any choice not to keep the Lord’s commandments can cause the Spirit to withdraw from our hearts. With that loss, happiness diminishes.

The happiness we want for our loved ones depends on their choices. As much as we love a child, an investigator, or our friends, we cannot force them to keep the commandments so that they qualify for the Holy Ghost to touch and change their hearts.



So the best help we can give is whatever leads those we love to watch over their own choices. Alma did it with an invitation you might offer:

“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and call on his holy name, and watch and pray continually, that ye

may not be tempted above that which ye can bear, and thus be led by the Holy Spirit, becoming humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love and all long-suffering;

“Having faith on the Lord; having a hope that ye shall receive eternal life;

having the love of God always in your hearts, that ye may be lifted up at the last day and enter into his rest” (Alma 13:28–29).

I pray that those you love may accept an inspired invitation to choose the path to lasting happiness. ■

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

President Eyring teaches that the happiness we feel in life depends on the decisions we make. As you discuss this message, consider focusing on the things President Eyring mentions we can choose to do (such as

praying, working, exercising faith, and committing ourselves with real intent) to lead us to that path of happiness. You could invite those you teach to write down two or three actions they would like to take that can better direct them to “the path to lasting happiness.”



Actions That Lead to Happiness

President Eyring teaches that “the happiness we want for our loved ones depends on their choices.”

You can read about the effect that choices can have from the examples of Nephi, Laman, and Lemuel. Laman and Lemuel murmured and didn’t want to keep the commandments (see 1 Nephi 2:12). As a result, they and their descendants were cursed and cut off from the Lord’s presence (see 2 Nephi 5:20–24). Nephi chose to obey the commandments (see 1 Nephi 3:7), and because of that, he and his people “lived after the manner of happiness” (2 Nephi 5:27).

You can choose to be righteous and be happy. But people around you will probably still make poor choices that lead to misery or discomfort. While those decisions are theirs to make, your example can influence their choices for good. How can your choices bring happiness to others? Discuss with your family different ways you can positively influence those around you and help them feel happiness.

CHILDREN

The Kindness Challenge

When Jesus visited the people in the Americas, He taught them to love each other and to be kind. What can you do to follow Jesus and love others? Here are some ideas. Check off each challenge as you go.



I can smile at someone who looks lonely.

I can _____

 _____.



I can read or watch a conference talk about being kind.

I can hug someone who is sad.

I can _____

 _____.



I can sing a Primary song for my family.



I can serve someone in secret.

Prayerfully study this material and seek to know what to share. How will understanding the doctrine of the family bless those you watch over through visiting teaching? For more information, go to reliefsociety.lds.org.

The Family: A Proclamation to the World

Of the general Relief Society meeting in 1995, when President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) first read “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women general president, said: “We were grateful for and valued the clarity, simplicity, and truth of this revelatory document. . . . The proclamation on the family has become our benchmark for judging the philosophies of the world, and I testify that the principles set forth . . . are as true today as they were when they were given to us by a prophet of God nearly 20 years ago.”¹

“From the family proclamation,” adds Carole M. Stephens, first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, “we learn, ‘In the premortal realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshipped God as their Eternal Father’² . . .

“ . . . We each belong to and are needed in the family of God.”³

We live in a time when parents must protect their homes and their



families. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” can guide us.

Additional Scriptures

Mosiah 8:16–17; Doctrine and Covenants 1:38

NOTES

1. Bonnie L. Oscarson, “Defenders of the Family Proclamation,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2015, 14–15.
2. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129.
3. Carole M. Stephens, “The Family Is of God,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2015, 11.
4. Nicole Seymour, “The Family: A Proclamation to the World’ reaches 10-Year Milestone,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2005, 127.
5. Barbara Thompson, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 148.

Consider This

How is “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” a document for our day?

Faith, Family, Relief



Living Stories

“Lee Mei Chen Ho from the Tao Yuan Third Ward, Tao Yuan Taiwan Stake, said the proclamation has taught her that family relationships help develop divine characteristics such as faith, patience, and love. ‘When I try to improve myself according to the proclamation, I can experience real happiness,’ she said.”⁴

Barbara Thompson, who was present when the proclamation was read for the first time and later served as a counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, said: “I thought for a moment that [the family proclamation] really didn’t pertain too much to me since I wasn’t married and didn’t have any children. But almost as quickly I thought, ‘But it does pertain to me. I am a member of a family. I am a daughter, a sister, an aunt, a cousin, a niece, and a granddaughter. . . . Even if I were the only living member of my family, I am still a member of God’s family.’”⁵

OCTOBER 2015 CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

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

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

DOCTRINAL HIGHLIGHT



PHOTOGRAPH OF MEMBERS WATCHING CONFERENCE IN KYIV, UKRAINE, BY MARINA LUKACH

Faith Is a Choice

“Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is not something ethereal, floating loosely in the air. Faith does not fall upon us by chance or stay with us by birth-right. It is, as the scriptures say, ‘substance . . . , the evidence of things not seen’ [Hebrews 11:1]. Faith emits a spiritual light, and that light is discernible. Faith in Jesus Christ is a gift from heaven that comes as we choose to believe and as we seek

it and hold on to it. Your faith is either growing stronger or becoming weaker. Faith is a principle of power, important not only in this life but also in our progression beyond the veil. By the grace of Christ, we will one day be saved through faith on His name. The future of your faith is not by chance, but by choice.”

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Faith Is Not by Chance, but by Choice,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 65.

PROPHETIC PROMISE



Let Your Light Shine

“As we follow the example of the Savior, ours will be the opportunity to be a light in the lives of others, whether they be our own family members and friends, our co-workers, mere acquaintances, or total strangers.

“To each of you, I say that you are a son or daughter of our Heavenly Father. You have come from His presence to live on this earth for a season, to reflect the Savior’s love and teachings, and to bravely let your light shine for all to see. When that season on earth has ended, if you have done your part, yours will be the glorious blessing of returning to live with Him forever.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Be an Example and a Light,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 88.

NEW SPECIAL WITNESSES



"I'm grateful for our Savior's Atonement and wish like Alma to shout it with the trump of God."
—Elder Ronald A. Rasband, "I Stand All Amazed," 90.



"I received a distinct impression . . . to focus not on what I can't do but rather on what I can do. I can testify of the plain and precious truths of the gospel." —Elder Gary E. Stevenson, "Plain and Precious Truths," 92.



"With all my heart I want to be a true follower of Jesus Christ. I love Him. I adore Him. I witness of His living reality."
—Elder Dale G. Renlund, "Through God's Eyes," 94.

ANSWERS FOR YOU

Each conference, prophets and apostles give inspired answers to questions Church members may have. Use your November 2015 issue or visit conference.lds.org to find answers to these questions:

- Why does the Church seem to work better for some people than for others? See Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "It Works Wonderfully!" 20.
- What are some truths and doctrines that can keep us safely anchored to the Church? See M. Russell Ballard, "God Is at the Helm," 24.
- Why are the senior leadership positions in the Church filled by older men? See David A. Bednar, "Chosen to Bear Testimony of My Name," 128.
- Why do I need to participate in the Church if I already consider myself spiritual without it? See D. Todd Christofferson, "Why the Church," 108.

DRAWING PARALLELS

The Sacrament

Multiple speakers sometimes address the same gospel topic. Here is what three speakers said about the sacrament:

- "If we partake of the sacrament in faith, the Holy Ghost will then be able to protect us and those we love from the temptations that come with increasing intensity and frequency." —President Henry B. Eyring, "The Holy Ghost as Your Companion," 104.
- "The Sabbath and the sacrament become much more enjoyable as we study the stories of Christ. In so doing, we create traditions that build our faith and testimony and also protect our family." —Elder Claudio R. M. Costa, "That They Do Always Remember Him," 101.
- "A perfect time to ask the Lord, 'What lack I yet?' is when we take the sacrament. . . . In this reverent atmosphere, as our thoughts are turned heavenward, the Lord can gently tell us what we need to work on next." —Elder Larry R. Lawrence, "What Lack I Yet?" 34.

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

WE BELIEVE IN BEING POSITIVE

We often find counsel in the scriptures to “rejoice” and “be of good cheer.” The Lord tells us in 2 Nephi 2:25, “Men are, that they might have joy.” The purpose of this life is to lead us to the joy the Lord ultimately promises.

Being of good cheer does not mean being ignorant or naive to life’s challenges. Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described cheerfulness as “a deep trust in God’s

unfolding purposes—not only for all of mankind, but for each of us as individuals.”¹ Challenges will certainly come, for they are a natural part of mortality, but we don’t have to be weighed down by discouragement and sadness. We can put our trust in the Lord and be positive.

Jesus Christ promised us we would experience tribulation, but He also urged, “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). President Ezra Taft Benson

(1899–1994) taught that because we have the gospel, “we as Latter-day Saints should be the most optimistic and the least pessimistic.”²

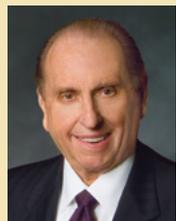
We all feel sorrow and discouragement from time to time, but we can still be of good cheer. Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “I witness that with faith in the Savior and obedience to His teachings, happiness never ends, but sadness does.”³ We can live with joy knowing that our “afflictions shall be but a small moment” (D&C 121:7).

As we put our trust in God’s plan for us and choose to live with a positive attitude, our ability to deal with life’s challenges will be strengthened. Our worries and fears will affect us less, and we will experience the joy He wants for us. ■

NOTES

1. Neal A. Maxwell, “But a Few Days” (address given to CES Religious Educators, Sept. 10, 1982), 4.
2. Ezra Taft Benson, “Do Not Despair,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, 65.
3. Richard G. Scott, “Finding Joy in Life,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 26.
4. Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Continuing Pursuit of Truth,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1986, 4.

CHOOSE TO BE HAPPY



“So much in life depends on our attitude. The way we choose to see things and respond to others makes all the difference.

To do the best we can and then to choose to be happy about our

circumstances, whatever they may be, can bring peace and contentment. . . . We can’t direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails. For maximum happiness, peace, and contentment, may we choose a positive attitude.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Living the Abundant Life,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Jan. 2012, 4.

The scriptures and the prophets teach us ways we can be positive:

A true fulness of joy comes only through God (see D&C 101:36). As we turn to Him, our hearts will change.



God blesses each of our lives (see Psalm 145:9). We can strive to be aware of His tender mercies in our lives.



Keeping our focus on God is not a one-time occurrence. We must make and consistently keep covenants, such as worthily partaking of the sacrament every week.



We, like Nephi, can delight in the scriptures (2 Nephi 4:15–16). Reading the words of God and His prophets will lift our hearts.



President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) encouraged us to “speak of one another’s virtues more than we speak of one another’s faults” and to “more generously compliment virtue and effort.”⁴



OUR BEST DEFENSE AGAINST PORNOGRAPHY

By Kerry Hanson Jensen

In one verse of scripture, I found my family's key to avoiding the explicit images that seemed to be everywhere.

I was shopping for school clothes with my nine-year-old son when our conversation turned from lighthearted chitchat to a more serious question. “Mom, why do they have to put that stuff in all the store windows?”

“That stuff” he was referring to was immodest pictures displayed in the windows of just about every shop we passed. Although pictures like these had always been there, I hadn’t paid much attention to them before. But the fact that my oldest son was starting to take notice awakened a new awareness in me. Over the next weeks, I began to see these images everywhere: on television, at the grocery store, at restaurants, in advertisements that came in the mail. I couldn’t get away from them. Some images were so explicit that I began to feel perplexed, and a feeling of alarm began to grow in my heart. How was I supposed to protect my family from the traps of pornography?

Every general conference we hear warnings about its devastating

effects, and we have been acquainted with its victims. We had taken all of the precautions at home with our computer and the media we allowed there, but clearly, unless our children were quarantined, there seemed to be no way to completely avoid seeing unwanted images that might lead to further curiosity. Could my son’s innocent gaze at the grocery store turn into a lifetime struggle with pornography? My anxiety over this issue grew, and I began to feel a sense of helplessness and vulnerability in protecting my children.

Then one day while I was reading in the Book of Mormon, I unexpectedly

found reassurance in 1 Nephi 15. Nephi is explaining Lehi’s vision of the tree of life to Laman and Lemuel when they ask the meaning of the river of water. Nephi answers in verse 27: “And I said unto them that the water which my father saw was filthiness; *and so much was his mind swallowed up in other things that he beheld not the filthiness of the water*” (emphasis added). Lehi’s mind was focused on the tree of life and getting his family to it to partake of its fruit! He didn’t even see the filthiness because of this focus.

That was the answer! Keeping inappropriate media out of our home was a start, but a more direct and conscious effort to teach our children the gospel is what would ultimately be their best defense against anything that could lead them away.

Because of this experience with the scriptures, my husband and I decided to redouble our efforts in teaching our children and thus keep our eyes on the love of God instead of the filthiness in

For those struggling with pornography, resources can be found on the Church’s website overcomingpornography.org and in a recent article by Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “Recovering from the Trap of Pornography,” in the October 2015 *Ensign* and *Liahona*.



Lehi's mind was focused on the tree of life and getting his family to it to partake of the fruit! He did not even see the filthiness because of this focus.

the world. We have felt impressed to focus on three different areas*:

1. Increasing our own personal scripture study and decreasing the “noise” around us. Like Lehi, our minds must be filled with positive things in order to hear the promptings of the Spirit and to keep us focused on anchoring our family in the gospel. My husband and I try to regularly spend time talking about the spiritual needs of each individual in the family and how we can meet those needs and create a home where the Spirit can thrive.

2. Making family scripture study more meaningful. Although it takes a lot of effort just to gather the family

together daily to read scriptures, we are trying to have more discussion when we read the scriptures. We have a wide range of ages with our children, so we read scriptures with the younger kids later in the day and the oldest kids early in the morning when the little ones are asleep so there is less distraction and more opportunity for discussion. We have found that almost daily there is discussion of current events that relates to the scriptures we are reading.

Most mornings are far from idyllic, but with perseverance we are finding that the kids really are listening and participating, even though sometimes it takes a lot of effort to get everyone together.

3. Doing missionary work.

When we bear testimony, the Spirit testifies that what we are saying is true, and our testimonies grow. We are trying to make missionary work a family affair. We talk about sharing the gospel, and we regularly invite friends to our home. We also take every opportunity to have the missionaries and investigators over for gospel discussion. We have had wonderful experiences with new members of the Church and investigators in our home, and it has made an impression on our children as they reflect on their own testimonies and hear those of the missionaries.

I am so grateful for the Book of Mormon and the miraculous way a single verse of scripture has given me reassurance and a clear direction for our family. The scriptures can truly replace fear and helplessness with power and peace. ■

The author lives in Washington, USA.

* Other families might need different areas of focus, such as lessons to teach children about media, our bodies, and healthy sexuality.

NOT THE MIRACLE WE WANTED

By Brittany King

Sometimes we pray and pray until our knees are sore for the miracle we want, but then God gives us the miracle we need.

In a few months I would graduate from college and, I hoped, have my first baby. My husband was as eager as I was to start having children.

One year, four months, dozens of negative pregnancy tests, five negative ovulation tests, two miserable months on medication, and thousands of tears later, we had no baby and little hope for natural conception. When the doctor's office called and offered to refer us to an infertility specialist, we declined. Too stressed to handle more, we needed a break. Before I hung up, the nurse said, "Call us if you have a miracle."

Miracles are, well, miraculous. They come big and small. They come when we least expect them and when we desperately need them. And sometimes we pray and pray until our knees are sore for the miracle we want, but then God gives us the miracle we need.

For a long time we prayed desperately for a child, but the heavens seemed silent. Eventually it occurred

to us that we were praying for the wrong thing. God knows what blessings we need and when we need them. He sees the big picture. We see *right now*. So we changed. We stopped praying for what we wanted and instead started saying "thank you."

Heavenly Father, thank Thee for blessing us with each other.

Thank Thee for caring family and friends.



Thank Thee for the children around us whom we can enjoy until we have our own.

Thank Thee for doctors and science that help uncover what does and doesn't work in our bodies.

And (now the hardest thing to say) thank Thee for this trial.

Being grateful for the very thing breaking our hearts was hard, but we knew that Heavenly Father loved us. So somewhere in this trial were blessings. We would never find the blessings if we let the trial overtake us. Instead, we chose to be grateful—and when we did, the blessings became clear:

We relied on each other more, shared our feelings more, loved each other more.

We relied on the Lord more and prayed more.

We grew closer to the Savior, felt His presence more, loved Him more.

We felt the love of family and friends who were praying for us.

And once we acknowledged all these blessings, we were overcome with the purest, sweetest peace imaginable.

That we weren't having a family right then didn't mean God didn't care. We just needed to trust in His timing, and we needed His peace to keep that trust alive. We needed His peace to bind up our breaking hearts and give us the faith to keep moving forward.

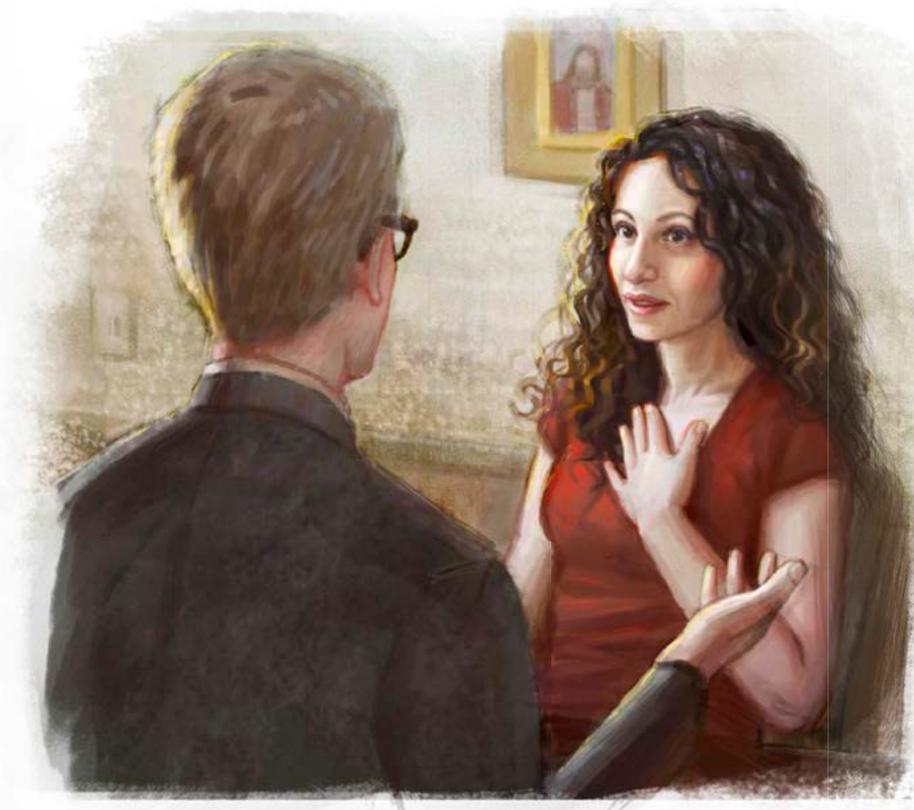
Peace was the miracle we needed—not the miracle we'd been begging for, but the one we needed most. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

PRAY ABOUT IT

By Taryn Taylor

I had been asking the Lord to show me how to be a better mother, and He gave me a calling that would teach me how.



I told the bishop he had the wrong person.

“I do not like other people’s children, I’ve never taught children, and I can’t sing,” I said.

“Sister Taylor,” he replied, “the Lord qualifies whomever He calls. You’ll be great.”

He asked me to think about the calling and let him know the next Sunday whether I would accept it.

“I’m trying to raise a six-year-old, a three-year-old, and a baby,” I said. “I can barely make it through the day with my own children, and now you want to put me with 40 more and have me teach them music?”

He responded, “Pray about it.”

That afternoon I tried to explain to my husband, Mark, why the calling was a bad idea. How could I work in Primary when I couldn’t even be the kind of mother to my own children I wanted to be? A fear had been plaguing me for months that I was failing as a mother.

The week went by in a blur, but my thoughts kept turning to the bishop’s parting words. Finally, Sunday morning in my bedroom, I fell to my knees in prayer. Tears started down my face, but a sweet peace filled my heart. Immediately I knew it was right to accept the calling. As I submitted to the Lord’s will, all the angst fled my heart.

When I entered the Primary room after sacrament meeting, the Primary president introduced me, and the children sang a welcome song. Looking into their hopeful eyes and seeing my six-year-old son beam, I resolved to be the best Primary chorister I could be.

From then on I spent a lot of time learning songs and preparing lessons. I played the Primary songs at home, in the car, and on walks. I researched different teaching methods and devoted hours each week to making posters and developing games.

As I prepared a lesson for singing time one afternoon at the kitchen table, I was humming the song “Scripture

Power.” My six-year-old was sitting at the counter eating a sandwich, and my three-year-old was cutting pieces of paper next to me. As I hummed the chorus, suddenly both children burst out:

*Scripture power keeps me safe
from sin.*

*Scripture power is the power to win.
Scripture power! Ev’ry day I need
The power that I get each time
I read.¹*

That’s when I knew that the calling was an answer to my prayers. I had been asking the Lord to show me how to be a better mother, and He gave me a calling that would teach me how as I taught music to my children.

I am so grateful for my bishop’s inspiration and his loving words: “Pray about it.” ■

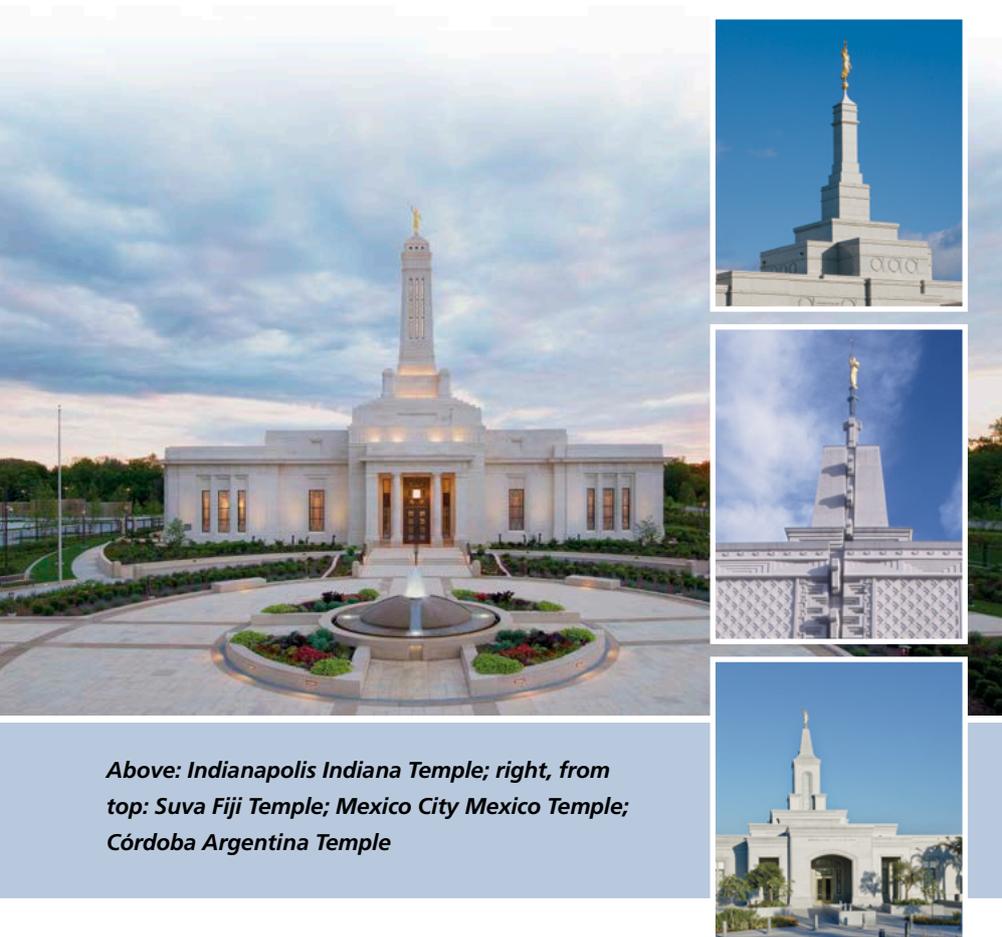
The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTE

1. Clive Romney, “Scripture Power,” [lds.org/callings/primary/sharing-time-music](https://www.lds.org/callings/primary/sharing-time-music).

NEWS OF THE CHURCH

Visit news.lds.org for more Church news and events.



Above: Indianapolis Indiana Temple; right, from top: Suva Fiji Temple; Mexico City Mexico Temple; Córdoba Argentina Temple

Temples Progressing

In 2015, five temples were dedicated, two rededicated, and groundbreakings were held for four more.

Temples dedicated in 2015:

Córdoba, Argentina; Payson, Utah, USA; Trujillo, Peru; Indianapolis, Indiana, USA; and Tijuana, Mexico.

Temples rededicated in 2015:

Mexico City, Mexico and Montreal, Quebec, Canada. The Fiji Suva Temple is scheduled to be rededicated in February 2016.

Groundbreakings held in 2015:

Star Valley, Wyoming, USA; Cedar City, Utah, USA; Concepción, Chile; and Tucson, Arizona, USA.

The Frankfurt Germany Temple was closed for renovation in September 2015, and the Jordan River Utah Temple will be closed for renovation beginning in February 2016. The Provo City Center Temple in Provo, Utah, USA, will be dedicated in March 2016.

The Church has 148 operating temples around the world, with 11 more under construction and 14 announced but not yet begun. ■

Defending Religious Freedom

Those who believe that God gave us the ability to choose between right and wrong must work together to strengthen the freedom to advocate and practice religious beliefs, Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said in an address to the Argentine Council for International Relations.

“The preservation of religious freedom depends upon public understanding of and support for this vital freedom,” he said. “It depends upon the value the public attaches to the teachings of right and wrong in churches, synagogues, and mosques. Believers and nonbelievers must be helped to understand that it is faith in God—however defined—that translates religious teachings into the moral behavior that benefits the nation.” ■

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke to the Argentine Council for International Relations (CARI) in Argentina on April 23, 2015.



Anxiously Engaged

Latter-day Saints are “anxiously engaged” (see D&C 58:27) in doing good throughout the world. Here are some highlights from last year:

- In Honduras, 600 Latter-day Saint youth worked alongside community members and medical and military representatives to clean areas that attract mosquitoes.
- In India, Latter-day Saints youth painted hallways and cleaned classrooms in the Government Girls High School in Hyderabad.
- In Latvia, members—dressed in Mormon Helping Hands vests and T-shirts—cleaned a community area, gathering 70 bags of trash.
- In Tonga, Latter-day Saints gathered and sent cassava and breadfruit to Vanuatu, to assist victims of Cyclone Pam.
- In Malaysia, the Church worked with government agencies to provide cooking and refrigeration appliances to victims of flooding and taught women how to cook using an electric mixer and an oven.
- In the Solomon Islands, members helped install tanks to provide clean water for about 2,000 people.
- In Russia, Latter-day Saints joined in an Easter weekend community cleanup.
- In Turkey, Church members joined an interfaith choir that included Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims. ■



From top: Volunteers serve in Latvia, the Solomon Islands, and Honduras.



Elder Neil L. Andersen with Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat

Elder Andersen in Jerusalem

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, while attending an international genealogical conference in Jerusalem, met with Nir Barkat, mayor of the city. They discussed the history and activities of the Brigham Young University Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies, which has operated in Jerusalem for 27 years, as well as the Church’s work to preserve family history.

The genealogy conference attracted hundreds of participants, including family history experts and researchers from Israel, North America, Europe, and other parts of the world. ■



Howard W. Hunter: My Father, the Prophet



By Richard A. Hunter

(shown at left)

I have come to believe that men and women are measured by what they value and by what they are willing to do about those values. Great people seem to consistently do whatever is required to live by their values, even at great sacrifice. My father was one of these great people. I had the privilege of learning remarkable things from him about the true meaning of greatness. The lessons did not come from what he told me but from what he did and who he was.

The following stories illustrate what it was like to grow up with my father: a lawyer, a musician, a caregiver, a prophet—above all, a man who exuded kindness and was willing to give anything for God and family.

Sacrificing for the Good of His Family

When I was a teenager, I was rummaging in the attic one day and came across a pile of dusty boxes. I discovered a clarinet, a saxophone, a violin, and a trumpet. After asking my dad about them, I learned that these were some of the instruments he played. He had a band when he was in high school in Boise, Idaho, USA. He was a talented musician who deeply loved music and making music. His band played at major social events in Boise and even on a cruise ship that sailed to Asia. After he moved to Southern California, USA, in 1928, the band reorganized and became very popular.

In 1931 he married my mother, Clara Jeffs. They wanted to have children. He felt that for him the demands of the entertainment world were inconsistent with the meaningful family he wanted. So one day he put all the instruments in their cases and carried them to the attic. Save for rare family events, he never played them again.

Friends often ask me two questions: “What was it like to be the son of a prophet and grow up with such a remarkable man?” and “Do you really think your father was a prophet of God?”



would never play them again, he could not bear the thought of giving them up. It was only then that I realized what a great sacrifice he had made.

Developing a Commitment to Family History

After my parents were married, one of Dad's first callings was to teach a family history class. During this time he became personally committed to doing family history work. His law office calendar had many afternoons blocked off to go to the Los Angeles public library to do genealogical research. He started preparing six-foot-long (1.8 m) family group sheets, which he bound in sturdy ledgers.

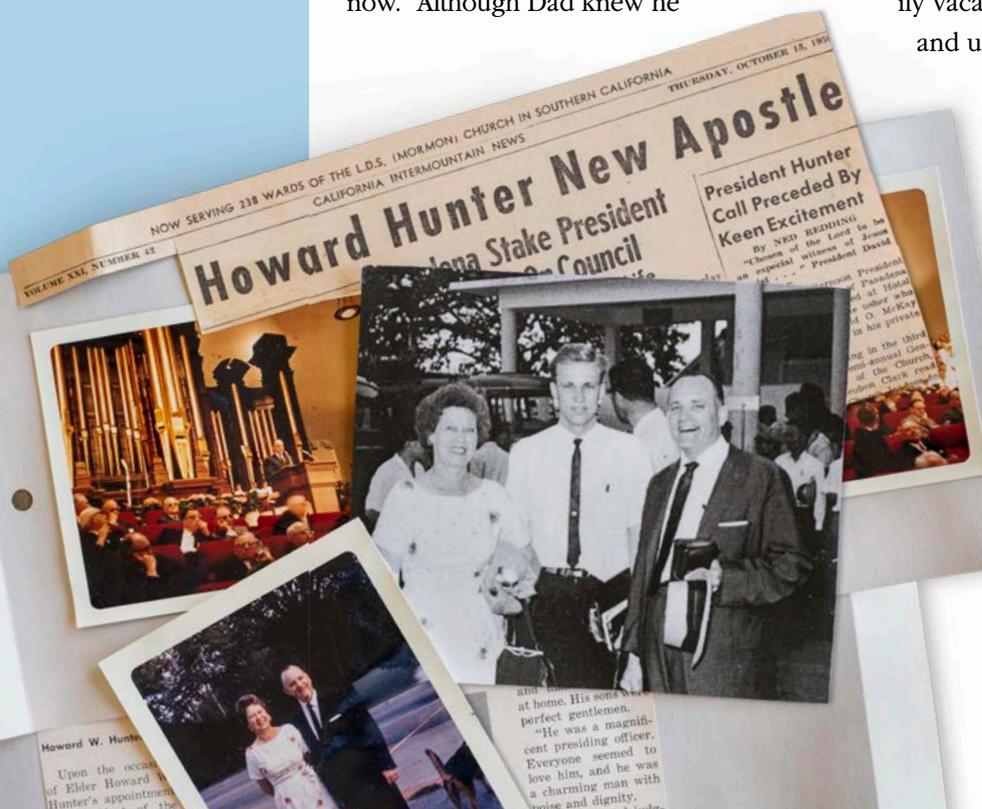
Dad would also gather data and connect with our relatives. He sent hundreds of letters to his relatives as he discovered who they were. He peppered our family vacations with visits to cousins, aunts, and uncles. From this I learned of the good that can be done when you sacrifice a pleasant day of vacationing.

Showing His Grit in Law School

When I was born, my father was reading a textbook on wills and testaments in the hospital waiting room. He had decided to become a law student when he worked with lawyers at the



I never realized what a sacrifice he had made until later. In 1993 he moved from his Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, home to an apartment in downtown Salt Lake City, near his office. During the move we came across the instruments again. I asked him if he would like to give them to the Church because of the important part they played in his young life. His answer took me by surprise: "Not yet. I can't part with them now." Although Dad knew he





“The family is the most important unit in time and in eternity and, as such, transcends every other interest in life.”¹

Los Angeles Flood Control District in Southern California. Always a family man, my dad felt he could support the family better if he were a lawyer himself. With a wife, two children, and a full-time job, however, he knew school and studying would have to be at night.

Later, when I was in law school myself, I wondered how my dad had managed. I asked, “When did you sleep?” He said he studied as much as he could, and when he was so tired that he couldn’t study anymore, he would sleep for three to four hours. That went on for five years. I marveled at his grit.

Spending Time with His Sons

Dad had a busy life, but he still made time for his family. When I was a Boy Scout, our troop planned to go down the Rogue River in Oregon, USA, in kayaks we had built ourselves. Dad volunteered to go with us even though he was not the camping, sleeping-on-the-ground kind. We spent hours in the garage working together building our two-man kayak.

Before long, we were on the river. I took the pivot position in front, and Dad took the back. As we progressed down the river, we soon headed into particularly dangerous falls.

The nose of our kayak went deep into the water at the bottom of the falls and turned over, tossing us both through the splashguard into the river. I came up and looked for Dad but couldn’t see him. He eventually bobbed up, sputtering, and we managed to right the kayak and get back in. Before we could make it to shore to assess what happened, the river swept us into the next set of rapids. We didn’t have time to get the kayak lined up again when an eddy spun us around, and we shot through a long set of rapids backwards and out of control.

We eventually made it back to camp that evening along with the other Scouts. Dad told us in some detail the story of Job. From the day’s events and the account of Job, we learned that life is not always easy. The next morning, rather than return home, Dad climbed back into our little boat and off we went. This experience taught me what a great man does when he values his family.

Caring for His Wife

In 1970 my mother was diagnosed with a chronic illness that was shutting down the arteries that fed her brain. She was a particularly bright, elegant, and engaging woman with sparkling eyes. But over the next 13 years, her condition declined. It was like losing a good friend piece by piece.

Dad stepped in to become her primary caregiver. At first he made small sacrifices to make her comfortable and cheerful. He prepared her meals, sang her songs, and held her hand. As time went on, however, caring for my mother became more difficult and more physical. It must have been trying for Dad.

As Mother’s condition worsened, my dad’s own health became a concern. I was there when his doctor told him that Mother needed full-time care in a skilled nursing facility. He would likely die if he continued to give the level of care she required, and then she would have no one to take care of her.

For the last 13 months of my mother’s life, Dad visited her in the nursing facility every day that he was not away on a Church assignment. She didn’t recognize him, but that made no difference to him. He spoke with her as though everything was all right. I would see him return from visiting a stake conference in some far-off place. He would be exhausted. But the first thing he would do when he arrived was go see Mother, to bring what cheer he could.

"I accept, without reservation, the call . . . made of me, and I am willing to devote my life and all that I have to this service."²

My father could not have taken better care of my mother. I learned much about sacrifice from watching him take care of her.

Making Sacrifices for His Calling

Dad felt his calling as an Apostle was an absolute priority—and for good reason. There is only a small group of men called as special witnesses to lead God's work on the earth, and they can't take a day off, let alone a year.

Fulfilling his assignments was more important to my father than even his health. Dad left it to the Lord to renew his body (see D&C 84:33). He once asked me to go with him to a regional conference in Paris, France. His doctor thought he should take several days to make the trip because of the toll traveling would take on Dad's body,



but we flew directly to Paris. I could hardly keep my eyes open, and Dad was off energetically conducting meetings,

interviewing, and lifting others.

Toward the end of his life, he was often in terrible pain. I didn't know the human body could endure such pain.

"Dad," I asked, "do you think we really shouted for joy to have a body like this?" With conviction he answered, "Yes." Then he added with a bit of humor, "I'm not sure we knew the whole story."

Showing Kindness

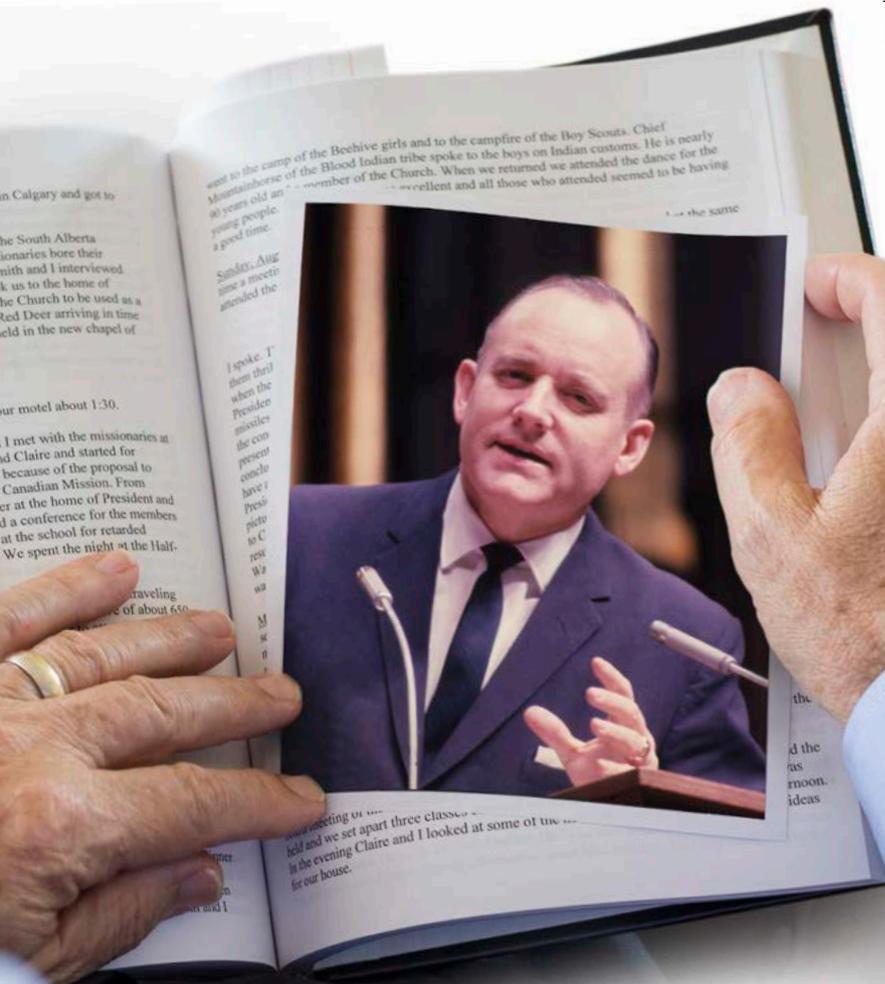
Dad valued kindness. He spoke with the moral authority of a kind man. He was known and respected by neighbors, family, friends, clients, co-workers, and Church members as a kind man.

I can't remember a time growing up when he treated me severely or unkindly. Even when I may have deserved a harsh response, he handled each situation by teaching rather than punishing. We would discuss why what I had done was wrong and what I should do about it. For me, that worked—or at least as well as could be expected.

My father served as a bishop of the El Sereno Ward when the Church was just getting started in the Los Angeles, California, area. The ward members still talk about his kindness to them and to their families.

One Sunday Dad was not at priesthood meeting.

Everyone wondered what had happened to



him. Later they discovered that one of the priests was having trouble getting up on time to go to the meeting. So in kindness he held the quorum meeting in the priest's bedroom.

One of my high school friends was an extraordinary person with great potential, but she worried about returning to college after her freshman year because of the cost. Dad found out about her concern and invited her to his office. At the end of the visit, he gave her a check he had already made out that enabled her to return to school.

I had another high school friend in the Pasadena Stake while Dad was the stake president. She went to Brigham Young University. While on a trip representing the school, she was involved in a terrible automobile accident and was stabilized in a hospital in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA. When Dad found out about her condition, he drove 270 miles (435 km) from Los Angeles to Las Vegas to see her and bring her love and encouragement.

I don't know how many acts of kindness like this Dad did. He never spoke of them to us or to anyone. Kind people usually don't.

I learned about some of these acts of kindness through letters that he kept from people who wrote to him in gratitude. This letter is typical of the kind he received: "Out of desperation I wrote concerning our oldest daughter. . . . You took the time and gentle caring to call her in for a visit, giving her your personal telephone number. She was surprised and amazed that you found her of worth. That call and personal visit was a genuine turning point in her life." The letter

then tells of her return to the Church, her sealing in the temple, and her happy and productive life. "After reading your statement [about kindness in the October 1994 general conference] it brought tears to my eyes to realize that you have been practicing for years what you are now encouraging all of us to do."

My Father, a Prophet of God

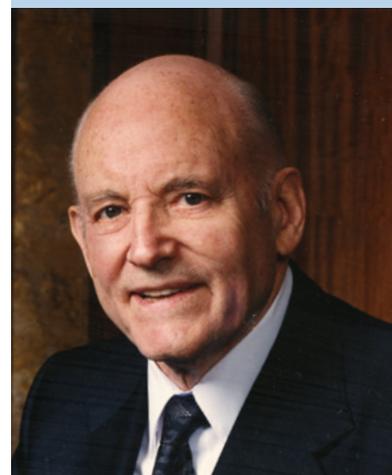
Dad believed in Jesus Christ. He made it easy for me to believe in Christ as well. I saw what someone does who believes in Christ and is like Him. I felt the peace and hope and joy that result from that kind of living.

Now for the last question: "Do you think your father was really a prophet of God?" This question has always been easy for me to answer. I can never remember a time in my father's personal, family, career, or Church life that would lead me to think that he was not qualified. But that is different than believing he was actually called as God's representative to all of His children on the earth. I have come to know that he was a prophet of God, but that knowledge didn't come from knowing him, watching his example, or being touched by what I saw him do and say. Those things help. But that knowledge was given to me as a merciful gift by the same God who called him. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Howard W. Hunter* (2015), 221.
2. *Teachings: Howard W. Hunter*; 243.
3. *Teachings: Howard W. Hunter*; 1.



"I would invite all members of the Church to live with ever more attention to the life and example of the Lord Jesus Christ, especially the love and hope and compassion He displayed. I pray that we might treat each other with more kindness."³



By Elder
Kevin S. Hamilton
Of the Seventy

THE Converting Power OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

All the truths of the gospel fall into place as we come to know that the keystone of our testimony—the Book of Mormon—is true.

As a young boy, I loved to set up dominoes in long lines with intricate designs and then push the first domino over. The resulting chain reaction would cause each of the successive dominoes to topple over, one after another to the end of the line. I would spend hours carefully setting the dominoes in place in order to have the thrill of seeing them fall.

A testimony of the Book of Mormon is one of the first steps in obtaining a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Much as the first domino causes the other dominoes to tumble in succession, if we first come to know that the Book of Mormon is true, then we can also come to know that Jesus Christ is our Savior and Redeemer, that Joseph Smith was His prophet through whom the Restoration took place, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the true Church of Jesus Christ restored with power and authority to the earth today.

The Book of Mormon Is Central to Our Message

Concerning the Book of Mormon, the Prophet Joseph Smith said, “I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.”¹



Joseph further taught that it is central to our faith, beliefs, and testimony. “Take away the Book of Mormon and the revelations, and where is our religion?” he asked. “We have none.”²

The beauty of the gospel’s message is that each of us can come to know for ourselves that the Book of Mormon is true.

As a mission president in France, Belgium, and the Netherlands some years ago, I had the privilege and blessing of interviewing individuals for worthiness to be baptized. I will never forget the interview I had with one sister.

During our interview I asked her how she came to know that the Church was true. She reached in her handbag and brought out a worn and well-read paperback copy of the Book of Mormon. She opened the book to 3 Nephi 27 and explained that this was the first chapter the missionaries had invited her to read. She said that as she began to read, she was profoundly moved by what she read and the Spirit she felt. She was so overcome with the spirit of the Book of

Mormon that she took a red pencil and began to underline the words that impressed her the most.

Then she showed me her copy of the Book of Mormon, open to 3 Nephi 27. Almost every word in that chapter was underlined in red.

“That is why I believe,” she said. “This book speaks to me in a way that I cannot deny. I know that it is true, and I know that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is true.”

She was baptized and became a faithful member of the Church.

The Introduction to the Book of Mormon

The introduction to the Book of Mormon gives us a pattern by which we can know for ourselves that the gospel message is true. The introduction “was first published in the 1981 edition of the Book of Mormon. It introduces the Book of Mormon to the modern reader by providing background information and a description of the book.”³

When we gain a divine witness from the Holy Spirit that the Book of Mormon is true, we can actually know for ourselves that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world.

The introduction starts by telling us precisely what the Book of Mormon is: “A volume of holy scripture comparable to the Bible. It is a record of God’s dealings with ancient inhabitants of the Americas and contains the fulness of the everlasting gospel.” We learn that it “was written by many ancient prophets by the spirit of prophecy and revelation” on golden plates and was abridged “by a prophet-historian named Mormon.”

We also learn that “the crowning event recorded in the Book of Mormon is the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ among the Nephites soon after His resurrection. It puts forth the doctrines of the gospel, outlines the plan of salvation, and tells men what they must do to gain peace in this life and eternal salvation in the life to come.”

One of the most important things we can learn from the Book of Mormon is that the Church restored by Jesus Christ through Joseph Smith is true.

The introduction invites us “to read the Book of Mormon, to ponder in [our] hearts the message it contains, and then to ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ if the book is true.” We are promised that “those who pursue this course and ask in faith will gain a testimony of its truth and divinity by the power of the Holy Ghost. (See Moroni 10:3–5.)”

This additional promise follows: “Those who gain this divine witness from the Holy Spirit will also come to know by the same power that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, that Joseph Smith is His revelator and prophet in these last days, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord’s kingdom once again established on the earth, preparatory to the Second Coming of the Messiah.”

Think about it! We can actually know for ourselves that:

- Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world, and the Redeemer of all mankind.
- Joseph Smith is a true prophet. He told the truth. He saw the things he said he saw and heard the words he said he heard.
- The Church that was restored by Jesus Christ through Joseph Smith is “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth” (D&C 1:30). It is the Church of Jesus Christ. It has truth, power, authority, and ordinances. It is personally directed by the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through living prophets.

All this we can know as we come to know that the Book of Mormon is true. It has converting and convincing power.

My Testimony of the Book of Mormon

As a young missionary serving in France, I wanted to know for myself that the Book of Mormon was true. I believed it was true. I hoped it was true. I had even gone on a mission with faith that it was true. However, as I worked day after day as a missionary and told people the best I could in my limited French that I had a testimony of the book, I still did not actually *know* for myself.

Our little apartment in southern France was cold and damp throughout that first winter. Every morning and evening, before and after the work of the day, I would huddle with a blanket and an overcoat to read and study my Book of Mormon. I knew of the promise of Moroni, that if I were to read, ponder, and pray, I too could know. For days and weeks I read,



One of the most important things we can learn from the Book of Mormon is that the Church restored by Jesus Christ through Joseph Smith is true.



but nothing happened. No light, no angel, no voice—nothing except a feeling of peace as I read.

I continued to read and underline meaningful passages and pray to know that the Book of Mormon was true. The miracle eventually came. As Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has described, it was more like the rising of the sun than the sudden turning on of a light switch.⁴ A light began to illuminate my mind and my heart. I began to see the Book of Mormon in a different way. Passages that I had read before began to mean something new. The best way I can describe the experience was that my mind began to be enlightened.

Over a period of weeks and months, I can say that I came to know more surely than anything I had ever known that the Book of Mormon was the word of God. I came to know that it was written and preserved for our day and was brought forth as a powerful

witness of Jesus Christ and His Church. The impression that came to me again and again through the voice of the Spirit was, “It’s true, it’s true, it’s all true.”

Forty years later, that same witness continues with me. I have now read the Book of Mormon many times, and each time—every time—I again hear the words “It’s true.” This has given me the assurance that Jesus Christ is my Savior and that this is His great work of salvation.

Just as the dominoes I loved to play with as a boy all fell down when I pushed over the first one, so do all the truths of the gospel fall into place as we come to know that the keystone of our testimony—the Book of Mormon—is true. ■

NOTES

1. Joseph Smith, in introduction to the Book of Mormon; see also *History of the Church*, 4:461.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 196.
3. *Book of Mormon Teacher Resource Manual* (2004), 19.
4. See David A. Bednar, “The Spirit of Revelation,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2011, 87–90.



THE CENTERPIECE OF THE RESTORATION

“The Book of Mormon is the centerpiece of the Restoration. It was written, preserved, and transmitted under the Lord’s direction. It was translated ‘by the gift and power of God.’”

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Catch the Wave,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2013, 47.

COME, FOLLOW ME: Teaching the Basics at Home

By Alicia Stanton and
Natalie Campbell

Sitting down to family home evening, a mother begins by asking her two children, “When have you felt guided by the Spirit?”

Her 17-year-old daughter complains, “I’ve already had three lessons on the Spirit this month.”

“Good, then you’ll have a lot to contribute,” her dad responds. It’s silent as Mom and Dad wait patiently while their children think about the question.

Eventually, their 14-year-old son shares an experience from school that day.

“Yeah,” replies his mother, “that reminds me of Nephi following the Spirit when he didn’t know how to get the plates from Laban.”

Her daughter speaks up, sharing how she followed a prompting to talk to a lonely girl on the bus. Her dad praises her decision and relates an experience he had at work.

They end the discussion by singing “Let the Holy Spirit Guide” (*Hymns*, no. 143).

A simple teaching method—sharing experiences about this doctrine—made this family home evening successful.

This article gives real-life examples of how people learned the principles in the Sunday youth curriculum, organized by month. Of course, these examples are not the only ways to learn about these doctrines. You can seek inspiration for the needs of your family.

The Sunday curriculum for youth—*Come, Follow Me*—teaches one fundamental gospel doctrine each month. Here are some ways to learn those doctrinal principles with your family.





JANUARY

The Godhead

The members of the Godhead—Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost—are three distinct personages but are unified in purpose and glory.

One young woman tells of learning about the Godhead: “It is important to me that my Heavenly Father, my Savior, and the Holy Ghost are separate Beings I can come to know individually but follow in unity. I’ve come to recognize with gratitude that I can become like God because the Godhead is not an undefined and incomprehensible substance but rather divine Beings who love, bless, guide, and know me.”

To teach this doctrine, you might try discussing questions such as, “What can we learn from the Godhead about working together in unity?” or “How can we strengthen our relationship with the members of the Godhead?”

Comparing John 10:30 and Doctrine and Covenants 50:43 may prompt good discussion and give insights about unity.

RESOURCES FOR TEACHING

The Church provides many resources to help you learn and teach these doctrinal principles. In addition to the scriptures and general conference talks, consider these options:

Teachings of the Presidents of the Church. Visit lds.org/manual/teachings-of-presidents.

True to the Faith. Visit lds.org/manual/home-and-family.

Preach My Gospel and accompanying pamphlets. Visit lds.org/manual/missionary.

Music. The music in the hymnbook and *Children’s Songbook* reinforces principles of the gospel. Visit lds.org/music.

Videos. Church videos are engaging and can help start gospel conversations at home. Visit lds.org/media-library.

Artwork. Using art like that found in the *Gospel Art Book* can spark insights about the scriptures. Visit lds.org/media-library.

FEBRUARY

The Plan of Salvation

The plan of salvation answers the most basic of human questions, like, “Who am I?” and “What is the purpose of life?” Asking our own questions and searching for answers can be a powerful way to learn about the Father’s plan of happiness.

For example, one young man began his scripture study by asking, “How do God’s attributes compare to the characteristics that I possessed in the pre-mortal life? that I possess now? that I hope to possess in the next life?” He wrote down the answers to these questions as he found them in the scriptures and used them to teach others about the plan of salvation.

What questions do your children have about the plan of salvation?





MARCH

The Atonement of Jesus Christ

How do we learn not only of the Atonement of Jesus Christ but also of our Savior's sincere hope that we will use His Atonement in our lives?

Because we have all been lonely, made mistakes, and required strength, all of us have needed to better understand and use the Atonement. A Young Women adviser used a video to help her class better understand the Savior's Atonement.

Here is one young woman's experience:

"We were watching 'None Were with Him' (video, LDS.org). As a single flute played a mournful tune, the voice of Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, 'One of the great consolations of this Easter season is that because Jesus walked such a long, lonely path utterly alone, *we* do not have to do so.'

"I had felt ashamed at requiring the Savior's Atonement, but immersed in the Spirit, I felt the hope of His Atonement sweep away my feelings of guilt. The Lord gave His life for me; He did not regret it, and neither would I."

Because the Atonement is the crowning event of our salvation, we must teach and learn about it with the direction of the Holy Ghost. Perhaps you will be led to discuss scriptures or apostolic testimonies such as "The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles" (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Apr. 2000, 2). Consider discussing a question such as, "When have you felt the healing, strengthening, or redeeming power of the Atonement?"

APRIL

Dispensation, Apostasy, and Restoration

Understanding apostasy—a falling away from the true gospel—helps us understand the need for a restoration of the gospel, the priesthood, and the Church of Jesus Christ.

The following object lesson helped some missionaries teach an investigator about the Apostasy and the Restoration.

"My companion and I used plastic cups labeled with parts of the true Church, building a pyramid with them while explaining how Jesus Christ established His Church.

"Then we explained the Apostasy as we removed cups representing the Apostles and watched the whole structure topple over. As we explained the Restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith, we rebuilt the tower, showing that the Church today is organized in the same way that Christ originally organized it.

"For the first time, this man understood. The Restoration finally gained meaning for him when he understood why it was needed."

There are many other ways to represent the cycle of dispensation, apostasy, and restoration. You might read scripture passages about these topics and follow the promptings of the Spirit to create your own representation of what you learn (see, for example, Amos 8:11–12; 1 Nephi 13; D&C 136:36–38; Moses 5:55–59).



MAY

Prophets and Revelation



The Lord cares deeply about communicating with us. We receive His guidance in our lives through revelation that He gives to His prophets and to us personally.

We can often better understand gospel principles if we compare them to objects and experiences in everyday life. A young woman relates how a comparison helped her recognize revelation:

“I learned about revelation through a modern-day prophet. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke on the spirit of revelation and explained it through a metaphor of light. Occasionally, revelation is sudden and clear like turning on a light in a dark room. More commonly, it comes gradually like the rising sun getting steadily brighter. Most often, Elder Bednar says, revelation is like light on a foggy day. ‘There is enough light that you . . . can see just enough to take a few steps ahead into the cloudiness’ (in “Patterns of Light: Spirit of Revelation” [video], LDS.org). This metaphor, while simple, deeply impacted me because I realized that revelation was available if I took time to perceive it.”

As we take time to study metaphors, parables, and symbols, our understanding of doctrines can continue to grow. These teaching methods help us learn even more when we allow the Spirit to reveal new perspectives to us.



JUNE

Priesthood and Priesthood Keys

The priesthood is an important topic for everyone. It is the power of God and can bless all of us. We each have an important role to play in priesthood work.

Some people are unfamiliar with the duties, offices, and history of the priesthood. A quiz can be a fun way to learn these ideas.

Depending on what you want to learn, you can use some of the following questions and invite your children to search for answers in the scriptures and teachings of modern prophets.

- What are the offices and duties of the Aaronic Priesthood? of the Melchizedek Priesthood?
- What are priesthood keys? Who holds them? Why are keys necessary?
- What is the difference between priesthood office, authority, and power?
- How does the priesthood bless both men and women?

Answers can be found in reference books such as *Gospel Principles* (2009) and *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* (2004) and in scriptures such as Doctrine and Covenants 13, 20, and 107.

The answer to the last question, “How does the priesthood bless both men and women?” can be found in the scriptures but most importantly in reflecting on how this doctrine affects us personally. ■

The authors live in Utah, USA.

Part 2 of this article, sharing ideas for July–December, will be published later this year.





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

KNOWING THE Godhead

*We are to know these Divine Beings
in every way we can. We are to
love Them, draw near to Them,
obey Them, and try to be like Them.*

From an address, “The Godhead,” delivered during the seminar for new mission presidents at the Provo Missionary Training Center on June 23, 2013.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “It is the first principle of the gospel to know for a certainty the character of God.”¹ Furthermore, he added, “I want you all to know Him, and to be familiar with Him.”² We must have “a *correct* idea of his . . . perfections, and attributes” and an admiration for “the excellency of [His] character.”³

I wish to expand the Prophet’s challenge to us and say that we and our missionaries, our members, and our investigators must know for a certainty the character of the members of the *Godhead*. We must have a correct idea of Their individual perfections and attributes and an admiration for the excellency of *Their* personal character.

It is not happenstance that the first article of our faith is “We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost” (Articles of Faith 1:1). The message is clear for all who teach the gospel. There is no point in going on to the other truths we believe if we haven’t fixed in our minds and in the minds of those we teach the preeminent role of the Godhead in our doctrine and in our eternal destiny. We are to know these Divine Beings in every way we can. We are to love Them, draw near to Them, obey Them, and try to be like Them.

When we bring people into the Church, we are not baptizing them into the Church of a man, whether that man be Joseph Smith or Brigham Young or Thomas S. Monson—revere those prophets as we do. And we are not baptizing them into the Church of happy families or of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

When we bring people into the Church, we baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. In doing so, we are leading them back to the presence of the Father through the ministry, Atonement, and grace of His Son, with the influence of the Holy Ghost guiding them to this goal. We must always keep uppermost in our minds this preeminence of the Godhead as both means and end as we undertake the work of salvation.

The impact of King Benjamin's teachings upon his congregation is a perfect scriptural definition of the real growth in our converts we are emphasizing as we establish the Church in "all the world."



If, as King Benjamin counseled, we *truly* know these Divine Beings whom we serve and make certain They are not strangers to us and are never far from the thoughts and intents of our heart (see Mosiah 5:13), then we might have the results King Benjamin had. And what were those? His people experienced “a mighty change,” had “no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually,” and were “willing to enter into a covenant . . . to do [God’s] will, and to be obedient to his commandments in all things that he [should] command [them], all the remainder of [their] days” (Mosiah 5:2, 5).

That was the impact of King Benjamin’s teachings upon his congregation, and it is a *perfect* scriptural definition of the *real growth* in our converts we are emphasizing as we establish the Church in “all the world” (Mark 16:15).

As the Savior Himself taught, missionary work—the work of salvation—is like a net that we are throwing to a wider and wider world of nations, cultures, and people. As such, we will gather, as the parable says, fish “of every kind” (Matthew 13:47). Many of those “fish” in our expanding frontier do not know who God is or what His Fatherhood is actually like; they do not know who Jesus Christ really is or why His is the only name given under heaven whereby we may be saved (see Acts 4:12); they do not know who the Holy Ghost is or why this member of the Godhead “was sent forth to teach the truth” (D&C 50:14).

Knowledge of the Godhead

Of course, there are a lot of other things these fish gathered of every kind don’t know, but if they are to embrace the restored gospel and truly find salvation for their souls, it will have to begin with some knowledge and understanding of the members of the Godhead. Ultimately, “true and saving worship is found only among those who know the truth about . . . the Godhead and who understand the true relationship men should have with each member of [what one of the Brethren has called] that Eternal Presidency.”⁴

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reminded us that Lucifer understands

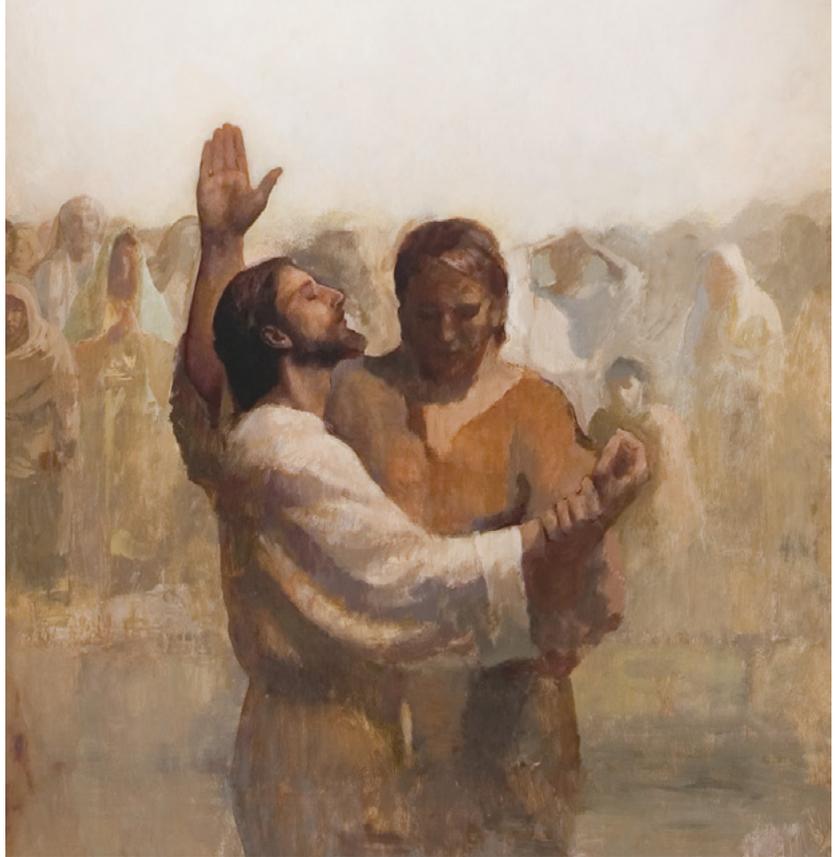
the significance of such doctrine, even if we don't. He said:

“There is no salvation in believing . . . false doctrine, particularly a false or unwise view about the Godhead or any of its members. . . .

“It follows that the devil would rather spread false doctrine about God and the Godhead, and induce false feelings with reference to any one of them, than almost any other thing he could do.”⁵

So no investigator can come into this Church with a *real* testimony, with *real* conversion, with what we are seeking for and calling real growth in each convert, unless he or she has had at least the beginning of some personal, spiritual, true experience with God. That kind of true experience can come only when there is the realization that He is a real being, an actual person, a literal Father of flesh and bone who speaks and sees and feels, who knows all His children's names and all their needs, who hears all their prayers, and who wants all His children in His Church. These investigators need to know He has a plan for their salvation and that He has given commandments as to how we find our way back to Him.

A God who cares about them as tenderly as a parent cares for a child cannot be an ethereal mist or a vague philosophical First Cause or a deistic absentee landlord. He must be recognized for what He truly is—a merciful, compassionate Father, in whose image every one of His children has been made and before Whom all of us will one day again stand—and then kneel! Few of our investigators will know *that* kind of God now, in or out of contemporary Christianity.



In that regard, it is most significant that lesson 1 in *Preach My Gospel* begins with the simple declaration that “God is our Heavenly Father.”⁶ In that lesson the first determination missionaries are to make is what each person being taught understands regarding the true nature of God.

If missionaries can get a proper understanding of God in the minds and hearts of their investigators at the outset of their teaching, everything else will fall into place much more easily in all the instruction that follows.

The Mission and Message of Jesus Christ

In like manner, elder, sister, and investigator alike must appreciate much more than they do the majesty of the mission and message of Jesus Christ, who came down from the Father and taught what the Father taught Him. All must come to realize that Jesus came into mortality to show us the way, the truth, and the life. Indeed, He *is* the *only* way, the *whole* truth, and the *perfect* life. As such, He is the only child in the human family of whom the Father can fully and completely

All must come to realize that Jesus came into mortality to show us the way, the truth, and the life.

Through the power of the Holy Ghost, we can chase darkness from among us and be warned against danger and against untruth. I bear witness that the Holy Ghost is also the Holy Spirit of Promise, confirming and authenticating covenants and ordinances and ultimately sealing all saving blessings unto eternal life.

say, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 17:5).

We are to have faith in Christ, trust that He has redeemed us from death physically and hell spiritually, accept His Atonement as the *only* means of reconciling ourselves before God, and acknowledge that there is no other path to salvation. The world, if it is to be redeemed, must bend its knee and with tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ, the living Son of the living God. We need to teach with faith and fervor “the doctrine of Christ” (Hebrews 6:1; 2 John 1:9; 2 Nephi 31:2, 21; 32:6; Jacob 7:2, 6) as declared in the scriptures and as summarized in lesson 3 of *Preach My Gospel*.

Our fish of the far-flung net need to know that the Holy Ghost is the member of the Godhead with whom they will have their most frequent and most intimate relationship as they receive the missionaries and pray for heavenly guidance regarding their message. It is this member of the Godhead who will *lead* investigators to truth and will then *bear witness* of that truth when they encounter it. The investigators must be taught to recognize the Spirit when it manifests itself during the course of the lessons. Certainly the missionaries must understand the Holy Ghost’s divine role in the conversion process and must strive to carry the Spirit with them at all times.

“Unto what were ye ordained?” the Lord asks. “To preach my gospel by the Spirit, even the Comforter which was sent forth to teach the truth. . . .

“Wherefore, he that preacheth [by the Spirit] and he that receiveth [by the Spirit], understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together” (D&C 50:13–14, 22).

We can be absolutely certain that it *will not* go well—for the missionaries or for their investigators—if we slide past our teaching of the Divine. We must not point toward mortal leaders before we have taught and testified of celestial ones. We must not try to teach ancillary truths before we have taught the fundamental ones. We must not rush toward baptism and the goal of a new convert before we have taught true faith in God, explained the need for true repentance in Christ, and made certain that those crucial first shoots of a convert’s growing testimony are kept strong and viable through the nourishing agency of the Holy Spirit.

Christian Confusion

Regarding the distinct nature of these Divine Beings, our latter-day revelations teach that “the Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit” (D&C 130:22).

You can’t get a baseline statement clearer than that! But unfortunately, nearly two millennia of Christian history have sown terrible confusion and near-fatal error in this regard. Many evolutions and iterations of religious creeds have greatly distorted the simple clarity of true doctrine, declaring the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to be abstract, absolute, transcendent, immanent, consubstantial, coeternal, and unknowable; without body, parts, or passions; and dwelling outside space and time.

In such creeds, all three members are separate persons, but they are a single being, the oft-noted “mystery of the trinity.” They are

three distinct persons, yet not three Gods but one. All three persons are incomprehensible, yet it is one God who is incomprehensible.

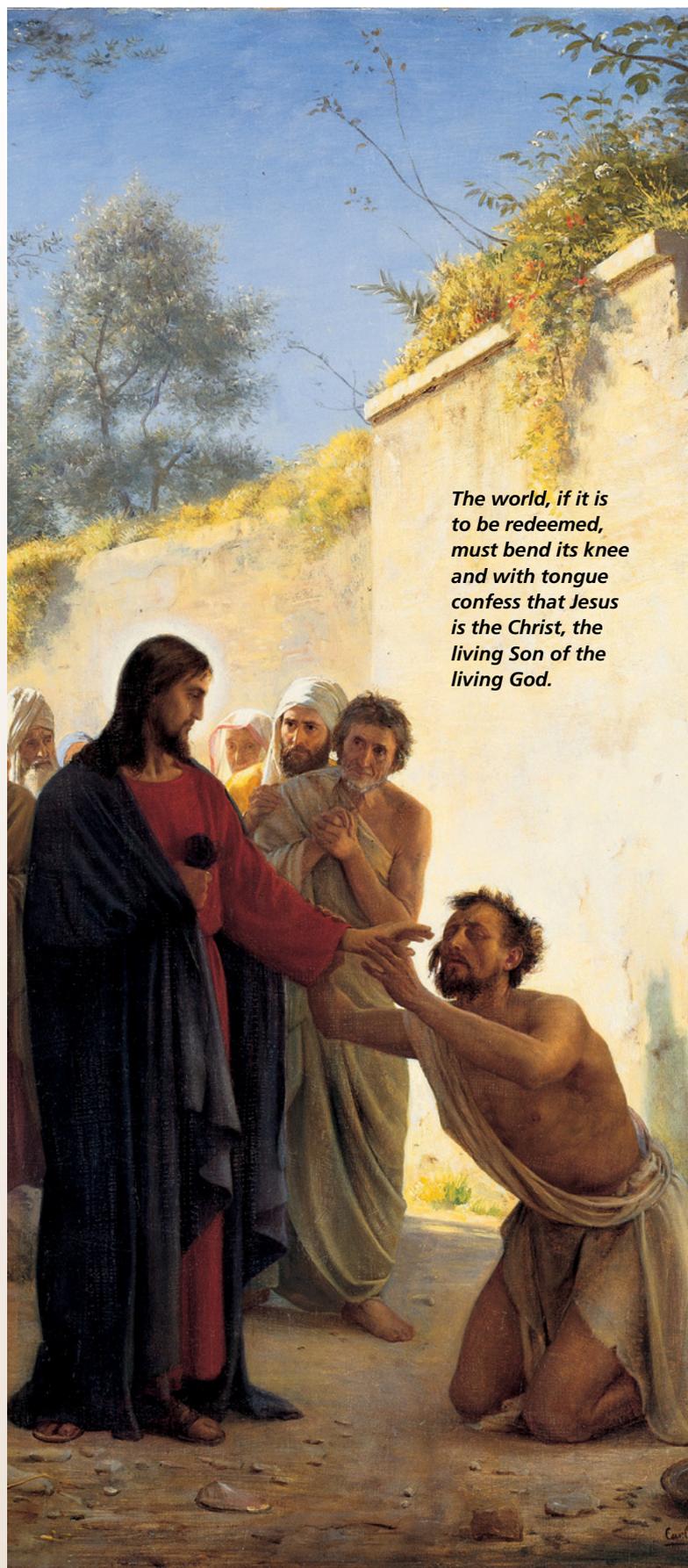
We agree with our critics on at least that point—that such a formulation for divinity is incomprehensible. With such a confusing definition of God being imposed upon the Church, little wonder that a fourth-century monk cried out, “Woe is me! They have taken my God away from me, . . . and I know not whom to adore or to address.”⁷ How are we to trust, love, and worship, to say nothing of striving to be like, One who is incomprehensible and unknowable? What of Jesus’s prayer that it “is life eternal, that they might *know thee* the only true God, *and Jesus Christ*, whom *thou* hast sent”? (John 17:3; emphasis added).

It is not our purpose ever to demean any person’s belief or the doctrine of any religion. We extend to all the same respect for their doctrine that we ask for ours. (That too is an article of our faith.) But no less a source than the stalwart *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, the gold standard in that field, records that “the formal doctrine of the Trinity as it was defined by the great church councils of the fourth and fifth centuries is not to be found [anywhere] in the [New Testament].”⁸

So we are very comfortable, frankly, in letting it be known that we do not hold a fourth- or fifth-century, pagan-influenced view of the Godhead, and neither did those first Christian Saints who were eyewitnesses of the living Christ.⁹ We are New Testament—*not* Nicene—Christians.

The Unity of Godhead

However, I now quickly stress that when we have made the point about the distinctiveness of Their persons, it is equally important to stress how unified They are and how truly *One* the Godhead is. I think I am safe in saying that part of the reason we are so misunderstood by others in the Christian tradition is because in stressing the individual personages of the Godhead, we have not followed that up often enough by both conceding and *insisting* upon Their unity in virtually every other imaginable way. For this we



The world, if it is to be redeemed, must bend its knee and with tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ, the living Son of the living God.

have reaped needless criticism, and we have made our LDS position harder to be understood than it needs to be.

Indeed, the great “doctrine of Christ” passage in 2 Nephi 31 ends with this declaration: “This is the doctrine of Christ, and the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God, without end” (2 Nephi 31:21).

We have all read the Savior’s majestic Intercessory Prayer in John 17. We know it to be a declaration of unity between the Father and the Son and between Them and us, Their earthly disciples. Read it often, particularly inasmuch as President David O. McKay (1873–1970) once called it “the greatest prayer . . . ever uttered in this world.”¹⁰ We ought to strive to be one with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as Jesus prayed we would be.

We ought to strive to be one with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as Jesus prayed we would be.



An Apostle’s Witness

I close with my testimony of each of these Divine Beings, who constitute that “Eternal Presidency” spoken of. I bear witness of the Holy Ghost *by the spirit* of the Holy Ghost, witnessing and testifying being two of its great roles. I bear witness that the Holy Ghost is a teacher, a Comforter, and the agent of personal revelation. I bear witness that the Holy Ghost will bring all things to our remembrance—a particular blessing inasmuch as remembering is one of the great commandments given to us, including in the sacramental prayers (see D&C 20:77, 79).

I testify that through the power of the Holy Ghost, we can chase darkness from among us and be warned against danger and against untruth. I bear witness that the Holy Ghost is also the Holy Spirit of Promise, confirming and authenticating covenants and ordinances and ultimately sealing all saving blessings unto eternal life. I am in awe that we have such ready access to a member of the Godhead and have it so constantly and repeatedly if we live worthily of it. I express my near-inexpressible gratitude for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

I bear witness of Jesus Christ, the living Son of the living God, who paid the liberating ransom for your soul and my soul and the soul of every man, woman, and child from Adam to the end of the world. I testify that the first principle of the gospel is *faith* in the Lord Jesus Christ and that it is the foundation of and the central message of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

I testify that every human being born into this world is born with the Light of Christ in his or her soul. I bear witness that He is the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and Omega of our salvation. I declare that He is the great Jehovah, the redemptive I Am, the Lamb of God slain from before the foundation of the world. I testify that in Him the fulness did dwell and that He was born, lived, and died a perfect, sinless Man, without blemish and without spot.

I am grateful that the authority of Jesus Christ, which regulates everything of eternal significance in this universe, bears His name—the Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God. If I were to live to be a thousand years of age, I could never adequately express my wonder and inadequacy at being called to be one of His Apostles, a witness of His name in all the world.

*I stand all amazed at the love Jesus offers me,
Confused at the grace that so fully he proffers me.*¹¹

I bear witness of God the Eternal Father, the grand Elohim, my Father and your Father, who gave us spiritual life. I testify that He is the Man of Holiness, that mercy and goodness, love and compassion only begin to note His chief and eternal characteristics. I testify that Christ came to show us the Father and as such was rightly called the Son of Man (of Holiness).

I bear witness that God our Father is the author of the great plan of salvation and that what came to be known as the gospel of Jesus Christ is also known as “the gospel of God” (Romans 1:1; see also verses 2–3). I bear witness that the Father was and is the Creator of all things, working through Jehovah and other heavenly agents to accomplish that Creation and sharing the title of Creator with His Beloved Son. I testify that we are to *serve* the Father in the name of the Son just as we are to *pray* to the Father in the name of the Son.

I testify that Jesus Christ came to do the will of the Father, taught the doctrine of the Father, and worked out His own salvation through the Father. I bear most solemn witness that the



Father so loved the world, His children, that He gave His best child, His perfect child, His Only Begotten Child, that whosoever would believe in Him would have everlasting life (see John 3:36; 6:47; Helaman 14:8).

I am grateful for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in whose names the sacred and saving ordinances from baptism to temple sealings are performed in this Church. I invite each of you to know deeply these Divine Beings. ■

NOTES

1. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 6:305.
2. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 6:305.
3. *Lectures on Faith* (1985), 38, 42.
4. Bruce R. McConkie, “Our Relationship with the Lord” (Brigham Young University devotional, Mar. 2, 1982), 1, speeches.byu.edu.
5. Bruce R. McConkie, “Our Relationship with the Lord,” 1–2.
6. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 31.
7. In Owen Chadwick, ed., *Western Asceticism* (1958), 235.
8. Paul J. Achtemeier, ed., *Harper’s Bible Dictionary* (1985), 1099.
9. For a thorough discussion of this issue, see Stephen E. Robinson, *Are Mormons Christians?* (1991), 71–89; see also Robert L. Millet, *Getting at the Truth: Responding to Difficult Questions about LDS Beliefs* (2004), 106–22.
10. David O. McKay, in Conference Report, Oct. 1967, 5.
11. “I Stand All Amazed,” *Hymns*, no. 193.

*Jesus Christ
came to do
the will of the
Father, taught
the doctrine of
the Father, and
worked out His
own salvation
through
the Father.*

I RECOGNIZED THE WORD OF GOD

While in an airport several years ago in São Paulo, Brazil, I saw in a bookstore showcase a book titled “The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ.” I doubted that our decaying and directionless world would accept another testament of Jesus Christ, and I spent the week-end thinking about the book.

Finally, I could no longer endure my curiosity, and I returned to the bookstore to buy it. When I arrived, however, I couldn’t find it. I described the book to the store attendant, but he said he had never seen it. Nor could he find a record of it, even though all books displayed in the showcase were cataloged.

Sometime later while in a pharmacy, I noticed an open book on a counter. As I began to read it, I learned about a man named Korihor who insisted on doubting the power of God and was eventually struck dumb. When I reflected on the words I read, I recognized them as being from God.

During this time I had been looking for divine direction. One day I knelt and fervently prayed asking God to show me the true path that would bring me to Him. A few days later our son became ill, so I returned to the pharmacy. When I was about to leave, three young Americans wearing name tags entered. I immediately felt a warmth in my breast, which prompted me to speak with them.

They told me they were in Brazil to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. I asked if they could teach me, and we scheduled an appointment.

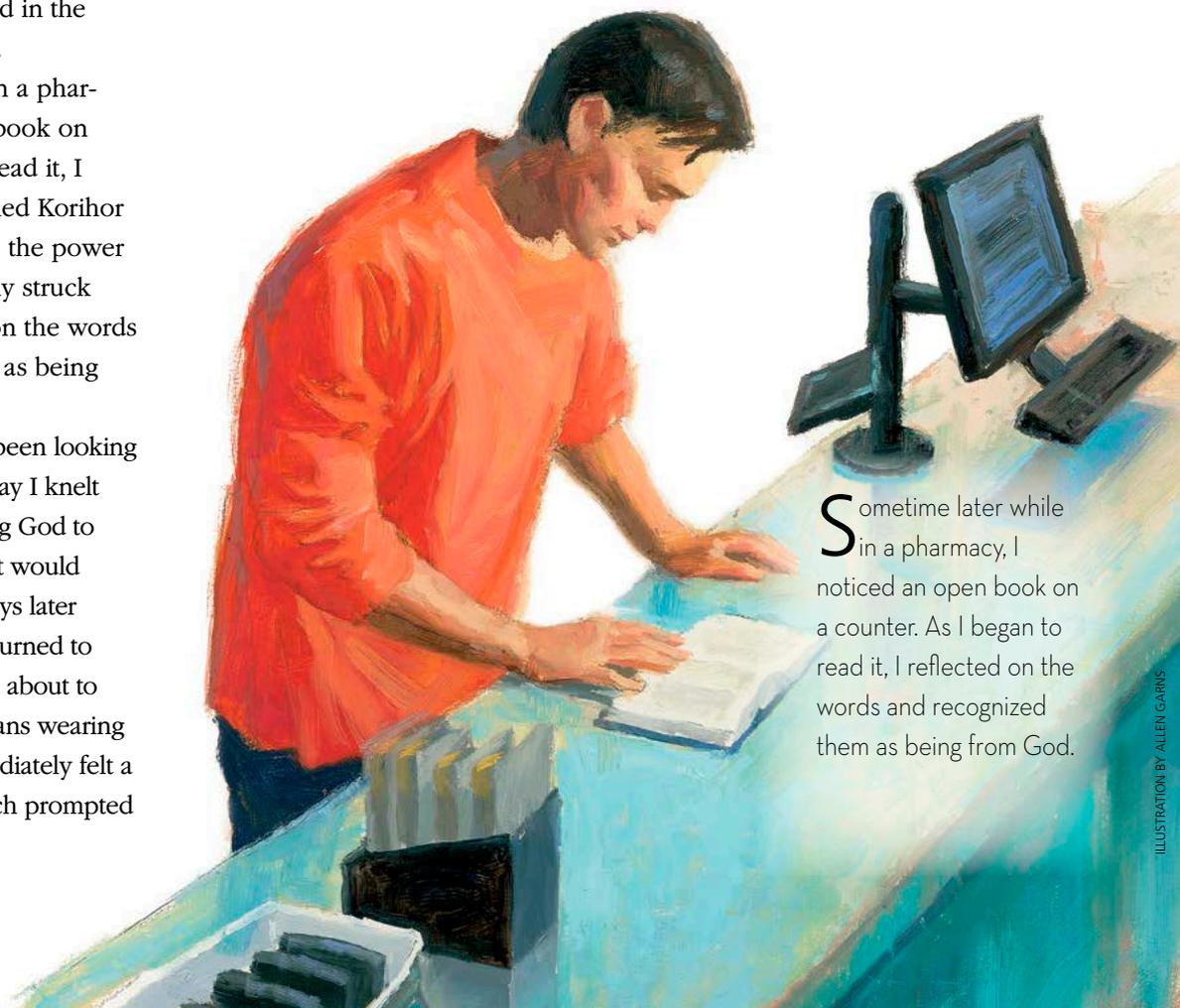
When I heard about the Prophet Joseph Smith for the first time, I knew my prayer had been answered. Then the missionaries gave me a book. To my astonishment, it was a Book of Mormon—just like the one I had seen in the showcase. I again felt a sweet warmth and became so happy that I was barely able to speak.

The missionaries explained the origin of the book and then asked me

to pray and ask God if it was true. I already had an absolute certainty of the divinity of the book, for the Lord had shown it to me—twice. Nevertheless, I examined it in great detail. Upon reading chapter 17 in 3 Nephi, I knew it contained a divine story because it contained the words of Jesus Christ.

The foundation of my testimony is in knowing that the Book of Mormon contains the word of God. It has changed me and continues to change me. ■

José Evanildo Matias Fernandes,
São Paulo, Brazil



Sometime later while in a pharmacy, I noticed an open book on a counter. As I began to read it, I reflected on the words and recognized them as being from God.

I'm not sure how long it took, but one day I could at last taste of God's love again. It was like warm sunshine after a long winter.

FINDING MY WAY THROUGH MISTS OF DARKNESS

A few years back I went through an especially dark season of my life. I faced many difficult challenges, and I felt depressed and overwhelmed by heavy burdens.

At church one Sunday, I looked around at all the happy families singing hymns and tasting of the love of God. I wanted to feel the same way, but something felt physically wrong with me.

I had felt the Spirit in the past, but I had been unable to for some time. As in Lehi's vision of the tree of life, I felt as if I were completely surrounded by mists of darkness—I couldn't even see the tree (see 1 Nephi 8:2–24).

When the sacrament prayers began, I closed my eyes and reached out to Heavenly Father, pleading for assurance of His love. I asked Him

why I couldn't taste of the fruit of the tree of life.

As I pondered Lehi's dream, I had a piercing realization. "Why haven't I remembered this before?" I thought. Traveling through mists of darkness is a completely normal part of God's plan. He allows us to experience difficulties from time to time so that we can completely depend on Him and His Son. The key is to cling to the iron rod. I still saw myself in mists of darkness, but I had hope.

As this impression left my mind, I felt a sweet reassurance from the Holy Ghost that my trials would pass. The Spirit testified that Heavenly Father was there. I wiped the tears from my eyes, grateful that I had been able to feel the Spirit again.

I began to immerse myself in the scriptures. I still had many dark days, but I had faith that if I clung to the iron rod—the word of God (see 1 Nephi 11:25)—I would be freed from the mists of darkness. I'm not sure how long it took, but one day I could at last taste of God's love again. It was like warm sunshine after a long winter.

As I have struggled off and on with life's challenges, I have remembered my promise to cling tightly to the iron rod by studying the scriptures and the words of the prophets. I know that when the mists of darkness come, I have the tools necessary to see my way through them and the promise of a warm reception on the other side. ■
Juventa Vezzani, California, USA



YOU KNOW IT'S TRUE!

One day while I was working in a department store in Oakland, California, USA, a friend stopped by and invited me to dinner. She said she would have two Mormon missionaries join us.

After dinner the missionaries set up a little flannel board and began asking me questions. I became somewhat irritated. I just wanted to listen to them and leave.

At the end of the discussion, however, a young missionary from Utah pulled up his chair, looked me in the eye, handed me a Book of Mormon,

and bore his testimony. He said he knew the Church was true and that I could also know by reading the book. Then he quoted Moroni 10:4 and said that if I would ask God with a sincere heart and with real intent, He would manifest the truth of the book to me by the power of the Holy Ghost.

During the following week I read several chapters, and we met again at my friend's house. After our third discussion, the missionary from Utah finished his mission and headed home.

I continued to read and pray each night, asking if the book was true.

After praying one night, I got into bed and read several more chapters. Suddenly I heard a voice say four simple words: "You know it's true!"

I had never heard the Spirit speak to me before. But I knew then that God knew me and loved me. I was so overcome that I could not control my tears. I knew I needed to join the true Church of Jesus Christ. I also understood how the young missionary from Utah could say he knew the Church was true.

I joined the Church and later married a beautiful young woman in the Oakland California Temple. We had

I took the book, looked him in the eye, handed it back to him, and said, "I know this book is true!"



eight children and lived in California for 33 years before moving to Utah.

A few years ago as our youngest daughter was preparing to leave for her mission, she asked if I had ever tried to contact the young missionary who had taught me.

“I have thought about him over these many years,” I replied, “but I don’t know how to contact him.”

Within 10 minutes she came back and said, “Here’s his phone number.”

When I got ahold of him, we had a long conversation. He asked for my email address so he could “bring me up-to-date on his life.” In his email the next day, he told me he hadn’t been a member of the Church for more than 40 years and hoped I wasn’t disappointed.

“How could I be disappointed?” I immediately emailed him back. “You changed my life!”

We exchanged more emails and agreed to meet. Soon I drove to his home, where he invited me in and introduced me to his wife. As we talked about our past, I asked him if he had a Book of Mormon. He went upstairs and returned with a copy. I took the book, looked him in the eye, handed the book back to him, and said: “I know this book is true! If you read Moroni 10:4 and pray about it, you can also gain a testimony of its truthfulness.”

Over the next several months, he read, prayed, and repented. Soon his 18-year-old son rebaptized him, and I

had the blessing of confirming him.

I know that my daughter was inspired to ask her question, and I know that Heavenly Father prepared the two of us for a 45-year reunion. I have learned the power of the Book of Mormon. I have also learned to never give up on someone who has wandered from the Church. ■

Henry (Hank) Brown, Utah, USA

WAS MY STUDY SUFFICIENT?

I had faithfully read the Book of Mormon daily since I was a teenager. Even on nights when I’d fall into bed exhausted and realize I hadn’t read for the day, I would pick it up and read at least a few verses.

Two years ago I was asked to teach the Old Testament in early-morning seminary. I was more unfamiliar with the Old Testament than any other book of scripture, so some days I would spend three to four hours studying and preparing my lessons. Because I spent so much time studying the Bible and latter-day revelation, I stopped reading the Book of Mormon every day. We were reading it as a family at night, and I would use it for an occasional cross-reference, so I felt that I was getting sufficient daily gospel study.

In the middle of the school year in January, my stake president challenged the entire stake to read a

chapter in the Book of Mormon each day. Though I wondered how I would find time given my heavy seminary studies, I decided I should accept the challenge. I needed to do it not only to strengthen myself but also to set an example for my children and students.

From that moment on I read a chapter from the Book of Mormon each day as I started preparing my seminary lesson or as I got ready for bed. A spirit and a power I didn’t know was missing returned to my life. My seminary lessons, which had been going well, became even better. Parts of the Old Testament that were difficult to understand became clearer. I also realized that I better understood the Book of Mormon as a result of the intense study I had been doing of the prophets and the law of Moses.

The introduction to the Book of Mormon includes this quote from the Prophet Joseph Smith: “I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.”

The Book of Mormon holds together all the parts of the gospel and contains a powerful testimony of Jesus Christ and the plan of salvation. It helps everything else in my life make sense. I am grateful to have the Book of Mormon as part of my daily life. ■
Angie Nicholas, Texas, USA



By Elder
Paul B. Pieper
Of the Seventy

Revealed Realities of MORTALITY

Each person is placed on the earth in unique circumstances. Despite our uniqueness, the Lord has revealed truths about the purposes of mortal life that apply to all of us. He taught these truths to our first parents, Adam and Eve, and has reconfirmed them in our day.

I refer to these truths as the “realities of mortality.” If we are to gain the fullest blessings and benefits from our mortal experience, we must understand and embrace these revealed realities. Failure to understand or, worse, knowingly ignoring them will result in our time on earth being misspent, underutilized, and perhaps utterly wasted.

It is not enough to merely arrive on earth, receive a mortal body, and live here for a lifetime. To make our time here meaningful, we must live and experience the God-ordained purposes of mortality—fully, completely, and wholeheartedly—rather than becoming distracted by things

that are interesting, comfortable, and convenient.

When Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden, they entered into a mortal world. The Lord prepared them for their mortal experience by teaching them the realities they would experience. I want to review three of those realities.

As I begin, remember that many premortal spirits did not receive mortal bodies because they did not keep their first estate.¹ They are intent on preventing us from experiencing the fullness of mortality. They seek to keep us from experiences that lead to our eternal happiness.

Reality Number 1: Work helps us develop the qualities and attributes essential for eternal life.

God said to Adam, “By the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, until thou shalt return unto the ground” (Moses 4:25; see also Genesis 3:19). Some people characterize the

Lord’s words as a curse on Adam and his posterity for partaking of the forbidden fruit. However, I hear these words as coming from a loving Father explaining to a young and inexperienced son the conditions in the fallen, mortal world in which the son will soon live.

Like an earthly father preparing a son about to leave home, the Father was helping the first man prepare to live on his own away from home. He was explaining that work was a new reality—a reality of mortality.

Heavenly Father knew that Adam and Eve would soon have to struggle against the elements and the earth itself. In contrast to their experiences in the Garden of Eden, where everything was provided for them, mortal life would require physical and mental effort, sweat, patience, and persistence to survive.

Learning to work—training and disciplining our minds, bodies, and spirits to exert, produce, achieve, and

Let us avoid the illusions of the precepts of men and cling to the revealed realities given by God so that our journey through mortality may be rich, full, and real.



progress—is a foundation reality of every mortal life. It is one of the ways we become like God and accomplish His purposes on the earth. Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost all work. Their work and their glory is “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). The reality is there can be no glory without work.

One of the principal reasons men need to work is to provide for their families. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” lists “provide” as one of the three roles given specifically to men.² A man who knows how to work and provide for himself has the confidence that he can marry and provide for a wife and children.

Bishop H. David Burton, former Presiding Bishop of the Church, said: “To work—honestly and productively—brings contentment and a sense of self-worth. Having done all we can to be self-reliant, to provide for our own needs and those of our family, we can turn to the Lord in confidence to ask for what we might yet lack.”³

Satan is ever alert to destroy the purposes of God and to subvert our mortal experience. To counter the emphasis the Father places on work, the adversary has convinced many in our day that a primary goal in life is to avoid work. In today’s societies, many people concentrate on finding jobs that pay well but require little

work, investments or schemes that pay high returns without effort, and programs that pay for what they want at no cost to them. Some seek to avoid work by borrowing and living on money they never intend to repay. They are unwilling to work, budget, and save before they spend. Church leaders have counseled that we should work for what we obtain and “avoid debt except for the most fundamental of needs.”⁴

Another insidious tactic the adversary employs in this generation is to channel men’s natural ambition to work and achieve into virtual dead ends. God placed in young men the desire to compete and achieve, with the intent that they use this ambition to become faithful providers for a family. In our youth, this ambition can be channeled into academic, athletic, or other pursuits that help to teach persistence, discipline, and work. Satan, however, would subtly intercept that ambition and channel it into a virtual world of video games that eat up time and ambition and lead to addiction.

No matter how hard you play a video game, virtual work can never bring you the satisfaction that accompanies real work. Real work is the effort, persistence, patience, and discipline to achieve worthwhile knowledge, perform a needed labor, or accomplish a challenging goal.

If we do not learn to work while in mortality, we will fail to achieve our full potential and happiness in this life, and we will not develop the qualities and attributes essential for eternal life.

Reality Number 2: Through eternal marriage we can obtain all of the blessings Heavenly Father wants to give us.

The Lord has promised in the oath and covenant of the priesthood:

“Whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken . . . become . . . the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God.

“And also all they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord; “. . . He that receiveth me receiveth my Father;

“And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father’s kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be giveth unto him.

“And this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood” (D&C 84:33–35, 37–39).

Our loving Father wants each of His children to receive everything—a fulness, His fulness. In order to receive this fulness, “a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]” (D&C 131:2).

Eternal marriage and all that it is designed to help us learn and

experience is the key to obtaining all of the blessings Heavenly Father wants to give His children. Only a family—a man and a woman who live worthy to enter the house of the Lord and are sealed to each other—can become eligible. The full blessings of the priesthood are received together as husband and wife or not at all.

It is interesting that in the oath and covenant of the priesthood, the Lord uses the verbs *obtain* and *receive*. He does not use the verb *ordain*. It is in the temple that men and women—together—obtain and receive the blessings and power of both the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods. After a couple has received these blessings in the house of the Lord, it is principally in their home life where they develop godly characteristics and attributes—sacrificing for and serving each other, loving each other with full fidelity, and being united in their love for each other and God.

Fulness, priesthood, family—these three related words are all encapsulated in the reality of eternal marriage. Doing all within our power to make eternal marriage a reality of our mortal life ensures that we will not waste our time on earth.

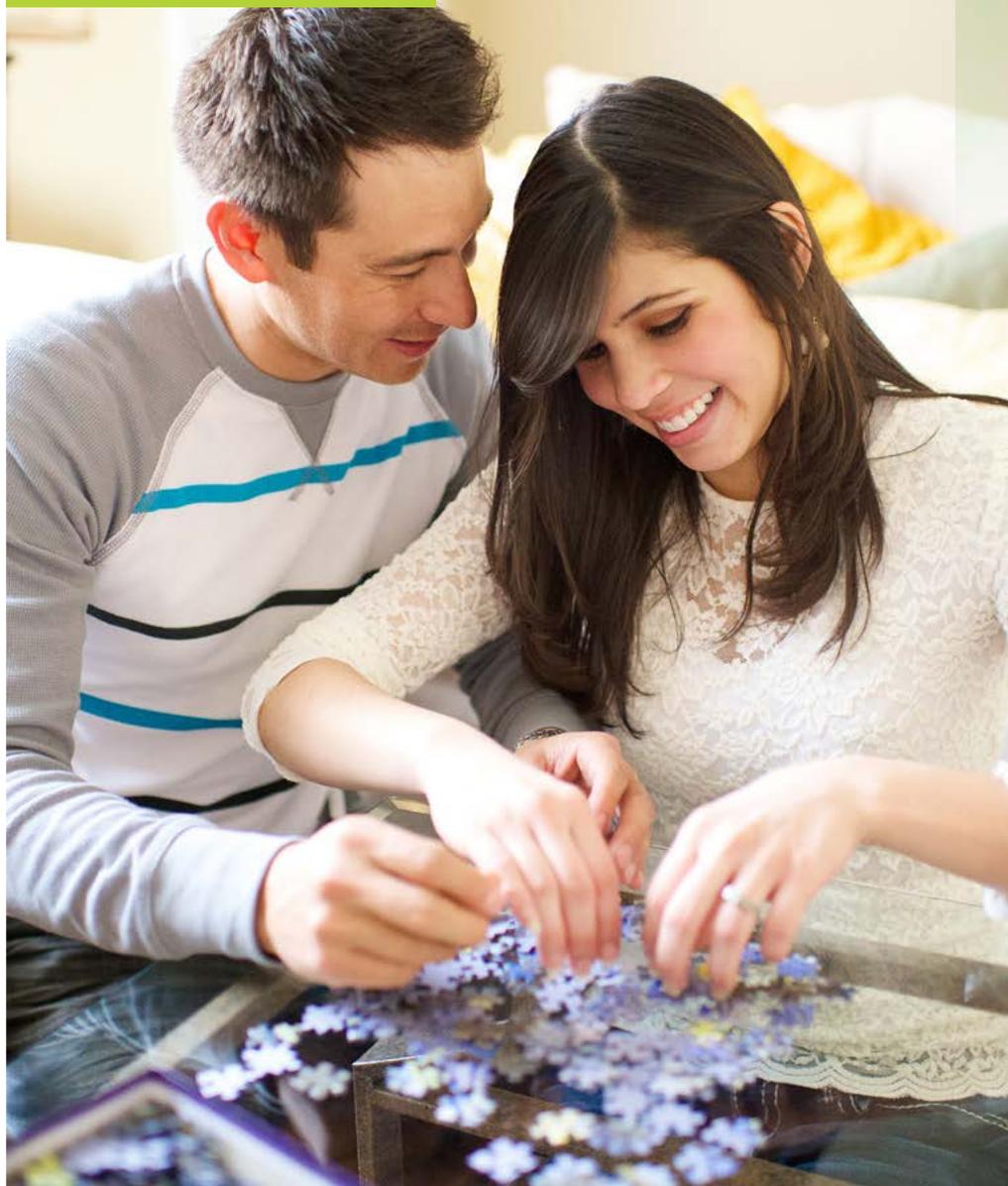
Satan, ever the deceiver, is abroad in our day twisting and distorting the realities of mortality. He is working overtime to destroy the very meaning

and importance of marriage in the minds of men and women. To some, he sells the lie that marriage is not necessary, that love is enough. To others, he attempts to use new legal definitions of marriage to legitimize immoral relationships. To those

who believe in marriage as God has defined it, he lowers its priority in relation to education and financial security. He engenders fear of the sacrifices and difficulties associated with marriage. Frozen by fear, many sit still as objects being acted upon rather than moving forward and acting in faith.

Some people, overwhelmed by the demands of building real relationships but feeling a desire for companionship and intimacy, are lured

**Eternal marriage
is the key to
obtaining all of the
blessings Heavenly
Father wants to
give His children.**



by false hope into the virtual world. Their attempts at virtual intimacy can bring nothing but greater emptiness, longing, and shame. Many are drawn into empty searching again and again until their pattern becomes an addiction that can never be satisfied.⁵ They are caught in a cycle that gradually destroys their will to withstand. They still have their agency but not enough hope in their ability to resist. Caught in this web, they risk missing out on the fulness and joy of one of the most sublime realities of mortality—eternal marriage.

If you are caught in this web, get help. Do not wait. To do so will delay your growth and progress in mortality.

Examine your life. Be sure that your mind has not been darkened by false

ideas related to marriage. Remember that successful marriages are built on “faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities.”⁶

Begin today to build those attributes in your personal life. As you do, the Lord will open the way for you to receive the fulness of the blessings He has prepared for His children—the new and everlasting covenant of marriage. Don’t let your mortality “be utterly wasted” (Joseph Smith—History 1:39).

Adam and Eve understood that bearing children was an important reality of mortality.

Reality Number 3: Bearing and raising children helps us develop our capacity to become like God.

At the time He “blessed,” or sealed, Adam and Eve to create the first family on earth,⁷ God gave them a commandment: be fruitful, multiply, and replenish the earth (see Genesis 1:28; Moses 2:28). Marriage and children go together. The procreative powers that make mortal birth possible are to be used only between a man and a woman, legally and lawfully wedded.⁸

Adam and Eve understood that bearing children was an important reality of mortality. They obeyed God’s commandment, “and Adam knew his wife, and she bare unto him sons and daughters, and they began to multiply and to replenish the earth” (Moses 5:2). Prophets in our day have declared that “God’s commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force.”⁹

In today’s world, however, many people no longer believe that “children are an heritage of the Lord” (Psalm 127:3).

Several years ago, a couple who was about to marry came to me. They asked for my advice regarding children. I reminded them of the commandment they would receive when they were sealed, and I counseled them that they could keep this



commandment in counsel with the Lord. I reminded them that it is a commandment like tithing, Sabbath observance, or other commandments. Once a covenant is made, the question is not whether to keep it but how to keep it in a way that is pleasing to and approved by the Lord.

I watched as they started their marriage. He had a year left of undergraduate studies, and she had another year in a master's program. They felt directed to have their family immediately—despite the schooling and uncertainty over future jobs. It was not easy or convenient to have a child so soon. He had to search for a job, they had to move, and she had to finish her degree. They faced stress and sacrifice. He had to rush home each day and watch the baby while she completed her thesis and practical training. She studied and wrote between nursing and changing diapers.

The Lord has blessed and prospered them. While many others lost jobs in the economic turndown of 2008, he was retained and promoted. Because they lived frugally, they are out of debt except for a mortgage, and they have since been able to completely pay for a master's program with no debt. All the while, they have continued to learn the valuable lessons that can come only with parenthood. Bearing children is neither easy

nor convenient, but it is a commandment that helps us realize the real blessings of mortality.

A Great Gift

Mortality is one of the greatest gifts our Father has given us. He loves us and wants us to use this gift fully and completely. Only by embracing and focusing on the realities God has revealed can we fulfill the purposes for which we came to earth. Satan knows he can do nothing to stop us from obtaining bodies, so he tries to divert us from the purposes for which they were created—to work, to marry, and to bear children.

Let us not live aimlessly and without purpose, only to find in the end that we have spent our time on earth disconnected from the revealed realities of mortality essential to achieve our purposes here. Let us avoid the illusions of the precepts of men and cling to the revealed realities given by God so that our journey through mortality may be rich, full, and real. ■

From a devotional address, "The Realities of Mortality," delivered at Brigham Young University–Idaho on February 19, 2013. For the full address in English, go to web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches.

NOTES

1. See Abraham 3:26, 28.
2. See "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129.
3. H. David Burton, "The Blessing of Work," *Ensign*, Dec. 2009, 43; *Liahona*, Dec. 2009, 37.
4. Neil L. Andersen, "Reverence for God Is the Beginning of Wisdom," *Ensign*, Jan.



THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL INCREASE

"Those who do not marry or those who cannot have children are not excluded from the eternal blessings they seek but which, for now, remain beyond their reach. We do not always know how or when blessings will present themselves, but the promise of eternal increase will not be denied any faithful individual who makes and keeps sacred covenants."

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Witness," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 95.

2013, 38; *Liahona*, Jan. 2013, 26; see also Robert D. Hales, "Becoming Provident Providers Temporally and Spiritually," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2009, 7–10.

5. Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, "Addiction is the craving of the natural man, and it can never be satisfied" ("Becoming Provident Providers Temporally and Spiritually," 10).
6. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World."
7. See Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (1954–56), 1:115, 2:71.
8. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World."
9. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World."

2016 MUTUAL THEME

“Wherefore, ye must

PRESS FORWARD

WITH A STEADFASTNESS IN CHRIST,

having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life” (2 Nephi 31:20).

BLESSINGS OF PRESSING FORWARD

By the Young Men General Presidency

Living as a faithful member of the Church brings amazing blessings. But that doesn't mean life won't occasionally be hard. Temptations, friends who are untrue, family challenges, you name it. A lot of things will try and pull you away from the covenant path.

That's why this year's Mutual theme, “press forward with a steadfastness in Christ” (2 Nephi 31:20), holds such a powerful message. When you press forward with steadfastness in Christ,

staying true to your covenants, God can do marvelous things for you and through you. And He can help you feel hope, comfort, and peace at the same time.

It's something the Prophet Joseph Smith knew very well. He was just 14 when he experienced the First Vision. As he knelt to pray in the Sacred

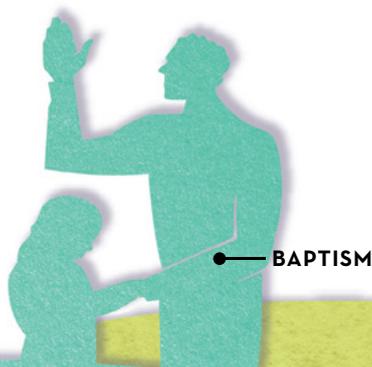


Stephen W. Owen, president (center);
Douglas D. Holmes, first counselor (left);
M. Joseph Brough, second counselor (right)

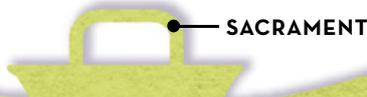
Grove, he was attacked by an unseen force of such incredible power that it threatened to destroy him. Only by exerting all his power to call on God was he rescued and received the visit from the Father and the Son.

Later, when Joseph shared his experience, he was ridiculed by friends and local leaders (see Joseph Smith—History 1:15–17, 21–26). That persecution never stopped and eventually took his life 24 years later.

But Joseph pressed forward with hope, and he was happy to do so in the service of the Lord. As he remained steadfast in



— BAPTISM



— SACRAMENT



Christ and exercised faith to do what was right, God blessed and supported him. And He will do the same for you.

So press forward. Commit to live the gospel. Keep your eyes firmly fixed on the Savior. Have “a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men.” “[Feast] upon the word of Christ.” Serve under the direction of the priesthood. Seek to be what God wants you to be.

As you press forward, making and keeping covenants on the path to eternal life, we testify you will find happiness. ■

GOING FORWARD

By the Young Women General Presidency

Have you thought about where you are headed and where you want to end up? The Mutual theme for 2016 is 2 Nephi 31:20, and this one verse gives you seven points of counsel about your direction in life.

In it you will discover the divinely commanded *direction, action, attitude, learning, and promised reward* for your effort. Let’s look at some key words in this verse.

To **press forward** implies that you are being required to make a real effort against some opposing force. We have to put forth energy to live the gospel because we are surrounded by a world of opposition to the commandments of God.

Are you **steadfast** in Christ? Are you immovable in your loyalty to Him?

If you “abide in Him” (see John 15:4) and follow His teachings, then you are truly steadfast and blessings will surely come to you.



Bonnie L. Oscarson, president (center);
Carol F. McConkie, first counselor (left);
Neill F. Marriott, second counselor (right)

Your **hope and love of God and man** increase as you understand and feel God’s love personally. This understanding grows as you **feast upon the words of Christ**, that is, as you gratefully and purposefully apply the words of Christ to your personal life.

And finally, you must **endure!** Does that sound dreary and grinding? Actually, to *endure* can mean to continue on with the good you are doing—to be constant in your effort to press on. When you steadily stay on the gospel path, you are enduring.

Is it worth it? YES! Our loving Father in Heaven wants us to come back to Him, to have **eternal life** with Him because He knows that is where we will have true, lasting happiness and joy beyond what we can now imagine. That is why in 2 Nephi 31:20, He has spelled out so clearly and specifically what it takes to return to Him. We can do this with His help. He will always prepare the way for us to do what He commands. ■

— PRIESTHOOD

● TEMPLE
ENDOWMENT

TEMPLE
MARRIAGE ●



2 Nephi 31:20

This year's Mutual theme helps us see how we can move forward while standing firm.



ENDURE TO THE END

“The test a loving God has set before us is not to see if we can endure difficulty. It is to see if we can endure it well. We pass the test by showing that we remembered Him and the commandments He gave us.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “In the Strength of the Lord,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2004, 17.

YE SHALL HAVE ETERNAL LIFE

Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, the Father has promised us eternal life—to become like Him—if we do certain things. Here are some scriptures that mention a few of those things:

- John 3:15; 6:54
- Moroni 7:47
- Doctrine and Covenants 5:22; 101:38; 133:62
- Moses 6:59



FEASTING UPON THE WORD OF CHRIST

“To feast means more than to taste. To feast means to savor.

We savor the scriptures by studying them in a spirit of delightful discovery and faithful obedience. When we feast upon the words of Christ, they . . . become an integral part of our nature.”

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Living by Scriptural Guidance,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 17.

20 Wherefore, ye must press forward with a “steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.

A LOVE OF GOD AND OF ALL MEN

“A love of God and of all men” covers both of the two great commandments (see Matthew 22:37–40). Another word for this kind of love might be *charity*, or the pure love of Christ (see Moroni 7:47).



PERFECT BRIGHTNESS OF HOPE

“While weak hope leaves us at the mercy of our moods and events, ‘brightness of hope’ produces illuminated individuals. Their luminosity is seen, and things are also seen by it! . . . Sometimes in the deepest darkness there is no external light—only an inner light to guide and to reassure.”

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Brightness of Hope,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 35.

PRESS FORWARD

What do you need to do while you press forward on the path to eternal life? Read what the people in Lehi’s vision of the tree of life did (see 1 Nephi 8:30). Can you think of other examples from the scriptures?

STEADFASTNESS IN CHRIST

Steadfastness means standing firm, not moving. Steadfastness in Christ means unwavering faith in Him and obedience to His commandments, including receiving ordinances and making and keeping covenants.

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



PRESS FORWARD

WITH A STEADFASTNESS IN CHRIST.
2 NEPHI 31:20

LEARNING OF HEAVENLY FATHER: A STUDY OF EPIC PROPORTIONS

You pray to Heavenly Father, but have you ever wondered what He's like? or why in the world He helped you find your lost keys the other day? or how well He knows you? or how He communicates with you? Luckily, it's never too late to learn more about God. Now is your chance to begin a scripture study of epic proportions, where you'll learn exactly why the God of the universe—with many billions of spirit children—thinks about you.

But it can be tough starting epic things, so let this flowchart help get you going. Each day you can pick a question on the chart. As you follow the steps and answer the questions, try to think about your relationship with Heavenly Father. Think about His role in your life and ask yourself what you could do to draw closer to Him. ■



SUNDAY LESSONS
.....

This Month's Topic:
**The
Godhead**

What is God even like?

Matthew 7:9-11
1 John 1:5
Ether 3:12



MEANINGFUL TIME WITH HIM

"To strengthen our relationship with God, we need some meaningful time alone with Him. Quietly focusing on daily personal prayer and scripture study, always aiming to be worthy of a current temple recommend—these will be some wise investments of our time and efforts to draw closer to our Heavenly Father. Let us heed the invitation in Psalms: 'Be still, and know that I am God' [Psalm 46:10]."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "Of Things That Matter Most," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 21.

Which words stood out to you? Were any words repeated? Look them up in the dictionary or the Guide to the Scriptures.

How are Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ the same but different?

John 3:16, 35

John 17:20-23

Mormon 7:5-7

Prepare a family home evening lesson about what you learned.

How can I get to know Heavenly Father?

John 14:6-9
1 John 4:7
Alma 30:44
Doctrine & Covenants 132:22-24

Do a search on LDS.org for any key words you found in the scriptures. Visit lds.org/media-library to watch a video on the topic.

There are billions of people on the earth! How can Heavenly Father possibly know me?

1 Samuel 16:7

Psalms 82:6

Luke 12:6-7

Doctrine & Covenants 93:23

What is the main idea in each scripture? Try to summarize it in fewer than five words.

We're told to talk to Heavenly Father in prayer. But how does Heavenly Father talk to me?

Doctrine & Covenants 1:38
Doctrine & Covenants 8:2-3
Doctrine & Covenants 9:8-9

How do you talk to God? What could you change as a result of what you've learned?

Do you have another question about Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, or the Holy Ghost? Write it down and use it for future scripture studies after your flowchart questions run out. And don't forget that you can always use resources like the Guide to the Scriptures, True to the Faith, and Preach My Gospel to learn more about what you're studying!



Moroni, My Mom, and a Lesson for My Life

This lesson from the Book of Mormon helped me know that I'm never spiritually alone.

By Louisa Hoe

Many things changed for me the year I turned 17. I was advancing to a new school and moving on to my third year of seminary. Not only that, but I also had a new seminary teacher: my mom.

Did I mention I was the only student in her class? Since the school I was going to attend was an hour's train ride from where I lived, my mother decided to teach me early-morning seminary at home so I would be able to reach school on time. I was fortunate to have her teach me every day, but it was also a little nerve-racking. I had to give her my fullest attention, which was especially a struggle at 5:30 in the morning.

When we were studying the Book of Mormon, we came to Moroni, a prophet I really admire. However,

I've always wondered: Why was Moroni alone? Why didn't Heavenly Father send someone to accompany



HOME: THE GOSPEL-LEARNING WORKSHOP

"One place where we best seek to be filled with light and truth is in our own homes. . . . Families are the Lord's workshop on earth to help us learn and live the gospel. We come into our families with a sacred duty to help strengthen each other spiritually.

"Strong eternal families and Spirit-filled homes do not just happen. They take great effort, they take time, and they take each member of the family doing his or her part. Every home is different, but every home where even one individual seeks for truth can make a difference."

Cheryl A. Esplin, first counselor in the Primary general presidency, "Filling Our Homes with Light and Truth," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2015, 8.

IDEAS FOR LEARNING AND LIVING THE GOSPEL AT HOME



Record spiritual promptings.

Writing down your impressions can help you be more spiritually aware, including after you've prayed, read the scriptures, or participated in family home evening.



Share what you learn from seminary, church, your scripture study, or even ideas from your daily life.

Sharing insights strengthens others.



Prepare for family home evening.

For example, you might ask your parents for an assignment, or your family might agree to have everyone read a general conference talk or a chapter of scripture and discuss it together at your next home evening.



Learn from everyday life.

What situations require you to exercise faith? What opportunities do you have to keep your covenants? How do the things around you testify of Christ?

him? Why didn't he complain when the Lord left him all alone to finish the Book of Mormon?

My mother explained that because of his righteousness and faith in Heavenly Father, Moroni knew that he was not alone. He had Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ to help him complete the Book of Mormon. I realized then that Moroni didn't need anyone to be physically there because he knew that someone was spiritually there, watching over him. He knew that Heavenly Father would never leave his side.

That had a huge impact on me. I now know that whenever I think I'm alone, I'm not spiritually alone since I have the companionship of

the Holy Ghost, who helps me feel closer to my Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. I know that as long as I have faith and trust in the Lord, I will never walk alone.

This particular lesson made an impact on my faith and my testimony of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Although I was worried about having seminary at home, I'm now grateful because it has given me special learning experiences with my mom. ■

The author lives in Singapore.

WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES TEACH ABOUT LEARNING THE GOSPEL?

"Apply thine heart to understanding." —Proverbs 2:2

"The Spirit of truth . . . will guide you into all truth."
—John 16:13

"Learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God." —Alma 37:35

"Seek learning, even by study and also by faith."
—Doctrine and Covenants 88:118

OUR SPACE



RECEIVING MY YOUNG WOMEN MEDALLION

I am so happy to have received my Young Womanhood Recognition. I am proud to say that I kept myself pure and clean and that I can wear my medallion with pride. “Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies” (Proverbs 31:10).

The Young Women organization is wonderful. It helps young women progress and prepare themselves for marriage in the holy temple. I am grateful to my Heavenly Father for this

organization. By earning my medallion, I have completed one of the goals I set for my life, and I know that I can continue to do much good in the work of the Lord.

Katherine Moreno, Venezuela

OUR TALENTS CAN MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

With the help of my mother and sister, I painted this banner for the Relief Society sports festival held in our stake. My mother recommended me to the Relief Society president, who asked me to make their banner for them. I accepted their request and started to make rough sketches. Through the combined efforts of my family and me, we were able to create a beautiful work of art that represents the theme, “Find Nobility in Motherhood and Joy in Womanhood.”

I know that if we use our talents to serve other people, we not only bring

them happiness but we also develop our own abilities. The Lord blesses those who use their gifts from Him to build up His kingdom. As the parable of the talents teaches, if we do not share our gifts with others, we lose those gifts (see Matthew 25:24–29). But if we use our talents for good, we can make the world a better place.

Vanessa Pamittan, Philippines



WHAT YOU CAN LEARN FROM DUTY TO GOD

Actively participating in the activities in *Fulfilling My Duty to God* requires your whole heart, dedication, strength, and more than anything, faith. Duty to God is truly inspired.

As a young man, you can learn marvelous things that you can apply throughout the rest of your life by completing the goals in Duty to God: spiritual, temporal, physical, and much more.

I can say that it's well worth the effort to dedicate yourself to completing these goals. I have learned to be a better man, I've grown in my testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and I have better prepared myself to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. It's gratifying to know that I will be able to be a good example to my future children one day because I have accomplished this wonderful, significant goal.

Jonathan Argüello, Venezuela



A MISSION WAS BETTER THAN EXPECTED

As a young man, I looked forward to the day when I would serve a full-time mission. When I finally entered the mission field, I discovered that missionary service was not what I had expected—it was better. It was harder than I thought, but the satisfaction that came from doing what the Lord asked of me was indescribable.

Never before had I experienced the joy of helping someone attend church. Never before had I felt the thrill of hearing someone say, “Sure,

come on in” so that they could hear the restored gospel. Never before had I sensed the reality of the power that came as we declared repentance. Never before had I prayed with such real intent. Never before had an hour of scripture study gone by so fast. Never before had I been brought to tears by the realization of my imperfections. Never before had I experienced the devastation that comes with the words, “Elders, please don’t come by my house anymore.” Never before

had I gotten a blister on my foot the size of my thumb. Never before had I felt so protected. Never before had I felt so much responsibility for my actions because I wore the name “Jesus Christ” on my chest.

Never before had I been so close to my Heavenly Father as I came to be during my full-time mission.

Nahuel Cabranes, Peru



Elder Neil L. Andersen

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

HOW TO PRESS FORWARD

Press forward implies something more than simply going forward. *Press* implies something is preventing your advancement, and you must push through it. To go forward in this life, you must **press temptations aside, press through obstacles, press the doubt and the fear under your feet, and embrace the divine qualities** of faith, hope, and love.

How do you press forward? Nephi answers, “Ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men” (2 Nephi 31:20).

Pressing forward with steadfastness in Christ means **having faith in Him**. It means **making Him the central focus of your thoughts and actions**. When it is He you are following, pressing forward is the ultimate adventure.

Pressing forward means **pushing away** the “temptations and cares” of the world and **keeping the commandments** with exactness. “If ye love me,” Jesus said, “keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

Nephi adds that with our steadfastness in Christ comes a perfect brightness of hope and a love of God and all men. Hope smiles brightly before us. We find peace even in difficulties. Discipleship allows us to see our true purposes on the earth. Those purposes center in **helping our family, those we love, and those around us**. They include **building the kingdom of God**, and as we do, we become who we should become.

Nephi tells us that we must press forward, **feasting upon the words of Christ**. He tells us that with the gift of the Holy Ghost, we can speak with (and understand) the tongue of angels (see 2 Nephi 32:2–5). I know this voice. It is a voice we must continually be ready to hear.

As you righteously press forward, Jesus Christ “will lead you along” (D&C 78:18) and you will know with even greater certainty of His reality and His love for you. As you press forward in faith, the Holy Ghost will tell you and show you those things that you should do (see 2 Nephi 32:5). ■

From an address given at Brigham Young University–Hawaii on December 14, 2013.



HOW HAVE YOU APPLIED THIS?

My favorite scripture is Mark 4:39 because of these three words the Savior spoke: “Peace, be still.” Just as the disciples lost themselves in the woe of the storm, I have found myself lost in misery without hope of escape. That can happen to anybody. But I learned that the Savior can calm real storms by saying those simple words. If He can calm a real storm, then I am content knowing that if I put my trust in Him, He can calm the storms of everyday life.

Anneka W., 18, Utah, USA

TO THE POINT

My friend
has drifted from
the Church because
others make
fun of it.
What should I do?

The best things to do in that situation are: (1) be kind, loving, and accepting of your friend and (2) never waver in your testimony.

If you do these things, your friend will hopefully feel your love and acceptance and want to be around you. Also, he'll hopefully see that ridicule and mockery are ugly things and that anyone worthy of his admiration and friendship wouldn't attack another person's beliefs in that way.

Your example can be one of the best things your friend can have. Be like those people from Lehi's dream who partook of the fruit of the tree of life and were mocked by those in the great and spacious building but "heeded them not" (1 Nephi 8:33). If your friend sees you upholding your beliefs and standing up to others' mockery with dignity, respect, and good humor, he may see that it's possible for him to do the same. If there's still a seed of testimony in his heart, the example you set and the testimony you bear may be some of the things that help him feel the Spirit and remember what he once knew. ■



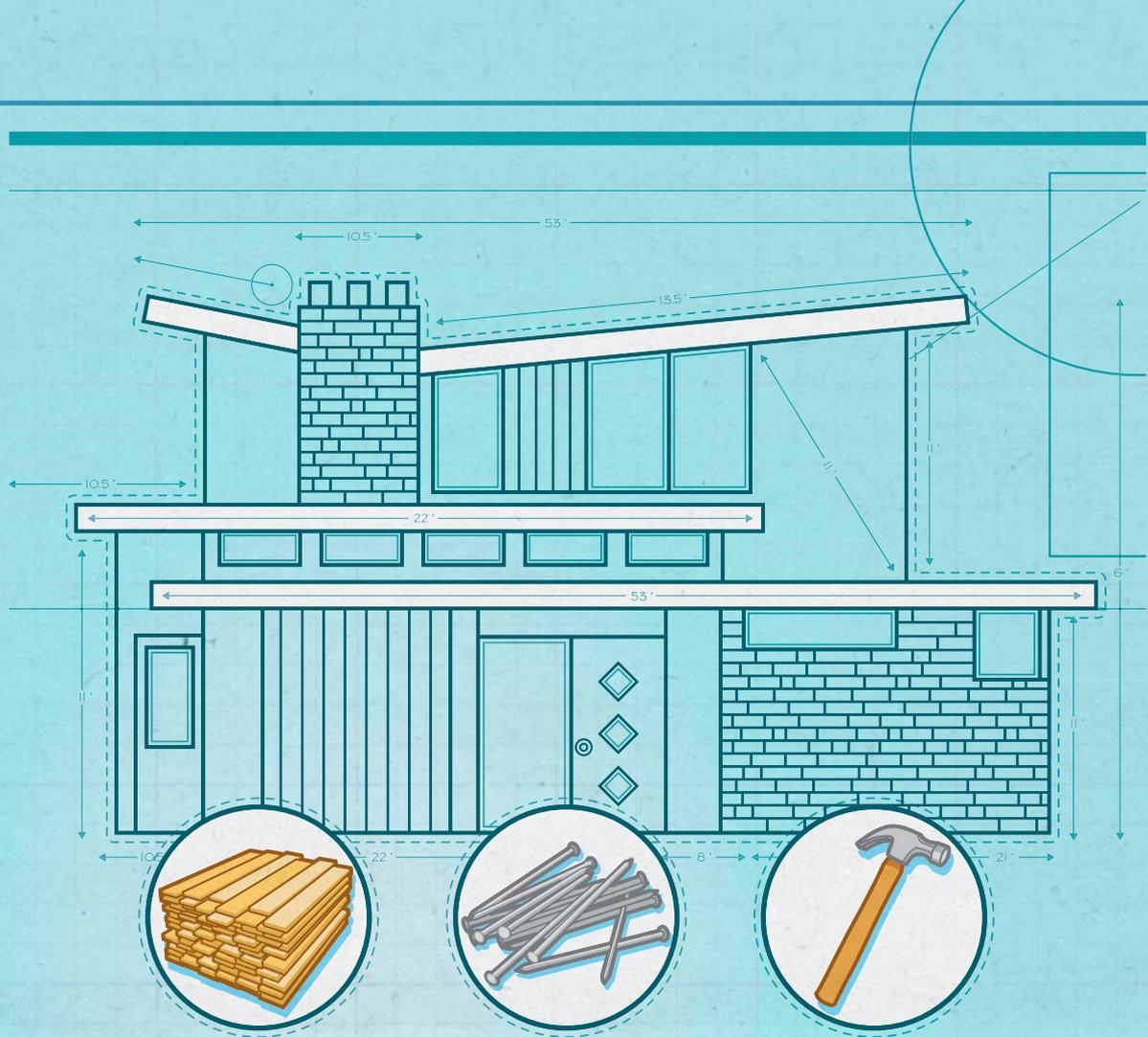
What is the Church's position
on gambling?

The Church is against all gambling of any kind, including lotteries (see *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2007], 21.1.19). The reason we're counseled not to waste our time and money on it is simple: "Gambling is wrong. . . . It is addictive and can lead to lost opportunities, ruined lives, and broken families. It is false to believe that you can get something for nothing" (*For the Strength of Youth* [booklet, 2011], 41). ■

LET GOD BE Your Architect

Your life can become better
than you've ever imagined.

By David Dickson
Church Magazines



You can get through a lot in life by figuring things out as you go along. Whether that means blissfully ignoring written instructions on how to assemble furniture that came in a million pieces or teaching yourself to play a musical instrument by pounding out whatever notes sound the best, your capacity to learn through trial and error is practically unlimited.

Only thing is, it's usually not very easy that way.

Imagine something truly complicated. What if you were in charge of building your own home and had all the raw materials set out in front of you. Can you picture that huge pile of stuff? Boards, nails, pipes, wires, tools, and everything else you'd need to build an awesome house for you and your family.

Would you still want to make it up as you went along? Or would you want help from somebody who actually knows how to make the most of the materials?

Our path through life is the same way. We all need help building our lives. And there's no better builder to turn to than God.

As explained in *For the Strength of Youth*: “The Lord will make much more out of your life than you can by yourself. He will increase your opportunities, expand your vision, and strengthen you. He will give you the help you need to meet your trials and challenges. You will gain a stronger testimony and find true joy as you come to know your Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, and feel Their love for you” ([2011], 43).

When we obey God’s commandments and involve Him in our plans, we become who we need to become—not who we thought we wanted to be.

Here are a few people who, with God’s help, found a better path than the one they had picked for themselves.

Letting Go of Violence

In a video series on mormonchannel.org, a young man named Bubba shares his story about how his life was headed for disaster.¹ He had grown up in a violent home, where his father was murdered when Bubba was only three years old.

Bubba grew up choosing the same life he’d always seen. He joined a gang and started fights with anybody who crossed him. By high school he figured he would end up in prison before long. And he didn’t care.

God intervened. At this dangerous crossroads in his life, Bubba met a Latter-day Saint family who showed him loving kindness and goodness. He’d never been around people like this before—people who showed compassion and love. He started spending as much time with them as possible. When he asked the family why they acted the way they did, they said it was because of their faith in Jesus Christ.

He wanted to find out what they knew. He began praying and studying the scriptures. And soon he felt something he’d never felt before. “Surely there is a God, and He loves

me!” Bubba says. With God’s help, Bubba began to build his life over again with Jesus Christ as the foundation, leaving his old life behind.

“My nature changed. Who I am as a human being is different than who I was. Now I have a purpose. I have a destiny,” he says. “I have somewhere that I’m going.”

These days Bubba sees his future with brightness, faith, and hope. “I know that it is only through Jesus Christ, my faith in Him, that will help me get to where I want to be,” he says.²



When we obey God’s commandments and involve Him in our plans, we become who we need to become—not who we thought we wanted to be.

Changing Direction

President Hugh B. Brown (1883–1975), a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and of the First Presidency, shared an experience where God made more out of his life than he would have done on his own.

Hugh had been serving in the Canadian military and was in line to be promoted to general. He had been working, hoping, and praying for that promotion for 10 years.

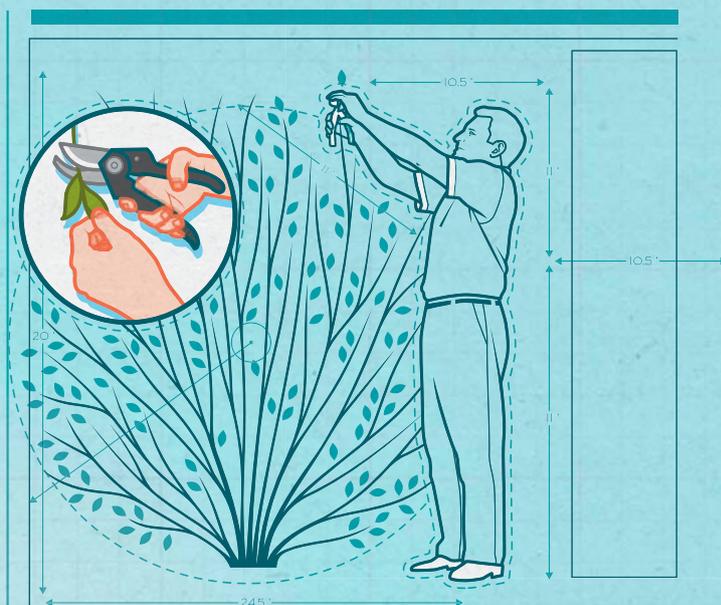
When the position became available, however, he was passed over simply because he was a member of the Church. That was literally the only reason, and they told him so.

Hugh was furious. He said: “I got on the train and started back . . . with a broken heart, with bitterness in my soul. . . . When I got to my tent, . . . I threw my cap on the cot. I clenched my fists, and I shook them at heaven. I said, ‘How could you do this to me, God? I have done everything I could do to measure up. There is nothing that I could have done—that I should have done—that I haven’t done. How could you do this to me?’ I was as bitter as gall.”³

Then Hugh remembered an experience from years earlier. He’d once bought a neglected farm that had an overgrown currant bush. Without trimming, that bush would never provide fruit. All it wanted to do was grow taller.

So Hugh trimmed it back severely. Afterward, he saw little drops of liquid at the end of each cut branch. They looked like tears. “I am the gardener here,” he told the currant bush. Hugh knew what he wanted that bush to become, and it wasn’t a shade tree.

That experience came to his mind as he battled anger over being passed up for promotion. “I heard a voice, and I recognized the tone of this voice. It was my own voice, and the voice said, ‘I am the gardener here. I know what I want you to do.’ The bitterness went out of my soul, and I fell on my knees by the cot to ask forgiveness for my ungratefulness. . . .



“I am the gardener here. I know what I want you to do.”

“. . . And now, almost 50 years later, I look up to [God] and say, ‘Thank you, Mr. Gardener, for cutting me down, for loving me enough to hurt me.’”⁴

Hugh never became a general. The Lord had other plans for President Brown. With the Lord as his architect, President Brown’s life became a masterful structure.

Building from Scratch

Being called a “child of hell” by a prophet of God probably doesn’t sound like your life’s headed in a good direction. But that’s exactly what happened to Zeezrom, a lawyer in the Book of Mormon. (See Alma 11:23.)

Alma and Amulek were preaching in the land where Zeezrom was trying to gain money as a lawyer by stirring up the people against Alma and Amulek. Zeezrom tried to trick Alma and Amulek with his questions, but they answered and rebuked him. Zeezrom’s thoughts were revealed to them by the Spirit. (See Alma 11–12.)

As the conversation continued, Zeezrom was stunned into silence. He began to recognize his faults and felt

serious guilt over his sins and what he'd done to lead the people away. He soon tried to undo some of the damage he'd caused, saying, "Behold, I am guilty, and these men are spotless before God" (Alma 14:7).

But it didn't work. The people cast Zeezrom out of their city. His guilt and despair over what he'd done—including a mistaken fear that his preaching against Alma and Amulek had led to their death—caused Zeezrom to fall sick with fever, "scorched with a burning heat" (Alma 15:3).

The structure he'd built for his life had crumbled to its foundation. But that's not where Zeezrom's story ends.

Once he learned that Alma and Amulek were still alive, Zeezrom took courage and asked for them to come to him. When they did, Zeezrom asked to be healed. Through his faith Zeezrom was healed fully. He was then baptized and began to preach from that time forth (see Alma 15:11–12).

Zeezrom's new life, this time with God as his architect, had just begun.

Beyond Hammer and Nail

The good news is we were never meant to go through life alone. God wants to help us every step of the way. And when we let Him help, there's no limit to what we can become. ■

NOTES

1. "His Grace" video series, mormonchannel.org.
2. "From Gang Member to 'Good Man'" (video), mormonchannel.org.
3. Hugh B. Brown, "The Currant Bush," *Liahona*, Mar. 2002, 24; *New Era*, Jan. 1973, 15.
4. Hugh B. Brown, "The Currant Bush," *Liahona*, 22, 24; *New Era*, 14, 15.
5. Neal A. Maxwell, "Response to a Call," *Ensign*, May 1974, 112.

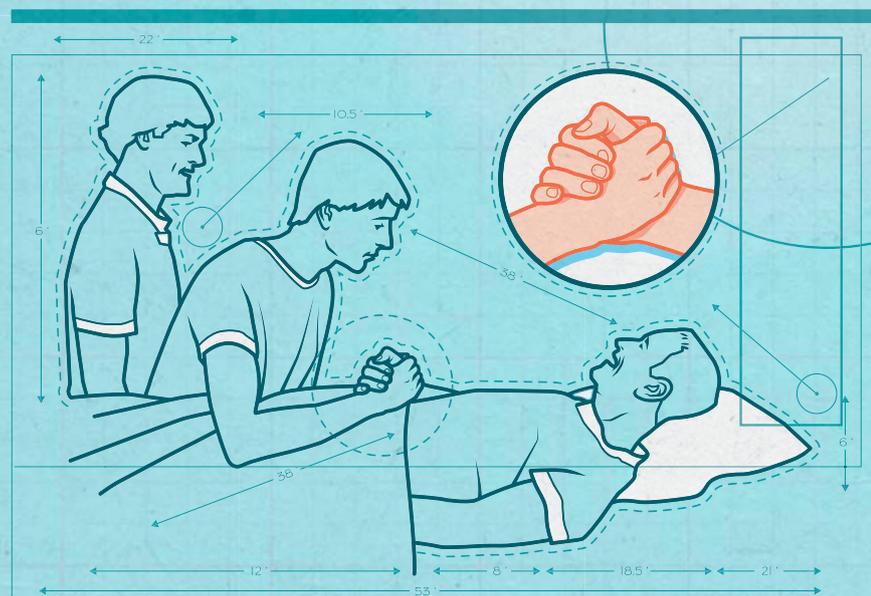
TEMPORAL VS. ETERNAL

In this life we have many opportunities to use our agency. All social networks, popularity, and friends may seem pretty important in this life, but in the end it is the kingdom of God that will matter. There's a quote I love that Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said in general conference: "If you have not chosen the kingdom of God first, it will in the end make no difference what you have chosen instead."⁵

Sometimes we are so focused in this life, we forget what is most important. If we could take the veil away from us, our whole perspective would change. We would become more humble and give more importance to the Lord and not so much importance to man.

I am convinced I want to be righteous and follow God. I want to have an eternal perspective, so I can enter His mighty kingdom. This will be better than having all the money and power of the world. In this life we shall live for only a short period in comparison to the eternities. The glory we will receive will be the glory we will have forever.

Isabelle A., 19, Mexico



Standing Tall in Ethiopia

By Amie Jane Leavitt
The author lives in Utah, USA.

My name is
Tsion!

I live in Ethiopia, a country in eastern Africa. I like playing soccer and reading. And I want to be a doctor when I grow up. I try to stand tall by living the gospel every day and sharing it with my friends!

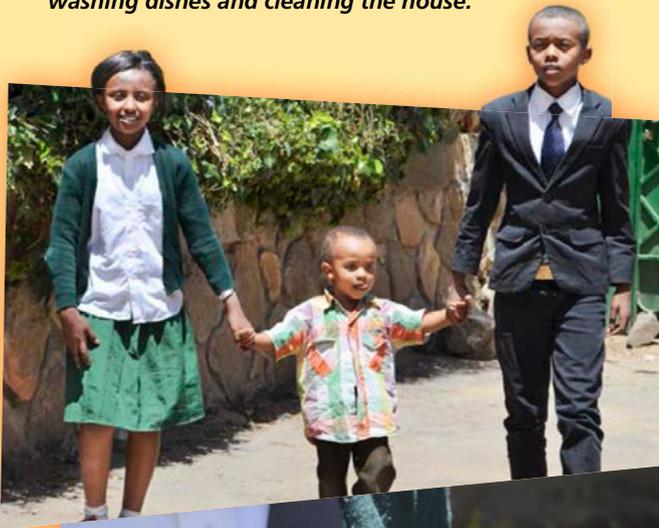
HOW I GOT A TESTIMONY

I came to church for the first time when I was eight. I read the Book of Mormon, I listened to the missionaries, and I prayed. The Spirit told me the Church was true, and I wanted to be baptized. The gospel makes me happy.



HELPING MY FAMILY

My family usually walks to church, and it takes about an hour. When my little brother gets tired, my brother or I will carry him. I help at home by washing dishes and cleaning the house.



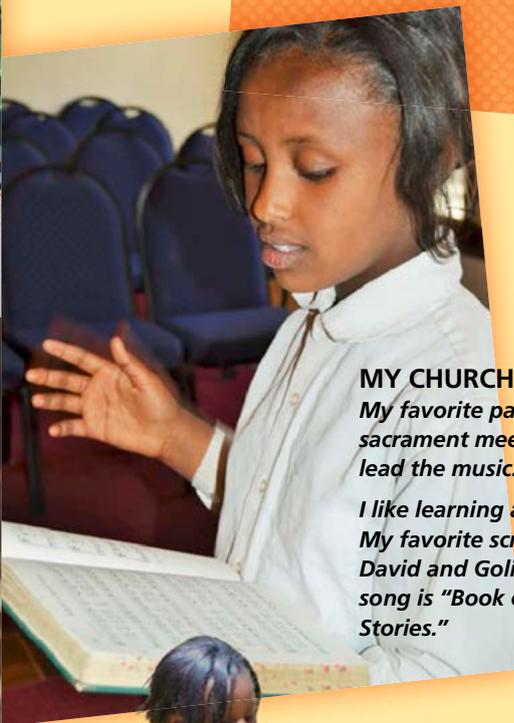
TSION'S TIPS FOR STANDING TALL

- Gain a testimony for yourself. Read the scriptures and pray.
- Share your testimony and be a good example to your friends.
- Go to church every Sunday and live the gospel standards.

MY CHURCH CALLING

My favorite part of church is sacrament meeting. I get to lead the music.

I like learning about the gospel. My favorite scripture story is David and Goliath. My favorite song is "Book of Mormon Stories."



SHARING WHAT I KNOW

I tell my friends at school about the restored gospel. One friend used to ask me about the Church—then she suddenly stopped. I asked her why. She said her parents were upset. I hope someday her parents will change their minds.

SEND US YOUR STORY

How do you follow Jesus by standing tall? Send us your experience and photo, along with your parent's permission.

Send it in online at liahona.lds.org (click "Submit an Article") or by emailing liahona@ldschurch.org.

WHAT STANDING TALL MEANS TO ME

"Standing tall" means living the gospel every day. Heavenly Father and Jesus want me to testify of Them! I want all of my friends around the world to share the restored gospel with their friends.



Reading Better Every Day

By Marissa Widdison and
Sonia Quenallata

Based on a true story

Joseph turned the page in his book. He frowned. He had two more pages to go.

“Are you OK?” Mama asked.

“I like to read,” Joseph said.

“But I am so slow. How can I learn to read better?”

“I have an idea,” Mama said.

“Read a chapter of the Book of Mormon every day. It will help you learn to read better.”

Joseph tried. At first it took him a long time. He had to sound out the long words. But he kept reading every day. Soon he could read more than one chapter.

Two weeks went by. Joseph’s bookmark moved from 1 Nephi to 2 Nephi. Then it was in the book of Jacob!





ILLUSTRATIONS BY KATIE MCDEE

One night it was Joseph's turn to give the lesson in family home evening.

"I know what to do!" Joseph thought. He found the *Book of Mormon Stories* book. It had words and pictures. He turned the pages until he found the perfect story.

Joseph read the story to his family. He read short words, like *ship*. He read long words, like *commanded*. Prophets wrote these words long ago. The words were easy to read.

When the story was over, Mama had tears in her eyes.

"Are you OK, Mama?" Joseph asked.

"Yes," Mama said. "I'm happy. You have worked hard."

Joseph smiled a big smile.

"I am reading every day, just like you said." He showed Mama his Book of Mormon. His bookmark was in the book of Alma!

Someday Joseph's bookmark would be at the end of the book. And then he could start over! ■

The authors live in Utah, USA, and Bolivia.



By Elder
Robert D. Hales
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

How can I get my OWN testimony?



Your testimony will grow as you learn about Heavenly Father and Jesus.



You can learn from reading the scriptures.



You can learn from the teachings and testimony
of your parents and teachers.

As a boy this
is how I came
to know for
myself.



When you do
what is right, the Holy
Ghost will help you.



By Elder Chi Hong
(Sam) Wong
Of the Seventy

Wilford's Fast Offering



One day I saw my oldest son, Wilford, preparing a tithing envelope. He was probably around five years old at the time. Wilford didn't earn any money, so I wondered why he was paying tithing. When I asked him, he told me he was actually paying a fast offering.

Wilford didn't have much money of his own. But he was still excited to pay a fast offering.

I was impressed by this act of kindness. I asked him why he had decided to do this.

Wilford answered, "I don't have any needs. But I know others do." He knew his money would help people. He was very happy about that.

This simple experience taught me a good lesson: children are really in tune with the Spirit and

have a natural Christlike love. Wilford had something he didn't need and knew it would be helpful to other people. He was willing to make the sacrifice.

Saving money is good. But my young son taught me another lesson through his example. By listening to the Spirit, we can bless the lives of others when we share what we have. ■

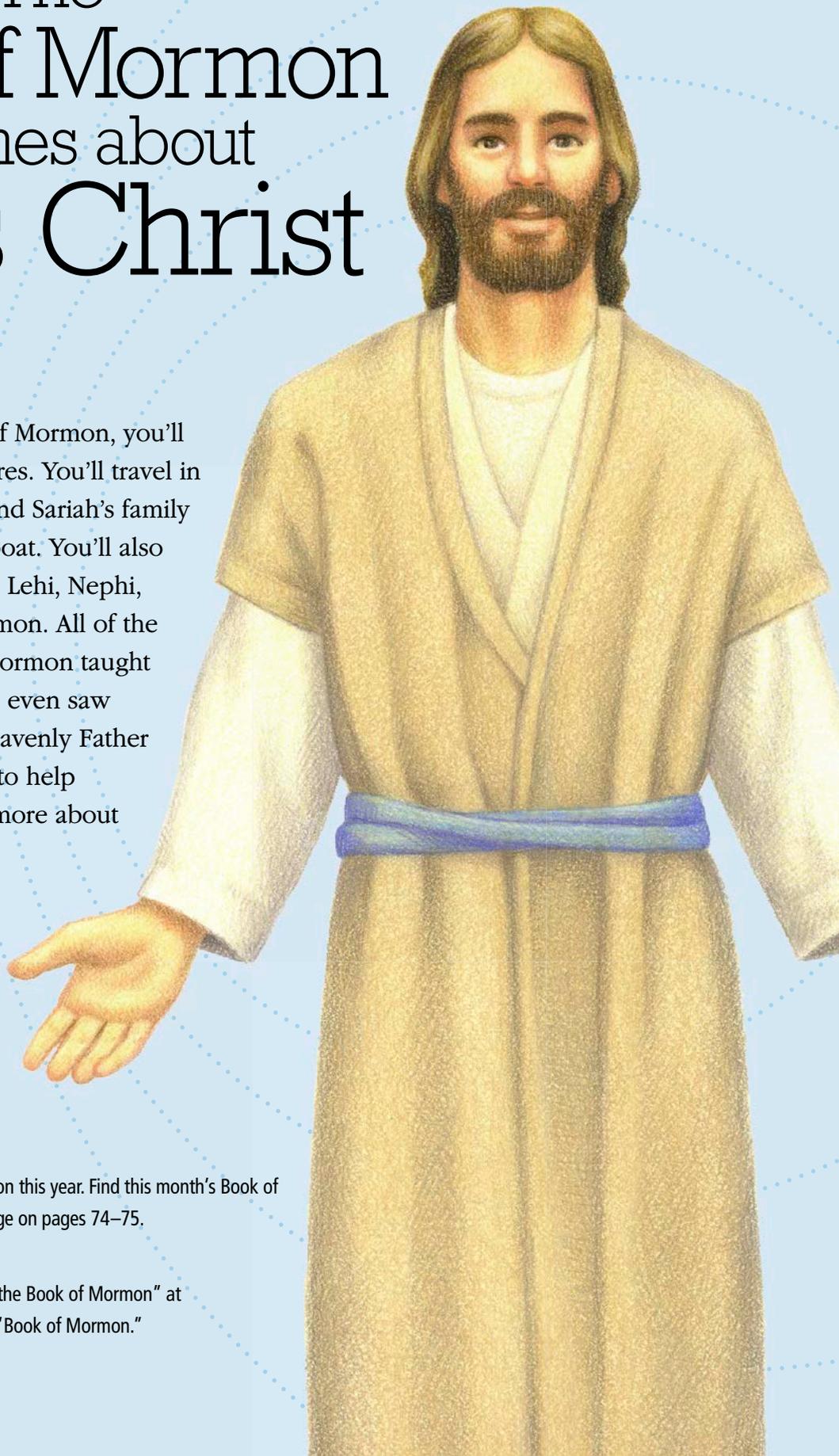
The Book of Mormon Teaches about Jesus Christ

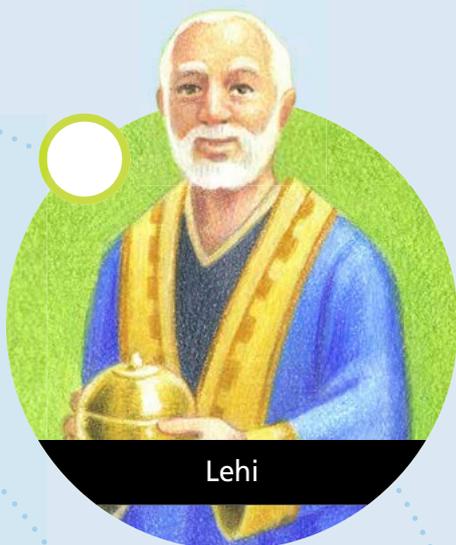
As you read the Book of Mormon, you'll go on many adventures. You'll travel in the wilderness with Lehi and Sariah's family and watch Nephi build a boat. You'll also meet many prophets—like Lehi, Nephi, Abinadi, Samuel, and Mormon. All of the prophets in the Book of Mormon taught about Jesus. Some of them even saw Him. In fact, that's why Heavenly Father gave us this special book: to help people everywhere learn more about Jesus! ■

MAKE A PLAN!

Make a plan to read the Book of Mormon this year. Find this month's Book of Mormon hero card and reading challenge on pages 74–75.

Watch "Chapter 1: How We Got the Book of Mormon" at scripturestories.lds.org. Click on "Book of Mormon."





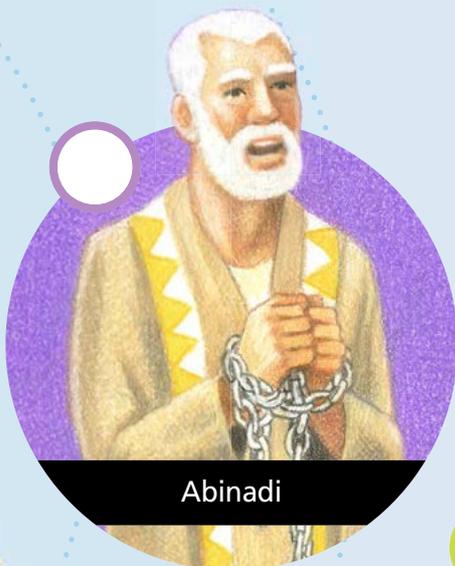
Lehi

Take turns reading these verses. Write the number of the scripture that matches each Book of Mormon prophet. Check your answers below.

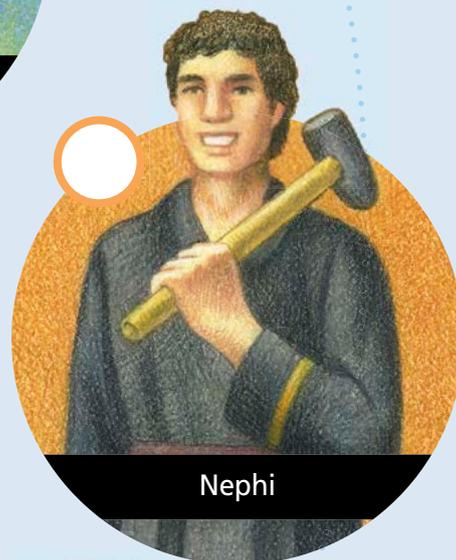
1. Ether 12:39, 41
2. 1 Nephi 1:5, 9
3. 1 Nephi 11:26–27
4. Mosiah 16:8–9
5. Alma 6:8
6. Moroni 9:22



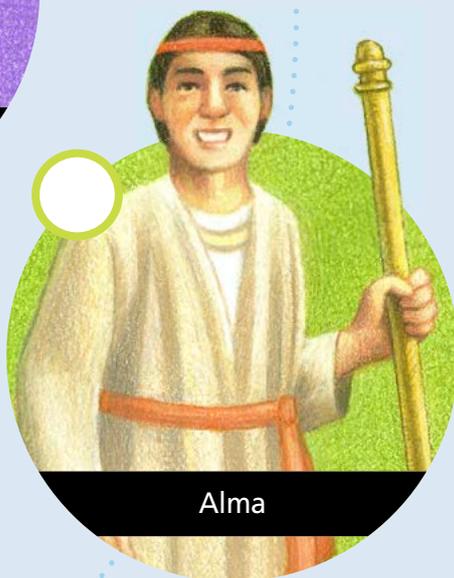
Moroni



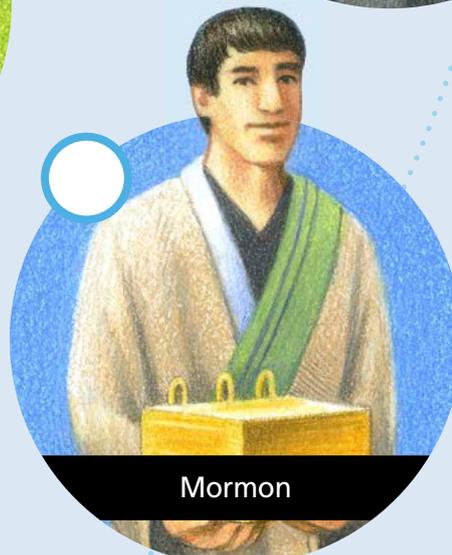
Abinadi



Nephi



Alma



Mormon

WRITE ABOUT IT!

How did Jesus Christ show His love for us in the Book of Mormon?

Answers: 1. Moroni; 2. Lehi; 3. Nephi; 4. Abinadi; 5. Alma; 6. Mormon

Nephi Was OBEDIENT

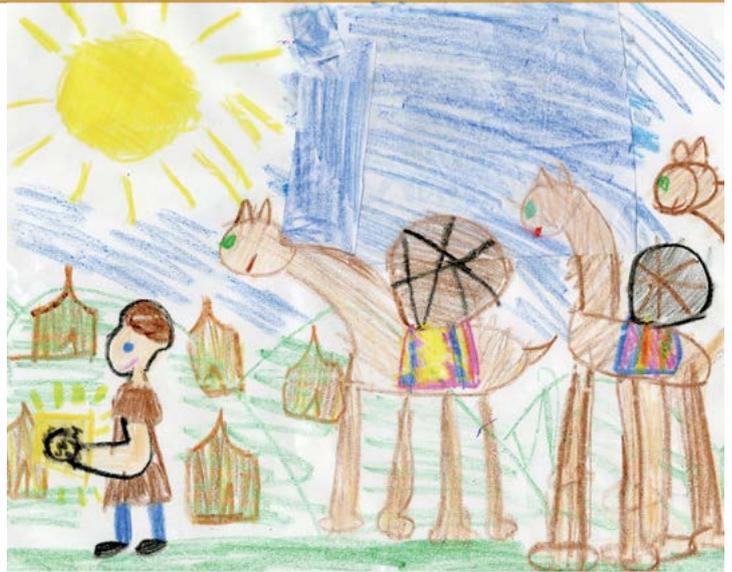
Nephi had to do many hard and scary things. He had to leave his home, get the brass plates from a wicked man, and help his family survive in the wilderness. But he trusted God and found the courage to obey. How can you follow Nephi's example this month?



My mom and I started reading the Book of Mormon. As we read about Nephi, I realized that Nephi always obeyed, and he was blessed because of it. I

feel that this is the right way to be, and I want to be like Nephi. So now when my mom says, "Take out the trash," I say, "OK, Mom!"

Heidi M., age 10, Yeongnam, South Korea



Ellie B., age 8, Utah, USA

ILLUSTRATION BY JARED BECKSTRAND

Cut, fold, and keep this challenge card!



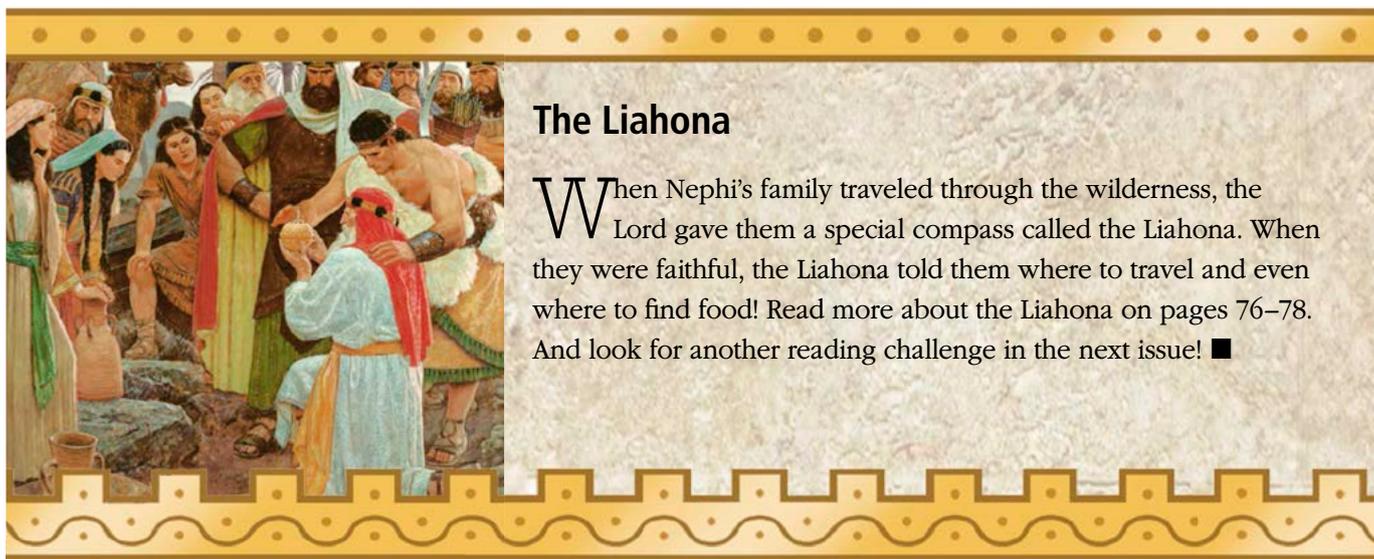
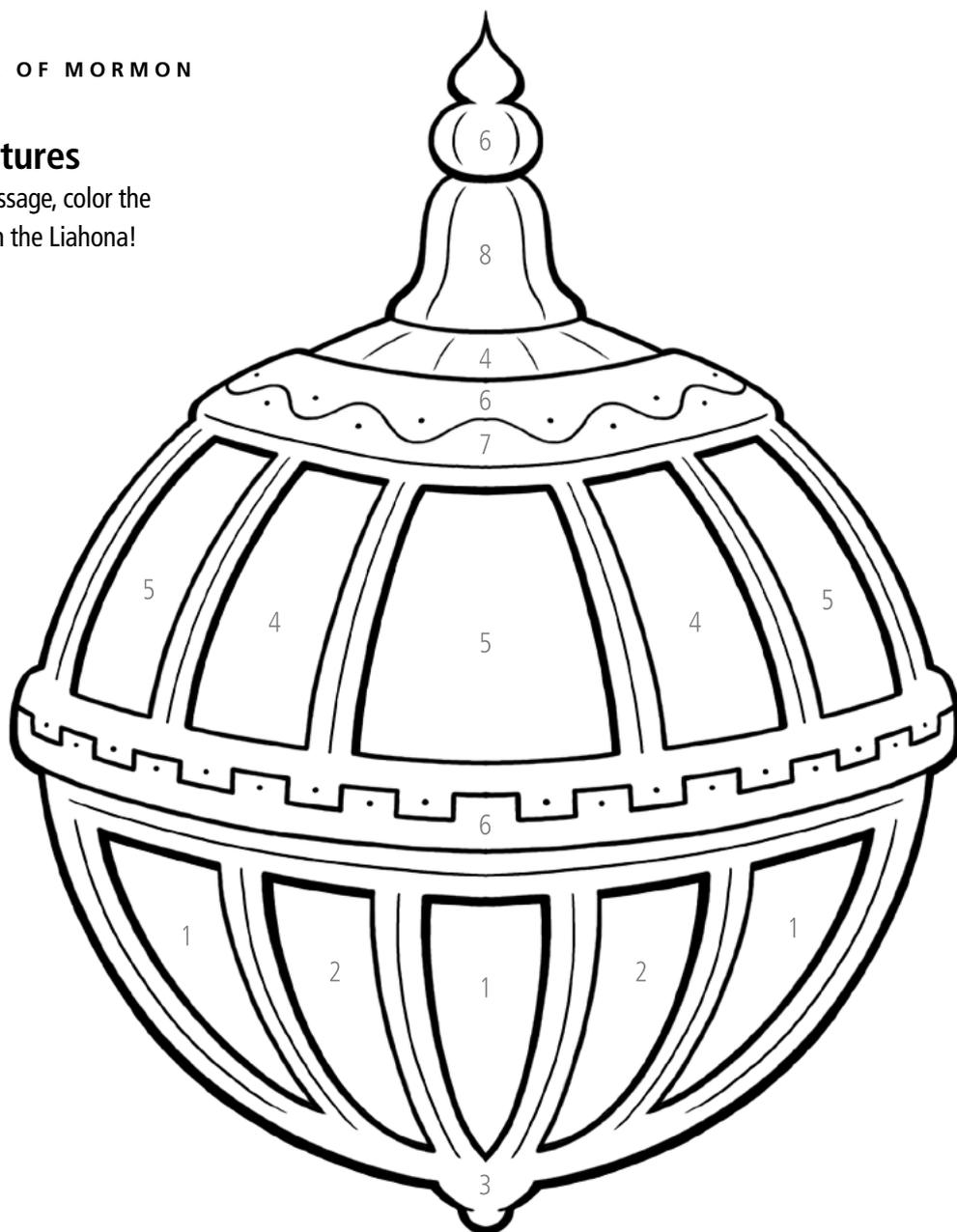
I Can Be Obedient!

- Memorize 1 Nephi 3:7.
- When your parents ask you to do something, be obedient like Nephi!
- Watch chapters 2–9 of the Book of Mormon videos at scripturestories.lds.org.
- I challenge myself to . . .

This Month's Scriptures

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

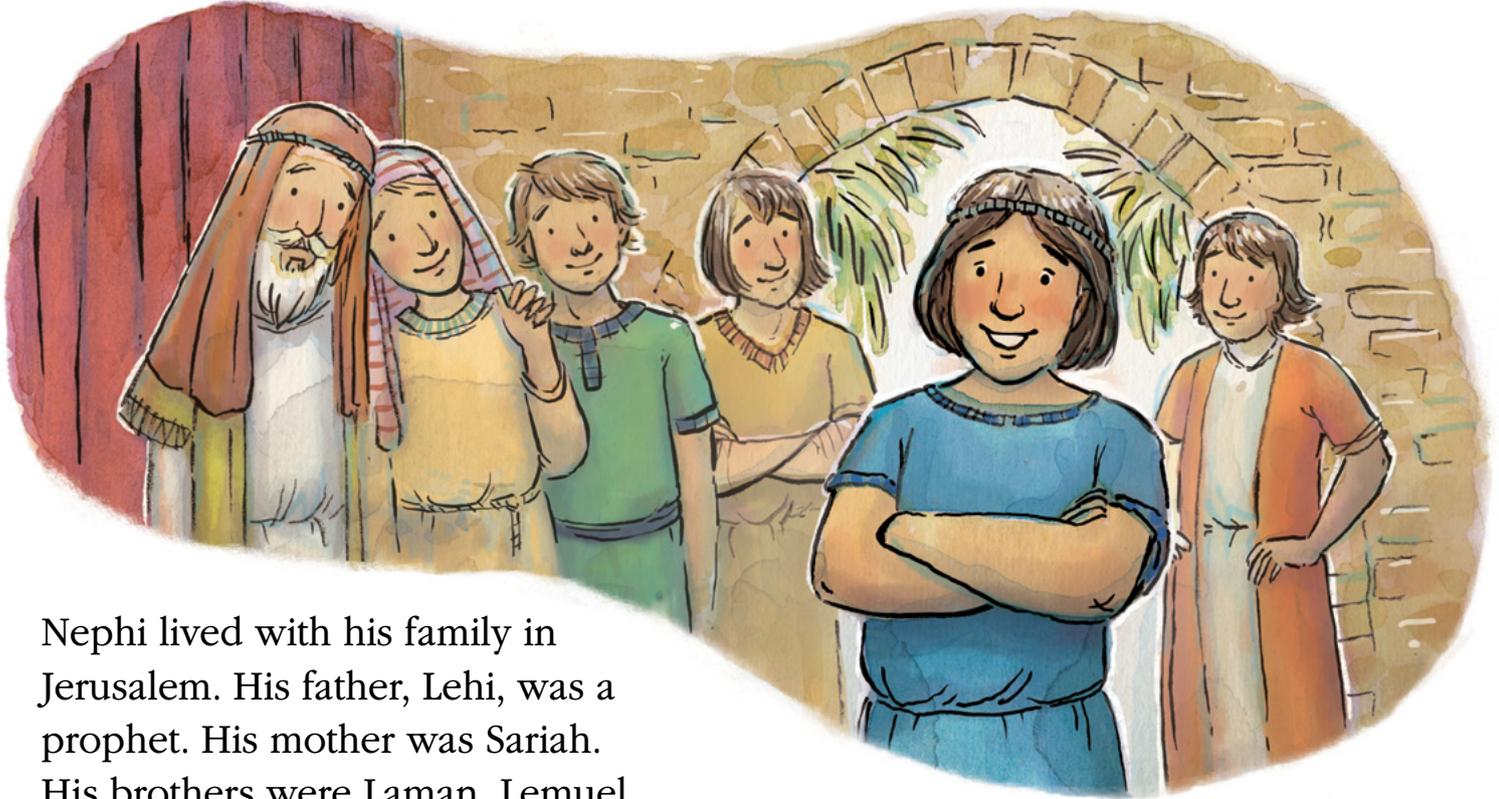
- 1 1 Nephi 1:1–10
- 2 1 Nephi 2:1–7, 16–20
- 3 1 Nephi 3:1–9
- 4 1 Nephi 3:22–31, 4:1
- 5 1 Nephi 4:4–35
- 6 1 Nephi 8:2, 5–18
- 7 1 Nephi 8:19–33
- 8 1 Nephi 16:9–16



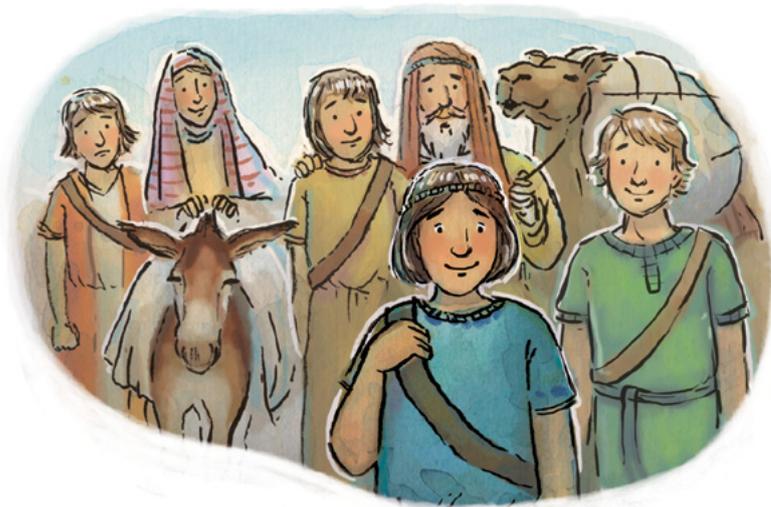
The Liahona

When Nephi's family traveled through the wilderness, the Lord gave them a special compass called the Liahona. When they were faithful, the Liahona told them where to travel and even where to find food! Read more about the Liahona on pages 76–78. And look for another reading challenge in the next issue! ■

A Journey in the Wilderness



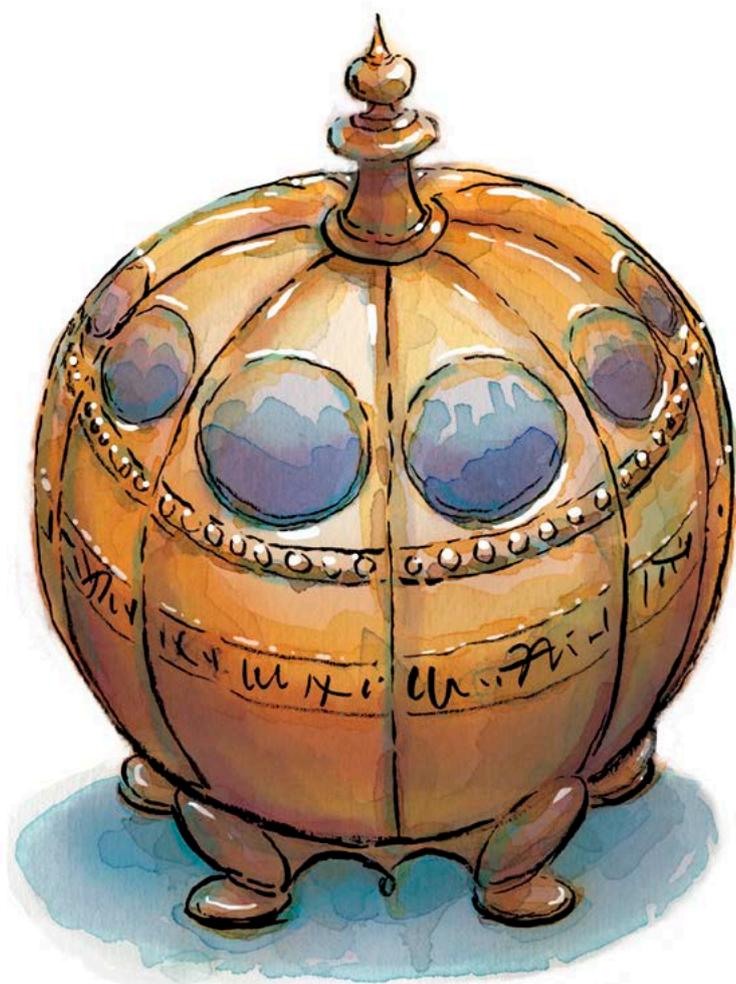
Nephi lived with his family in Jerusalem. His father, Lehi, was a prophet. His mother was Sariah. His brothers were Laman, Lemuel, and Sam.



Nephi's father prayed. Heavenly Father told him that his family needed to leave the city so they could be safe. It was hard to leave their home. But Nephi's family obeyed.



Nephi's family went into the wilderness. Then Heavenly Father said Nephi and his brothers needed to go back to the city to get the scriptures. It was hard to do. But Nephi was a good example when his brothers didn't want to obey. He said he would do what Heavenly Father asked.

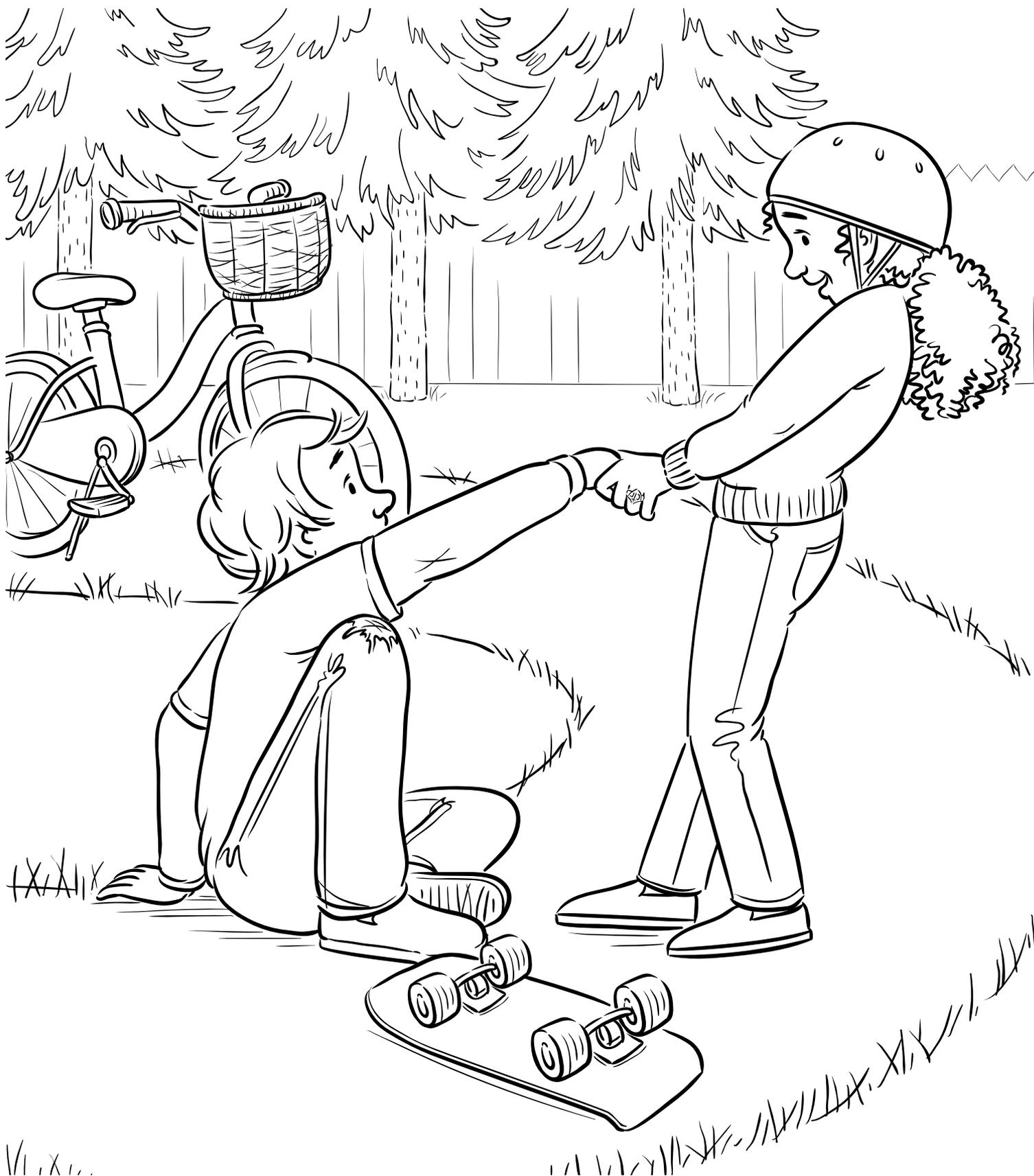


Heavenly Father gave Nephi's family a special compass. It was called the Liahona. When Nephi's family obeyed Heavenly Father, it showed them the way to travel in the wilderness. It even showed Nephi where to go to find food for his family.



We can be like Nephi when we obey the commandments
and follow Heavenly Father! ■

I Can Choose the Right





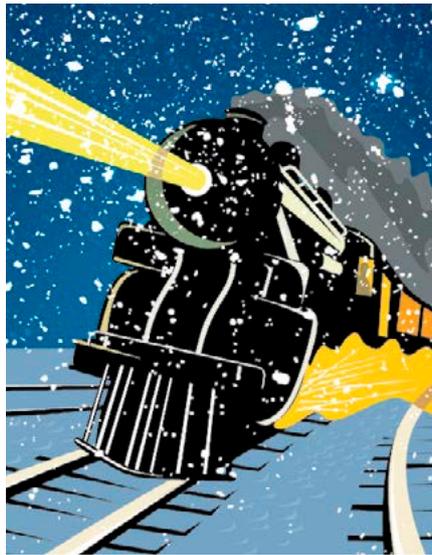
By Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933)
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

THE PARABLE OF THE OWL EXPRESS

I thought deeply of the words of the grimy, oil-stained engineer.

During my college days, I was one of a class of students appointed to fieldwork as a part of our prescribed courses in geology. . . .

A certain assignment had kept us in the field many days. . . . As the time allotted to the investigation drew near its close, we were overtaken by a violent windstorm, followed by a heavy snow—unseasonable and unexpected, but which, nevertheless, increased in intensity so that we were in danger of being snowbound in the hills. The storm reached its height while we were descending a long and steep mountainside several miles from the little railway station at which we had hoped to take [a] train that night for home. With great effort we reached the station late at night while the storm was yet raging. . . .



. . . The train for which we so expectantly and hopefully waited was the Owl Express—a fast night train connecting large cities. . . .

Long after midnight the train arrived in a terrific whirl of wind and snow. I lingered behind my companions as they hurriedly clambered aboard, for I was attracted by the engineer, who during the brief stop, while his assistant was attending to the water replenishment, bustled about the engine, oiling some parts, adjusting others, and generally overhauling the panting locomotive. I ventured to speak to him, busy though he was. I asked how he felt on such a night—wild, weird, and furious, when the powers of destruction seemed to be let loose, abroad and uncontrolled, when the storm was howling and

when danger threatened from every side. . . .

His answer was a lesson not yet forgotten. In effect he said, though in jerky and disjointed sentences: “Look at the engine headlight. Doesn’t that light up the track for a hundred yards [90 m] or more? Well, all I try to do is to cover that hundred yards of lighted track. That I can see, and for that distance I know the roadbed is open and safe. . . . The light of the engine is always ahead of me!”

As he climbed to his place in the cab, I hastened to board the first passenger coach; and as I sank into the cushioned seat, in blissful enjoyment of the warmth and general comfort, offering strong contrast to the wildness of the night without, I thought deeply of the words of the grimy, oil-stained engineer. They were full of faith—the faith that accomplishes great things, the faith that gives courage and determination. . . .

We may not know what lies ahead of us in the future years, nor even in the days or hours immediately beyond. But for a few yards, or possibly only a few feet, the track is clear, our duty is plain, our course is illumined. For that short distance, for the next step, lighted by the inspiration of God, go on! ■

From “Three Parables—The Unwise Bee, the Owl Express, and Two Lamps,” Liahona, Feb. 2003, 36–41.

INSIGHTS



RECENTLY REDEDICATED OGDEN UTAH TEMPLE

How do we become a temple-attending people?

“Let us be a temple-attending people. Attend the temple as frequently as personal circumstances allow. Keep a picture of the temple in your home that your children may see it. Teach them about the purposes of the house of the Lord. Have them plan from their earliest years to go there and to remain worthy of that blessing.”

President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95), “Exceeding Great and Precious Promises,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 8.

Also in This Issue

FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Revealed **Realities** of Mortality

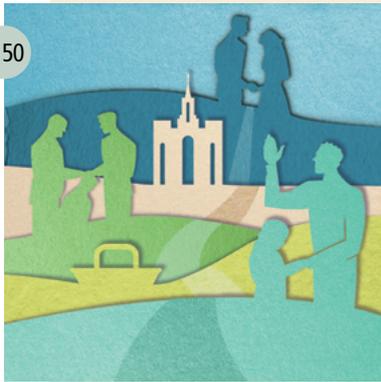
We can live lives of meaning and purpose by embracing the three realities of mortality the Lord taught to Adam and Eve.



p.44

FOR YOUTH

p.50



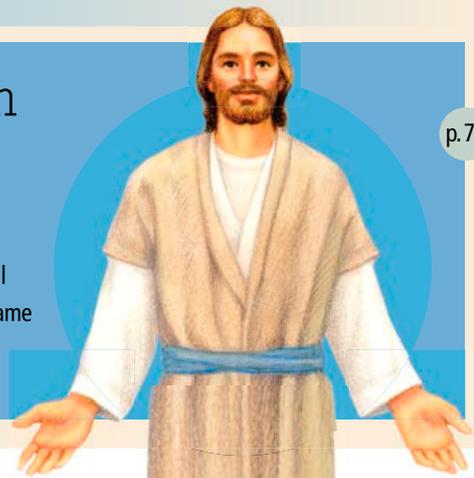
2016 **Mutual Theme**

The Young Men and Young Women general presidencies explain this year's theme and what it means to "press forward with a steadfastness in Christ" (2 Nephi 31:20).

FOR CHILDREN

The Book of Mormon Teaches of **Jesus Christ**

While reading the Book of Mormon this year, you'll learn about lots of prophets who all wanted the same thing—to teach about Jesus Christ!



p.72



THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS