

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

Liahona



**With Optimism, Love,
and Vision: President
Gordon B. Hinckley, p. 22**

**Getting to the Heart of Asking
Questions, p. 14**

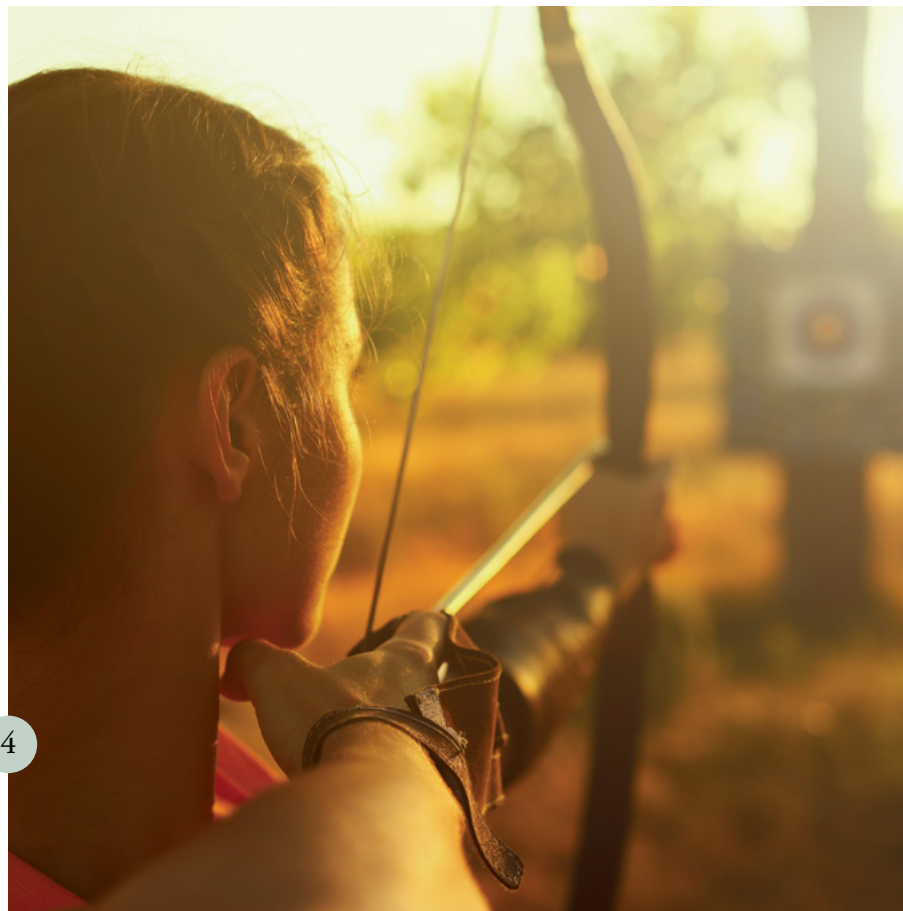
**Doctrine and Covenants:
Firsthand Knowledge of the Father
and the Son, p. 16**

**When You Stand Alone,
Choose to Be Valiant, p. 28**



Noted Latter-day Saint photographer George Edward Anderson captured this moment in 1907. It contrasts the everyday with the eternally significant event that transpired in the nearby grove: the First Vision. In that Sacred Grove near Palmyra, New York, 14-year-old Joseph Smith prayed to know which church to join and was answered with a visit from God the Father and the Son.

Photograph courtesy of Church History Library



4

MESSAGES

- 4 First Presidency Message:
Aiming at the Center**
By President Dieter F. Uchtdorf
- 7 Visiting Teaching Message:
The Purpose of Relief Society**



ON THE COVER
Photograph by George Frey.

FEATURE ARTICLES

- 16 Insights from the Doctrine and Covenants about the Father and the Son**
By Norman W. Gardner
Because of lost truths revealed in the Restoration, the Doctrine and Covenants helps deepen our understanding of the Father and the Son.
- 22 Gordon B. Hinckley: A Prophet of Optimism and Vision**
By Andrew D. Olsen
As the beloved 15th President of the Church, Gordon B. Hinckley led with an example full of optimism, love, and vision for the future.

28 Valiant in Our Testimony of the Savior

By Elder Christoffel Golden
The difficult moments are those that will define us most.

34 With All Thy Getting, Get Understanding

By Elder Gary E. Stevenson
Real understanding will come through understanding the interdependence of study and prayer, committing to serve, and trusting in the Lord.

DEPARTMENTS

- 8 October 2016 Conference Notebook**
- 10 What We Believe: We Believe the Church Will Fill the Earth**
- 12 Our Homes, Our Families: I Want to Live with You Forever!**
By Leongina Adamés de Ubrí
- 14 Teaching in the Savior's Way: Questioning Our Discussion Questions**
By Ted Barnes
- 40 Latter-day Saint Voices**
- 80 Until We Meet Again: The Case for a Living Prophet**
By President Hugh B. Brown



44

44 Prophetic Principles of Faithfulness

By Elder C. Scott Grow

The decisions and commitments you make now can help you remain faithful in the future.



See if you can find the Liahona hidden in this issue. Hint: Where do you kneel to pray?

58



50 2017 Mutual Theme: James 1:5–6

By Stephen W. Owen and Bonnie L. Oscarson

53 Poster: Ask

54 Five Promises of Prayer

By Carlisa Cramer

Prayer is more than a way to communicate with our Father in Heaven. Here are a few other blessings that it brings.

56 Five Questions to Ask When Prayers Feel Unanswered

By Margaret Willden

It can be tough when prayers feel unanswered, but a few questions might help you think about things in a new way.

58 Mutual Theme Song: Ask of God

By Nik Day

61 Line upon Line: James 1:5–6

62 Celestial Moments

By Hollie Megan Laura Hunter

With moments like these, heaven suddenly doesn't feel so far away.

63 Our Space

64 Answers from Church Leaders: How to Share the Gospel

By Elder M. Russell Ballard

65 To the Point

Finding it tough to forgive? Struggling with depression?

76



66 Church History Reading Chart: The Restoration

69 Answers from an Apostle: Will Heavenly Father always answer my prayers?

By Elder Dallin H. Oaks

70 Our Page

71 The Book on the Shelf

By Elder Walter F. González

Looking for a good book to read, I found the Book of Mormon and it changed my life.

72 Min-Jun Measures Up

By Kelly Hunsaker

How could Min-Jun go inside the church when he was all dirty and wet?

74 Don't Forget to Pray for Erik

By Julie Cornelius-Huang

Kari was sad that her brother didn't want to go to church anymore, but then she learned an important lesson about prayer.

76 Stories of Jesus: Jesus Loves Me

By Kim Webb Reid

79 Coloring Page: I Am a Child of Heavenly Parents

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Henry B. Eyring, Dieter F. Uchtdorf

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Printing Director: Stephen T. Lewis

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Family Home Evening Ideas

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



"Valiant in Our Testimony of the Savior," page 28: Elder Golden discusses how we will each face difficult yet defining moments in our lives. You could role-play several situations in which family members are faced with a challenging decision. For instance, you might practice saying no to a classmate who asks to cheat off your homework or asking a friend to use clean language. Talk about how you can prepare by developing a strong testimony of the Savior before such situations arise.

"Will Heavenly Father always answer my prayers?" page 69: How have you seen your prayers answered? You might share specific experiences where the Lord has answered your prayers, whether they were answered in an expected or unexpected manner. Consider encouraging each other to record in a journal the particular ways in which the Lord has answered your prayers and blessed you.

MORE ONLINE

The *Liahona* and other Church materials are available in many languages at **languages.lds.org**. Audio recordings of *Liahona* articles are available in English, Portuguese, and Spanish at **liahona.lds.org**. You can also visit **facebook.com/liahona.magazine** to view and share inspirational messages (available in English, Portuguese, and Spanish).

TOPICS IN THIS ISSUE

Numbers represent the first page of the article.

Agency, 44, 74

Book of Mormon, 71

Church history, 10, 16, 28,
34, 66

Commandments, 4,
28, 76

Covenants, 44

Depression, 65

Doctrine and Covenants,
16, 66

Eternal families, 12, 41,
44, 63, 79

Faith, 12, 22, 34, 44, 50,
53, 58, 61, 72, 80

Family history, 41, 63

Forgiveness, 54, 65

Godhead, 16

Holy Ghost, 42, 54, 62,
64, 74

Individual worth, 72

Jesus Christ, 4, 16, 28, 34,
70, 76

Joseph Smith, 10, 16, 28,
34, 66, 71, 80

Love, 4, 22, 76

Missionary work, 10, 34,
63, 64, 71

Obedience, 44, 61

Peace, 54, 62

Pornography, 44

Prayer, 34, 42, 50, 53, 54,
56, 58, 61, 71, 74

Priorities, 43, 44

Prophets, 22, 80

Questions, 14, 56, 58

Relief Society, 7

Restoration, 16, 66

Scripture study, 34, 43,
66, 71

Second Coming, 10

Temples, 12, 22, 44, 62,
63, 70

Testimony, 22, 28, 44, 64

Womanhood, 40



**By President
Dieter F. Uchtdorf**

Second Counselor in
the First Presidency

Aiming AT THE CENTER

Recently, I watched a group of people practicing the art of archery. Just by watching, it became clear to me that if you really want to master the bow and arrow, it takes time and practice.

I don't think you can develop a reputation for being an accomplished archer by shooting at an empty wall and then drawing targets around the arrows. You have to learn the art of finding the target and hitting the bull's-eye.

Painting Targets

Shooting first and drawing the target afterward may seem a little absurd, but sometimes we ourselves mirror that very behavior in other circumstances of life.

As Church members, we sometimes have a tendency to attach ourselves to gospel programs, issues, and even doctrines that seem interesting, important, or enjoyable to us. We are tempted to draw targets around them, making us believe we are aiming at the center of the gospel.

This is easy to do.

Throughout the ages we have received excellent counsel and inspiration from prophets of God. We also receive direction and clarification from various publications, handbooks, and manuals of the Church. How easy it would be to select our favorite gospel topic, draw a bull's-eye around it, and then make a case that we have identified the center of the gospel.

The Savior Clarifies

This is not a problem unique to our day. Anciently, religious leaders spent a great deal of time cataloging, ranking,

and debating which of the hundreds of commandments was the most important.

One day a group of religious scholars attempted to draw the Savior into the controversy. They asked Him to weigh in on an issue upon which few could agree.

"Master," they asked Him, "which is the great commandment in the law?"

We all know how Jesus answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."¹

Please note the last sentence: "On these two commandments hang *all* the law and the prophets."

The Savior not only showed us the target, but He also identified the bull's-eye.

Hitting the Target

As members of the Church, we covenant to take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ. Implicit in that covenant is the understanding that we will strive to learn about God, love Him, increase our faith in Him, honor Him, walk in His way, and stand steadfastly as witnesses of Him.

The more we learn about God and feel His love for us, the more we realize that the infinite sacrifice of Jesus Christ is a divine gift of God. And God's love inspires us to use the



path of true repentance, which will lead to the miracle of forgiveness. This process enables us to have greater love and compassion for those around us. We will learn to see beyond labels. We will resist the temptation to accuse or judge others by their sins, shortcomings, flaws, political leanings, religious convictions, nationalities, or skin color.

We will see every one we meet as a child of our Heavenly Father—our brother or our sister.

We will reach out to others in understanding and love—even those who may not be particularly easy to love. We will mourn with those who mourn and comfort those who stand in need of comfort.²

And we will realize that there is no need for us to agonize about the correct gospel target.

The two great commandments are the target. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.³ As we accept this, all other good things will fall into place.

If our primary focus, thoughts, and efforts are centered on increasing our love for Almighty God and extending

our hearts to others, we can know that we have found the right target and are aiming at the bull's-eye—becoming true disciples of Jesus Christ. ■

NOTES

1. Matthew 22:36–40.
2. See Mosiah 18:9.
3. See Matthew 22:40.

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

Before sharing this message, you could sing “Our Savior’s Love” (*Hymns*, no. 113). Then consider encouraging those you visit to reflect on the “targets” in their own lives. You could discuss ways to ensure that the two great commandments—to “love the Lord thy God” and to “love thy neighbour as thyself” (see Matthew 22:37, 39)—are always guiding their actions. You might also share specific ways in which you have focused your own life on Christ and share testimony of how that has blessed you.

A Smile Can Make the Difference

President Uchtdorf identifies two goals we should have for our actions: love God and love our fellow men. But sometimes it just isn't that easy to love others. Throughout your life, there may be times when you find it difficult to interact with others—perhaps someone has hurt you or you have a hard time communicating or getting along with someone. In these moments, try to remember the love you've felt from friends, family, Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ. Remember the joy you felt in those situations and try to imagine if everyone had the opportunity to feel such love. Remember that everyone is a daughter or son of God and is deserving of both His *and* your love.

Think of a specific person in your life whom you've had difficulty getting along with. Include them in your prayers



and ask Heavenly Father to open your heart to them. You'll soon start to see them how He does: as one of His children who deserves love.

After you've prayed, do something nice for them! Maybe invite them to a Mutual activity or an outing with friends. Offer to help with a homework assignment. Even just say "hello" and smile at them. The little things can make a big difference . . . in both of your lives!

CHILDREN

Bull's-eye!

President Uchtdorf says the gospel is like target practice. We need to aim for the most important things. The most important commandments are to love God and to love others. If we focus on these two things, we can hit the bull's-eye every time!

Draw an arrow in the targets that help us show love for God and others. Draw an X over the targets that are not good things to do.



SHARE YOUR
TOYS



STEAL CANDY



GO TO CHURCH



CALL SOMEONE
A MEAN NAME



SAY YOUR PRAYERS



GIVE SOMEONE
A HUG



FIGHT WITH
YOUR SIBLING



The Purpose of Relief Society

Prayerfully study this material and seek for inspiration to know what to share.



The purpose of Relief Society is to “prepare women for the blessings of eternal life,” says Linda K. Burton, Relief Society General President.¹ It is through faith, family, and relief that we engage in our “vital part in the work.”²

Relief Society “is a temporal and spiritual work,” says Carole M. Stephens, First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency. “That is what the women did in the Savior’s day, and that is what we continue to do.”³

As we look to the Samaritan woman at the well, who left her water pot and ran to tell others that Jesus was a prophet (see John 4:6–42), or to Phebe, who joyfully served others throughout her life (see Romans 16:1–2), we see examples of women in the

Savior’s day who took an active part in coming unto Christ. It is He who opens our way to eternal life (see John 3:16).

As we look to our pioneer sisters in Nauvoo, Illinois, who gathered in Sarah Kimball’s home in 1842 to form their own organization, we see God’s plan for bringing Relief Society into being and in line with the priesthood. After Eliza R. Snow wrote a constitution, the Prophet Joseph Smith reviewed it. He realized that the Church was not fully organized until the women were organized. He said that the Lord accepted their offering but that there was something better. “I will organize the women under the priesthood after the pattern of the priesthood,” he said.⁴

“The Relief Society was not

just another group of women trying to do good in the world. It was different. It was ‘something better’ because it was organized under priesthood authority. Its organization was a necessary step in the unfolding of God’s work on earth.”⁵

Additional Scriptures and Information
Doctrine and Covenants 25:2–3, 10; 88:73; reliefsociety.lds.org

NOTES

1. Linda K. Burton, in Sarah Jane Weaver, “Relief Society Celebrates Birthday and More March 17,” *Church News*, Mar. 13, 2015, news.lds.org.
2. Linda K. Burton, in Weaver, “Relief Society Celebrates Birthday.”
3. Carole M. Stephens, in Weaver, “Relief Society Celebrates Birthday.”
4. Joseph Smith, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 11–12.
5. *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 16.



Consider This

How does Relief Society help women fulfill Heavenly Father’s divine role for them and lead them to eternal life?

OCTOBER 2016 CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

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

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



DOCTRINAL HIGHLIGHT

Repentance Is God’s Gift to Us

“One of the terms we hear often today is that God’s love is ‘unconditional.’ While in one sense that is true, the descriptor *unconditional* appears nowhere in scripture. . . .

“God will always love us, but He cannot save us in our sins. Remember the words of Amulek to Zeezrom that the Savior would not save His people *in* their sins but *from* their sins, the reason being that with sin we are unclean and ‘no unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of heaven’ [Alma 11:37] or dwell in God’s presence. . . .

“From the Book of Mormon we learn that the intent of Christ’s suffering—the ultimate manifestation of His love—was ‘to bring about the bowels of mercy, which overpowereth justice, and bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance’ [Alma 34:15]. . . .

“Repentance, then, is His gift to us, purchased at a very dear price.”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Abide in My Love,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 48.

PROPHETIC PROMISE



THE PLAN OF SALVATION

“Essential to the plan [of salvation] is our Savior, Jesus Christ. Without His atoning sacrifice, all would be lost. It is not enough, however, merely to believe in Him and His mission. We need to work and learn, search and pray, repent and improve. We need to know God’s laws and live them. We need to receive His saving ordinances. Only by so doing will we obtain true, eternal happiness.

“We are blessed to *have* the truth. We have a mandate to *share* the truth. Let us *live* the truth, that we might merit all that the Father has for us. He does nothing save it be for our benefit. He has told us, ‘This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man’ [Moses 1:39].

“From the depths of my soul and in all humility, I testify of the great gift which is our Father’s plan for us. It is the one perfect path to peace and happiness both here and in the world to come.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “The Perfect Path to Happiness,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 80–81.



Christ's Infinite Atonement

The Savior, the Master Healer, has the power to change our hearts and give us permanent relief from the sorrow caused by our own sin. . . .

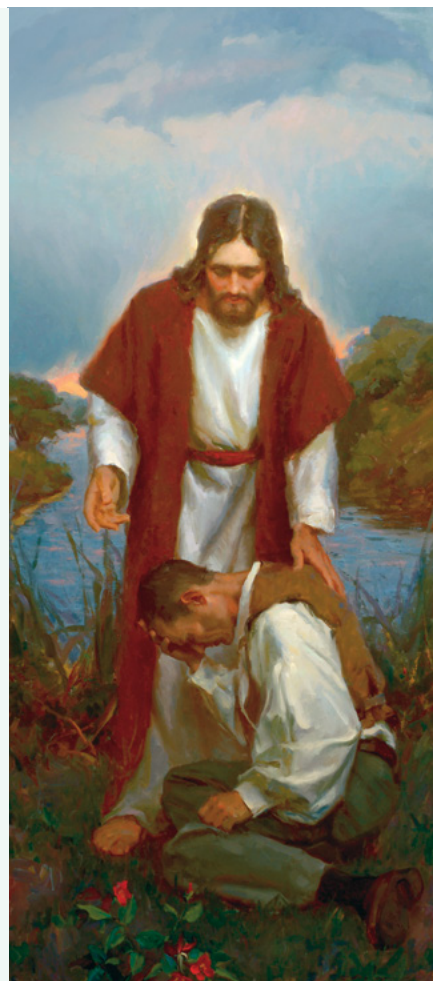
“ . . . [He] can comfort and strengthen us when we experience pain because of the unrighteous actions of others. . . .

“ . . . [He] can comfort and sustain us as we experience painful ‘realities of mortality,’ such as disaster, mental illness, disease, chronic pain, and death. . . .

“The Savior [says]: . . .

“‘ . . . If ye will come unto me ye shall have eternal life. Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come . . . will I receive’ [3 Nephi 9:14].”

Carole M. Stephens, First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, “The Master Healer,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 10, 11, 12.



POWER TO CHANGE, BY MICHAEL T. MALM

“Anything that opposes Christ or His doctrine will interrupt our joy.”

President Russell M. Nelson,
President of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles, “Joy and
Spiritual Survival,” *Ensign* or
Liahona, Nov. 2016, 84.

Come, Follow Him

Several speakers encouraged us to develop Christlike attributes and remember the Savior as we worship on the Sabbath. Use the November 2016 issue or visit conference.lds.org to read what they said.

- How can I practice Christian love and service? —See Robert D. Hales, “‘Come, Follow Me’ by Practicing Christian Love and Service,” 22.
- How can I become a better home teacher? —See Jeffrey R. Holland, “Emissaries to the Church,” 61.
- How do I develop sincere and heartfelt worship on the Sabbath day? —See Dean M. Davies, “The Blessings of Worship,” 93.
- How can I make partaking of the sacrament more meaningful? —See Peter F. Meurs, “The Sacrament Can Help Us Become Holy,” 85.

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

WE BELIEVE THE CHURCH WILL FILL THE EARTH

There were only six members of the Church when it was organized in 1830 in a small town in New York, USA. Since then the Church has grown to over 15.5 million members with wards and branches in over 150 countries. This growth is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy that the Church would roll forth to fill the whole earth (see Daniel 2:31–45). The Church—the kingdom of God on earth—is described as a stone “cut out of the mountain without hands” (Daniel 2:45), revealing that it is a divine, not a manmade, work.

Even as the Church’s influence fills the earth, its members will still be relatively few. Nephi foresaw this and wrote of our day, “I beheld the church of the Lamb of God, and its numbers were few” because of the surrounding wickedness (1 Nephi 14:12). As the time of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ draws near, the world will become more and more wicked, and “it will become less and less popular to be a Latter-day Saint.”¹

But Nephi also foresaw “that the church of the Lamb, who were the saints of God, were also upon all the face of the earth” (1 Nephi 14:12). Wards and branches can be found all over the world, general conference is interpreted in over 90 languages, and almost 75,000 full-time missionaries are sharing the gospel in 418 missions. The gospel is also being spread worldwide through social media and websites such as Mormon.org and LDS.org.

These efforts are significant and extensive but often proceed quietly. “This work of the Lord is indeed great and marvelous, but it moves forward essentially unnoticed by many of mankind’s political, cultural, and academic leaders. It progresses one heart and one family at a time, silently and unobtrusively, its sacred message blessing people everywhere.”²

The stone prophesied of so long ago truly is rolling forth, and as we do our part, the gospel will continue to spread and fill the whole earth (see Daniel 2:31–45). ■

To learn more about the Church’s future, read Doctrine and Covenants 65; Gordon B. Hinckley, “Stone Cut Out of the Mountain” (Oct. 2007 general conference); L. Whitney Clayton, “The Time Shall Come” (Oct. 2011 general conference).

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Stand as True Millennials,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2016, 28; *Liahona*, Oct. 2016, 50.
2. L. Whitney Clayton, “The Time Shall Come,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 13.



THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH

“It is only a little handful of Priesthood you see here tonight, but this Church will fill North and South America—it will fill the world.”

The Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44), in a priesthood meeting in 1834, in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 137.

What can we do to help the gospel roll forward?



Keeping the commandments and strengthening our testimonies give us a foundation to help spread the gospel.



Fulfilling our callings helps strengthen the Church in our local areas.



Teaching our families the gospel strengthens them to live faithfully in a world that teaches them otherwise.



We can help spread the gospel by simply talking to people about it.



In the temple we can perform ordinances for those who died without hearing the gospel in this life.

I WANT TO LIVE WITH YOU FOREVER!

By Leongina Adamés de Ubri

The faith of a six-year-old helped me find my faith again.

When I was 22, my life took an unexpected turn: my mother passed away. She and my father were people of great faith, and they had raised me in the gospel. After her death, my father moved away from our country to the United States. As time went by, I began to feel very lonely since I am my parents' only child. I did not have my mother with me here on the earth, and my father lived far away; I only saw him for three weeks out of the year.

It was with those feelings that I began to increasingly seek refuge in my "friends" from college and from the office where I was working. Little by little, I began to find false happiness in temporal things. I stopped attending church, and I gradually became completely inactive. Later, I married a wonderful young man who, though he had very good principles, did not know about the gospel. We had three children: Leah, Isaac, and Ismael.

One October, my father came to visit and see the new baby. During

his visit, six-year-old Leah asked her grandfather why he never brought her grandmother with him. My father then explained to her that Grandmother was in a very special place close to Heavenly Father. As soon as my father left, Leah forcefully told me, "Mom, I want to meet Grandma. I know she is in heaven, but I also want us to be there together someday—Grandma and Grandpa, Dad, Isaac, Ismael, and you, and me. I want to live with you forever. I want

us to be the same family up there that we are down here so we can play with Grandma!"

I did not know what to say. I touched her beautiful, innocent face, and then I walked off to my bedroom. I fell on my knees and cried until I ran out of tears. I asked Heavenly Father for forgiveness. I knew that I had left the path that would allow us to live together as an eternal family. I had failed in my responsibility to lead them along the right path, and I had



BOUND IN HEAVEN

"The Savior in His mortal ministry spoke of the power to seal families in words to Peter, His chief Apostle, when He said, 'Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven' (Matthew 16:19).

"It is only in the celestial kingdom that we can live in families forever. There we can be in families in the presence of our Heavenly Father and the Savior."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "Families Can Be Together Forever," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, June 2015, 4.



failed to talk to my husband about the gospel.

When I was able to stand, I contacted a Church leader, and he put me in contact with the elders in my ward. The following night, they came and taught my husband. From that night on, our lives changed forever. Now we attend church every Sunday as a family. I have a calling that allows me to help less-active sisters. We are also preparing to attend the temple.

The Spirit of God sometimes guides us through those we least expect. This time it happened through my six-year-old daughter. I now know that by being sealed in the temple, I can live with my family forever. ■

The author lives in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

QUESTIONING OUR DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

By Ted Barnes

Priesthood and Family Department of the Church

Imagine you're sitting at lunch with some friends discussing a movie you saw together. Then one of your friends says, "Who can tell me what the most important scene was in the movie?"

A bit confused by the question, you think for a moment and suggest that the last scene was probably the most important. "Well, that's a good comment," your friend says. "But it's not quite what I had in mind. Anyone

else? Let's hear from someone who hasn't shared yet."

You wouldn't talk this way among friends, but for some reason it seems to happen often in Sunday classes. Instead of discussing gospel truths naturally and comfortably, as teachers we sometimes say things that in other settings would seem strange and even stifle conversation. We hope

that class members will feel that they are among friends and be comfortable sharing their thoughts regarding the principles they are learning. Such sharing can

invite the Spirit and enrich the experience for everyone.

How do we make sure our questions lead to more natural and meaningful discussion? There are some do's and don'ts that many teachers have found helpful: Don't ask questions that have obvious answers. Do ask questions that have more than one answer. Don't ask questions that are too personal.

It may also be valuable, before we start planning questions to ask in class, to ask ourselves a question: *Why am I asking questions in the first place?*

Why Do You Ask?

The motivation behind our questions makes a big difference. For



The most important question may be the one teachers ask themselves before they get to class.

example, do we sometimes ask questions because we have something to say but we want a class member to say it instead? We rightfully don't want to do all the talking, but we do want a particular point to be made, so we sometimes ask a question that we know will elicit the answer we want to hear. This mindset leads to questions that are really statements in disguise, like "How will avoiding pornography help you keep your thoughts pure?" or "Is it important to pray every day?"

There are situations in which it is perfectly appropriate to ask questions that are meant to draw out a particular answer. They can serve to emphasize a point or help the teacher advance the lesson. But questions like these are not likely to encourage meaningful discussions.

On the other hand, if we ask questions because we really want to know what is in our class members' minds and hearts and lives, then it will show in the questions we ask.

Questions that invite class members into a heartfelt conversation that fosters spiritual learning include questions like "As you read this verse,

what stands out to you?" or "What experiences have taught you to trust the Lord's promises?" or almost any question that begins with "What do you think . . . ?"

Consider these examples:

- The Spirit asked Nephi, "What desirest thou?" (1 Nephi 11:10).
- The Savior asked His disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" (Matthew 16:15).
- And He said to Martha, "I am the resurrection, and the life: . . . Believest thou this?" (John 11:25, 26).

Each of these questions invited someone to share what was in his or her heart. And in each case, what followed was a powerful spiritual experience.

Questions Are an Expression of Love

Believe it or not, asking questions that foster discussion comes naturally to almost everyone—even to people who don't consider themselves good teachers. We do it spontaneously every time we have a meaningful conversation with friends or family—or just a chat about a favorite movie over lunch. But when we stand in front

of rows of expectant students, we suddenly forget all about what comes naturally.

So perhaps part of the trick to asking good discussion questions is to think to ourselves, "How would I ask this if we weren't in a classroom—if we were just sitting at home talking about the gospel as a group of friends? How would I invite them to share their insights and feelings?" Teaching isn't *exactly* like a casual chat among friends, but they have one thing in common: they should be motivated by sincere interest and genuine love.

So don't worry if you aren't yet skilled at crafting well-worded questions. Even if all you can do is love the people you teach, the Spirit will guide you, and you will get better and better at knowing what to say. "Charity never faileth," Paul declared (1 Corinthians 13:8), and that's true even for something as simple as a teacher asking questions in a class. ■

You can learn about six types of questions in "Ask Inspired Questions," *Teaching in the Savior's Way* (2016), 31–32, available at teaching.lds.org.



INSIGHTS FROM THE DOCTRINE
AND COVENANTS ABOUT

the Father and the Son

*This book of revelations reveals lost truths
about the Godhead and how we can live with
the Savior and Heavenly Father again.*

By Norman W. Gardner
Seminaries and Institutes

The Restoration of the gospel has given the world far greater knowledge about the nature of the Godhead and Their purposes. With this knowledge, our faith in Them grows and our desire to keep Their commandments increases.

Specifically, the Doctrine and Covenants helps us learn about Jesus Christ because it teaches powerful truths concerning “His divinity, His majesty, His perfection, His love, and His redeeming power” (introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants). This book of modern revelation includes the Lord’s invitation to “learn of me, and listen to my words” (D&C 19:23). It can deepen our understanding of Him, what our relationship to Him is, what He has done for our redemption, and what He expects of us.

In the Doctrine and Covenants, we can hear the voice of Jesus Christ

The Doctrine and Covenants is not ancient scripture but contains revelations given to Joseph Smith and his successors in our modern world. Jesus Christ's divine voice is heard speaking as the representative of the Father.¹ The first-person voice of the Lord Jesus Christ is recorded more frequently in the Doctrine and Covenants than in the New Testament, Book of Mormon, and Pearl of Great Price combined.²

D&C 18:33–35 “I, Jesus Christ, your Lord and your God, have spoken it. These words are not of men . . . , but of me; . . . it is my voice which speaketh them unto you.”



Joseph Smith received many revelations from the Savior.

JOSEPH SMITH JR. RECEIVING REVELATION, BY DANIEL A. LEWIS



THE LORD APPEARS IN THE KIRTLAND TEMPLE, BY DEL PARSON

Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery saw Jesus Christ in the Kirtland Temple.

The Doctrine and Covenants contains accounts of those who saw God

As a result of the First Vision in 1820, the boy Joseph Smith gained firsthand knowledge of the existence of the Father and the Son. The Doctrine and Covenants records additional instances when the Prophet and others saw the Father and the Son in visions or personal appearances. These accounts serve as modern witnesses for us that They live and that They directed the Restoration of the gospel.

D&C 76:19–23 The Father and the Son were seen in vision in February 1832.

D&C 137:1–3 The Father and the Son were seen in vision in January 1836.

D&C 110:2–4 The great Jehovah, Jesus Christ, appeared in April 1836.

The Doctrine and Covenants helps us learn about God the Father

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “When we understand the character of God, and know how to come to Him, He begins to unfold the heavens to us. . . . When we are ready to come to Him, He is ready to come to us.”³ The Doctrine and Covenants helps us draw closer to Heavenly Father by teaching about His nature, attributes, and purposes.

D&C 20:12, 17–18 God the Father is infinite and unchangeable.

D&C 76:20, 23 The Father and the Son are separate and distinct beings.

D&C 93:3–5 The Father and the Son are one.

D&C 130:22 The Father and the Son have tangible bodies of flesh and bones.

D&C 138:3–4 Heavenly Father loves His children, so He sent His Son to save mankind.

DETAIL FROM MOSES SEEING JEHOVAH, BY JOSEPH BRICKEY



Jehovah (Jesus Christ) spoke to Moses face to face.

The Doctrine and Covenants helps us learn about Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ was the Firstborn of all the spirit children of Heavenly Father. In the premortal life, Jesus obtained all knowledge and power and represented the Father as the Creator of the worlds. Through His divine power, the Lord Jesus Christ is the source of light and life for all of His creations. The Doctrine and Covenants clarifies many of His roles in the Father's plan.

D&C 93:21 Jesus Christ was the Firstborn of all the spirit children of God.

D&C 38:1–3 Jesus Christ obtained all knowledge and power before the world was made.

D&C 76:24 Jesus Christ represented the Father as the Creator of the worlds.

D&C 88:6–13 Jesus Christ is the source of light and life for all of His creations.

D&C 45:11; 136:21, 22 Jesus Christ was the great Jehovah of the Old Testament.

D&C 43:34 Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world.

D&C 18:11–13; 20:21–25 Jesus Christ suffered, was crucified, died, and rose again.

D&C 29:10–12 Jesus Christ has promised to return to earth with power and glory.



While being stoned to death, Stephen saw the Father and the Son.



Through modern revelation, we can learn how to become more like the Father and the Son.

The Doctrine and Covenants helps us learn what the Father and the Son expect of us

More than any other book of scripture, the Doctrine and Covenants makes it plain what eternal life is: to return to live with the Father and the Son, receive all that the Father has, and become like Them. It also tells us how Jesus Christ, through His Atonement, makes this possible and what we need to do to fulfill the requirements He has set. In addition, we learn in the Doctrine and Covenants what it means to follow Jesus Christ's example, since, like us, Jesus Christ did not have a fulness at first but received grace for grace until He had all power and glory.

D&C 1:32; 19:16–19; 58:42–43; 95:1–2 The Savior offers forgiveness to those who repent.

D&C 20:37, 41, 72–74; see also **33:11** The Godhead invites those who believe to receive baptism and the Holy Ghost.

D&C 84:19–21 Through the ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood, the power of godliness is manifest.

D&C 93:12–14, 16–17 Jesus Christ received grace for grace until He had a fulness.

D&C 20:30–31 The Savior gives grace to those who love and serve Him.

D&C 35:2; 50:40–43 We can become one with the Father and the Son.

D&C 93:19–20 We can receive of the Father's glory and fulness.

The Doctrine and Covenants provides a pattern for acquiring spiritual knowledge

In addition to teaching and testifying of the Father and the Son, the Doctrine and Covenants provides a pattern to acquire spiritual knowledge about all the members of the Godhead through the help of the Holy Ghost: study the Lord's word, ask Heavenly Father for understanding, and exercise faith in Jesus Christ by obeying His commandments.

Light and truth are promised to those who live according to all of the Lord's words. It is important to learn details about the nature of the Godhead and Their purposes. This knowledge can lead to diligent searching for spiritual understanding and conviction of the truth. This knowledge confirms for us that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ know us personally, that They love us, and that They desire to bless us with eternal life.

D&C 6:5; 76:5–10, 114–118 Heavenly Father wants us to ask for knowledge and promises to share it.

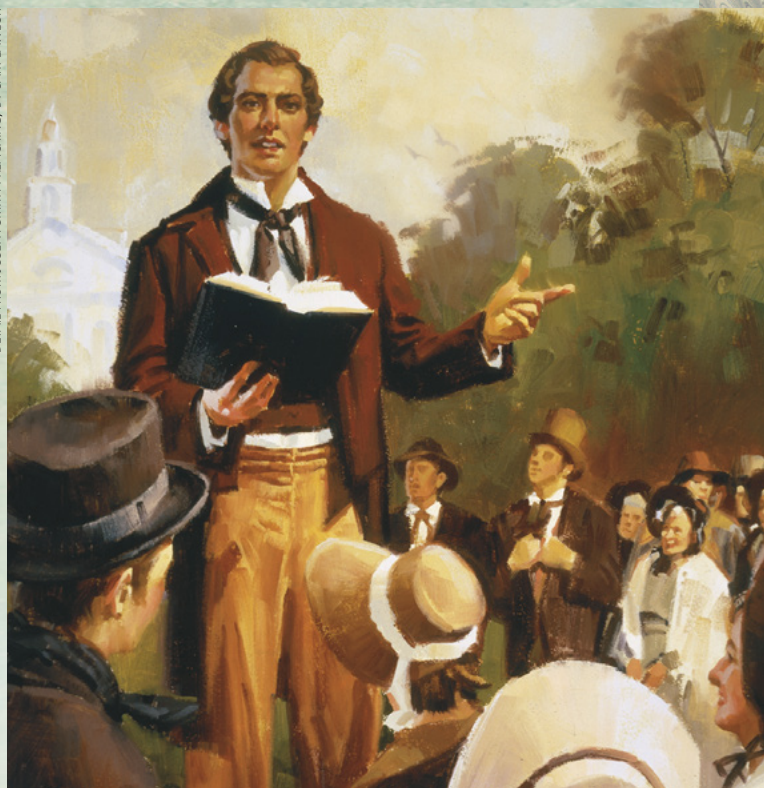
D&C 84:43–48 The Father teaches us when we give diligent heed to His words.

D&C 88:118 Seek learning by study and by faith.



Study and prayer can unlock spiritual knowledge.

DETAIL FROM JOSEPH SMITH PREACHING, BY SAM LAWLOR



Joseph Smith revealed the character and purposes of the Father and the Son.

Conclusion

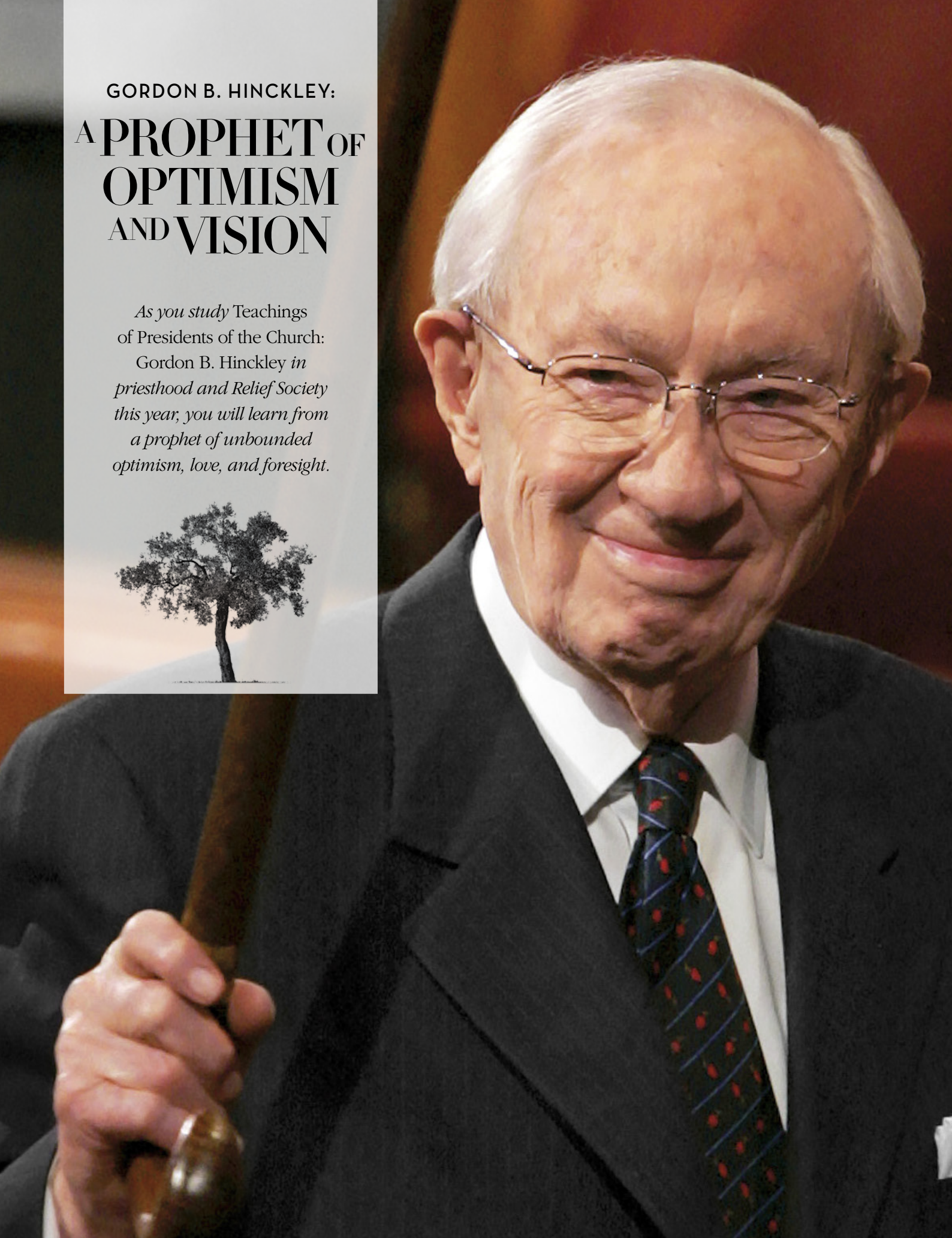
The Doctrine and Covenants helps us draw nearer to Heavenly Father and His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, by revealing Their character and Their purposes. The Prophet Joseph Smith summarized why we can trust and rely upon God: “The purposes of our God are great, His love unfathomable, His wisdom infinite, and His power unlimited; therefore, the Saints have cause to rejoice and be glad, knowing that ‘this God is our God for ever and ever’ (Psalm 48:14).”⁴ ■

NOTES

1. President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) explained: “All revelation since the fall has come through Jesus Christ, who is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. In all of the scriptures, where God is mentioned and where he has appeared, it was Jehovah. . . . The Father has never dealt with man directly and personally since the fall, and he has never appeared except to introduce and bear record of the Son” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 1:27).
2. See Gordon B. Holbrook, “The Voice of Jesus Christ in the Doctrine and Covenants,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2013, 40, 45 (note 2).
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 40–41.
4. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 39.

GORDON B. HINCKLEY:
**A PROPHET OF
OPTIMISM
AND VISION**

*As you study Teachings
of Presidents of the Church:
Gordon B. Hinckley in
priesthood and Relief Society
this year, you will learn from
a prophet of unbounded
optimism, love, and foresight.*



Gordon B. Hinckley was born on June 23, 1910, to Bryant Stringham Hinckley and Ada Bitner Hinckley. He married Marjorie Pay in the Salt Lake Temple on April 29, 1937, and they became the parents of five children. He served as the 15th President of the Church from March 12, 1995, to January 27, 2008.

By Andrew D. Olsen

Church Publishing Services Department

I have to plant some trees each spring,” President Gordon B. Hinckley recorded in his journal at age 82. “I think I have done so for at least the last 50 years. . . . There is something wonderful about a tree. It starts ever so small and grows through the seasons. It affords shade from the hot summer sun. It bears delicious fruit. It carries on the remarkable process of photosynthesis. . . . A tree is one of the remarkable creations of the Almighty.”¹

President Hinckley continued planting trees into his 90s. In many ways, his love for planting was reflected in his ministry as an Apostle and as President of the Church. When he planted, it was an expression of optimism, a characteristic that also infused his teachings and his interactions with others. He nurtured each tree, just as he did each person. And he looked far into the future,

seeing what the trees would become—just as he saw the eternal potential of each person and the grand future of God’s work.

“We Have Every Reason to Be Optimistic”

“I am an optimist!” President Hinckley often declared. “My plea is that we stop seeking out the storms and enjoy more fully the

sunlight.”² His optimism went much deeper than having a positive outlook, although he cultivated that. The ultimate source of his optimism—the source that made it a power—was his faith in God and his testimony of God’s plan for the happiness and salvation of His children.

One manifestation of President Hinckley’s optimism was his firm belief that “things will

work out.”³ That phrase, said Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “may well be President Hinckley’s most repeated assurance to family, friends, and associates. ‘Keep trying,’ he will say. ‘Be believing. Be happy. Don’t get discouraged. Things will work out.’”⁴

This message wasn’t only for others, however. “I say that to myself every morning,” President Hinckley told a congregation. “If you do your best, it will all work out. Put your trust



in God, and move forward with faith and confidence in the future. The Lord will not forsake us.”⁵

President Hinckley’s optimism sustained him through trials, feelings of inadequacy, and overwhelming pressures. And he stood by his conviction that “things will work out” even when he experienced setbacks and disappointments, heartache and loneliness.

In his optimism, President Hinckley did not minimize problems. He explained: “I have seen a good deal of this earth. . . . I have been in areas where war rages and hate smolders in the hearts of people. I have seen the appalling poverty that hovers over many lands. . . . I have watched with alarm the crumbling morals of our society.

“And yet I am an optimist. I have a simple and solemn faith that right will triumph and that truth will prevail.”⁶

During an interview with a *New York Times* reporter in Nauvoo, Illinois, USA, President Hinckley acknowledged the prevalence of tragedies and problems, and then he drew on his love of Church history to teach about optimism:

“We have every reason to be optimistic. . . . Look at Nauvoo. Look at what they built here in seven years and then left. But what did they do? Did they lie down and die? No! They went to work! They moved halfway across this continent and turned the soil of a desert and made it blossom as the rose. On that foundation this church has grown into a great worldwide organization affecting for good the lives of people in more than 140 nations. You can’t, you don’t, build out of pessimism or cynicism. You look with optimism, work with faith, and things happen.”⁷

President Hinckley’s optimism also influenced his sense of humor—an upbeat, congenial wit that built affinity with others. One time he stayed with a stake president whose family lived in an old schoolhouse that they had converted

into a home. That night, a classroom served as President Hinckley’s bedroom. During stake conference the next day, he quipped, “I [have] slept on a great many occasions in classrooms before—but never in a bed.”⁸



“Our Concern Must Always Be with the Individual”

In his first general conference address as President of the Church, Gordon B. Hinckley spoke extensively about the Church’s growth. “We are becoming a great global society,” he said. He then shifted to emphasize this essential principle: “Our interest and concern must always be with the individual. . . .

“ . . . We speak in terms of numbers, but all of our efforts must be dedicated to the development of the individual.”⁹

While a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, President Hinckley traveled to some of the most remote areas of the world, including war zones, to minister to individuals.

No group was too far away or too small for his attention. He continued this same way as President of the Church, traveling more than a million miles to more than 60 nations, sometimes meeting with large groups, sometimes with just a handful.

In 1996, President and Sister Hinckley made an 18-day journey to eight nations in Asia and the Pacific. Beginning in Japan and moving at a vigorous pace, they met with thousands of people who packed every venue. “These are emotional experiences for me,” President Hinckley recorded while in Korea. “I see things that I scarcely dared dream of when I came here first in 1960.”¹⁰ On this trip he also dedicated the Hong Kong China Temple.

The final scheduled stops were in the Philippines. After speaking to 35,000 people in Manila, President Hinckley recorded, “I stood and waved to them with great emotion

in my heart. We left with tears in our eyes.” Earlier that day he had returned to the place where, in 1961, he had offered a dedicatory prayer to begin missionary work in the Philippines. “We were able to find only one native Filipino member,” he recalled. “From that one member the Church has grown to more than 300,000 members.”¹¹

When the Hinckleys began the trip home, they learned that the plane would refuel on the island of Saipan. President Hinckley asked if there were any missionaries on Saipan and was told that there was a small number. Although he was at the end of an exhausting trip, he wanted to meet with those few missionaries: “I asked if we might somehow get word to them that we would land in Saipan about 7:00 p.m. and would try to come out at the airport to greet them.”

Hours later in Saipan, 10 missionaries and about 60 Church members were there to greet the Hinckleys. “They threw their arms around us,” President Hinckley recorded. “They were so grateful to see us, and we were grateful to see them. We could spend only a very short time with them since only a brief time was needed to refuel the plane. We left our blessing with them and went back to the plane.”¹²

Another typical example of President Hinckley’s caring for an individual occurred during the 2002 Winter Olympics, which were held in Salt Lake City, Utah. Nearly every day he met with presidents, ambassadors, and other dignitaries. One day, shortly before meeting with the president of Germany, he met with a 13-year-old young woman on her birthday. “[She] suffers from aplastic anemia, a very serious illness,” he recorded. “We had a delightful visit. . . . I told her that we would remember her in our prayers.”¹³

President Hinckley had a special love for the children and youth of the Church, and they felt the same for him. After hearing him speak in Brazil, one young woman expressed: “I felt the Spirit of God intensely. When President Hinckley was ending his talk, he said to us, ‘You can leave here, go home, and forget everything that I said here today, but never forget that I love you.’ I will never forget those words.”¹⁴

President Hinckley’s wife, Marjorie, was both a partner

and influencer in his concern for individuals. He recorded: “Everyone she knows seems to love her because she has a genuine interest in people. She is concerned with their problems and their needs. How fortunate I am to have such a companion.”¹⁵



*Clockwise from top:
President Hinckley
meeting with members;
with his wife, Marjorie,
in Hong Kong, China;
contemplating at general
conference.*

After their five children were grown, the Hinckleys usually traveled together, and Sister Hinckley reached out with love around the world. When she met missionaries, she would often give their parents a surprise phone call when she returned home. She was also gifted at connecting with large audiences. “[Marge] knows how to say the things that please and help the people,” President Hinckley recorded after a regional conference. “The rest of us preach while she simply talks with them.”¹⁶

At the funeral for President Hinckley, one of his counselors, President Henry B. Eyring, summarized some of his accomplishments. He then observed that all of these accomplishments had one thing in common:

“Always they were to bless individuals with opportunity. And always he thought of those with the least opportunity,

the ordinary person struggling to cope with the difficulties of everyday life and the challenge of living the gospel of Jesus Christ. More than once he tapped his finger on my chest when I made a suggestion and said, ‘Hal, have you remembered the person who is struggling?’”¹⁷



Clockwise from top: President Hinckley at the Boston Massachusetts Temple; interacting with the news media; with members in Ghana.

Vision for the Future

Connected with President Hinckley’s optimism and his focus on individuals was his prophetic vision for the future. Most profoundly, that vision concerned temples. The ordinances of the temple, President Hinckley emphasized, are “the crowning blessings the Church has to offer.”¹⁸

When he became President of the Church in 1995, there were 47 operating temples worldwide. Under his leadership, the Church more than doubled this number in a little over five years. His vision regarding temples was bold and expansive, but the entire purpose was to bless individuals one by one.

The inspiration for this new era of temple building came in 1997 when President Hinckley went to Colonia Juárez, Mexico, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of

a Church-owned school. Afterward, during a long, dusty drive, he was contemplative. “It got quiet,” recalled his secretary, Don H. Staheli. “And then, as I understand it, the revelation started coming. He had thought about smaller temples in the past, but not in the way that he thought about them this time.”¹⁹

President Hinckley later described the process: “I began to ask myself what could be done to make it possible for these people to have a temple. . . . As I meditated on this, the thought came into my mind that . . . we can build all of the essential elements of a temple into a relatively small building. . . . I sketched out a plan. . . . The whole picture came into my mind very clearly. I believe with all my heart that it was inspiration, that it was revelation from the Lord. I came home and talked with my counselors about it, and they approved of it. I then presented it to the Twelve, and they approved of it.”²⁰

Four months later in general conference, President Hinckley made the historic announcement that the Church would begin to build smaller temples in areas where there were not enough members to justify larger ones. “We are determined . . . to take the temples to the people and afford them every opportunity for the very precious blessings that come of temple worship,” he said.²¹

In the next general conference, President Hinckley made another historic announcement, saying that plans were going forward to have 100 temples in operation by the end of the year 2000. “We are moving on a scale the like of which we have never seen before,” he stated.²² When he reported on the progress of temple building in April 1999, he used a familiar phrase: “This is a tremendous undertaking, with many problems, but no matter the difficulty, things work out and I am confident we will reach our goal.”²³

In October 2000, President Hinckley traveled to Boston, Massachusetts, USA, to dedicate the Church’s 100th temple—one of 21 he dedicated that year on four continents. By the end of his life, 124 temples were completed and another 13 were announced or under construction.

President Hinckley’s vision for the future prompted him to seek inspiration about other ways to bless God’s

children. He was anguished by the suffering and poverty he saw, so he directed a substantial expansion of the Church's humanitarian work, primarily among those who are not members of the Church. He also instituted the Perpetual Education Fund to help Church members in poverty-stricken countries. From this fund, they could receive loans to pay for the education they needed to obtain better employment, which would help them break the chains of poverty and become self-reliant. As of 2016, more than 80,000 individuals had received the opportunity for education or training made possible by loans from this fund.

Many other examples of President Hinckley's prophetic vision, such as "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" and the building of the Conference Center, are included in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Gordon B. Hinckley*.

"My Testimony"

A few days before his 91st birthday, President Hinckley recorded: "I do not need to plant anymore, but I will.

That is my nature."²⁴ No matter his age, whether a young missionary or a 97-year-old prophet, it was likewise his nature to plant gospel seeds and saplings in the hearts of people around the world. He served for 20 years as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He then served for 14 years as a counselor in the First Presidency. When he became President of the Church at age 84, he led it through nearly 13 years of dynamic growth.

At the core of President Hinckley's lifetime of service was his testimony of Jesus Christ and of His gospel restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. In a general conference address titled "My Testimony," he expressed the following witness, speaking parts of it through tears:

"Of all the things for which I feel grateful this morning, one stands out preeminently. That is a living testimony of Jesus Christ. . . .

"He is my Savior and my Redeemer. Through giving His life in pain and unspeakable suffering, He has reached down to lift me and each of us and all the sons and daughters of God from the abyss of eternal darkness following death. . . .

"He is my God and my King. From everlasting to everlasting, He will reign and rule as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. To His dominion there will be no end. To His glory there will be no night. . . .

"Gratefully, and with love undiminished, I bear witness of these things in His Holy name."²⁵ ■



NOTES

1. Gordon B. Hinckley journal, Mar. 22, 1993.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, *Standing for Something: Ten Neglected Virtues That Will Heal Our Hearts and Homes* (2000), 101.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Gordon B. Hinckley* (2016), 70.
4. Jeffrey R. Holland, "President Gordon B. Hinckley: Stalwart and Brave He Stands," *Ensign*, June 1995, 4.
5. *Teachings: Gordon B. Hinckley*, 339.
6. In Conference Report, Oct. 1969, 113.
7. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 412.
8. Journal, Nov. 4, 1973.
9. *Teachings: Gordon B. Hinckley*, 298–99.
10. Journal, May 22, 1996.

11. Journal, May 30, 1996.
12. Journal, June 1, 1996.
13. Journal, Feb. 22, 2002.
14. In "The Prophet Spoke to Youth," *In Memoriam: President Gordon B. Hinckley, 1910–2008* (supplement to the *Ensign*, Mar. 2008), 15.
15. Journal, Nov. 23, 1974.
16. Journal, May 14, 1995.
17. Henry B. Eyring, in *Teachings: Gordon B. Hinckley*, 202.
18. In *Teachings: Gordon B. Hinckley*, 313.
19. Don H. Staheli oral history transcript (2012), 85, Church History Library.
20. Journal, Mar. 6, 1999. This entry is a

- summary of his remarks at the first dedicatory session of the Colonia Juárez Mexico Temple. President Hinckley had been considering the concept of small temples for more than 20 years (see *Teachings: Gordon B. Hinckley*, 33, 309–10).
21. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Some Thoughts on Temples, Retention of Converts, and Missionary Service," *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 50.
22. *Teachings: Gordon B. Hinckley*, 310.
23. Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Work Moves Forward," *Ensign*, May 1999, 4.
24. Journal, June 18, 2001.
25. *Teachings: Gordon B. Hinckley*, 321–23.





By Elder
Christoffel
Golden
Of the Seventy

Valiant

IN OUR TESTIMONY OF THE SAVIOR

Each of us will be called upon to act in moments that are difficult and yet defining. These moments will determine who we are and what we have become.

As a young man many years ago, I was drafted—or as we called it, “conscripted”—into the South African military. I was assigned to a squad of soldiers who were good men but had the roughness of speech and behavior that is sometimes manifested by men serving in the military.

Surrounded by such influences, I discovered that it wasn’t always easy to live gospel standards. But from the beginning of my military service, I was pleased to stand up for my beliefs. I made it clear that I would not engage in conduct that I knew was wrong. I am grateful that the men in my squad—some grudgingly at first—grew to respect my standards.

On one occasion, during a military training camp, a group of us were standing around a campfire on a beautiful, dark, cloudless, star-filled night. Some of the fellows in my squad were drinking beer while I sipped a soft drink. The discussion was pleasant, with no improper talk.

During our visiting, a few men from another unit wandered over to our happy band. One of these men turned to me and, noticing the soft drink in my hand, mocked me for not joining the men in drinking beer. Before I could respond, one of my friends surprised me by rebuking the man.

“We suggest that you leave now, sir,” he said. “We will not have anyone speak to Chris like that! In fact, he is the only man amongst us who lives his life like a true Christian.”

With that, the rebuked man quietly skulked away into the dark night. At that moment, although a little embarrassed by the unexpected compliment, I remembered Paul's counsel to be "an example of the believers" (1 Timothy 4:12).

You too face choices, especially at this time in your life, when your spirit is uniquely attuned and receptive to great opportunities that await you. The question is, what will you want to write about yourself in 5, 10, or 20 years' time—or even at the end of your life?

What Does It Mean to Be Valiant?

In one of the most remarkable visions recorded in holy writ, the Prophet Joseph Smith described the condition of those who will inherit the celestial kingdom after they have been resurrected and judged. This same section in the Doctrine and Covenants (section 76) also reveals the conditions and circumstances of those who are not fit for the celestial kingdom but instead are candidates for the terrestrial and telestial kingdoms.

In speaking of those who will inherit the terrestrial kingdom, revelation teaches us that they "are [the] honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men . . . [and] who receive of [God's] glory, but not of his fulness" (D&C 76:75–76). Then we learn this astounding principle: "These are they who are *not valiant in the testimony of Jesus*; wherefore, they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God" (D&C 76:79; emphasis added).

Imagine that for a moment. Would we forfeit the glory of the celestial kingdom, with all of its profound and everlasting blessings, simply because we were not valiant in the testimony of Jesus here on earth in our brief, mortal, probationary state?

What does it mean to be valiant in the testimony of Jesus? A modern-day Apostle of the Lord declared:

"It is to be courageous and bold; to use all our strength, energy, and ability in the warfare with the world; to fight

the good fight of faith. . . . The great cornerstone of valiance in the cause of righteousness is obedience to the whole law of the whole gospel.

"To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to 'come unto Christ, and be perfected in him'; it is to deny ourselves 'of all ungodliness,' and 'love God' with all our 'might, mind and strength.' (Moroni 10:32.)

"To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to believe in Christ and his gospel with unshakable conviction. It is to know of the verity and divinity of the Lord's work on earth. . . .

"To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to 'press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men.' It is to 'endure to the end.' (2 Nephi 31:20.) It is to live our religion, to practice what we preach, to keep the commandments. It is the manifestation of 'pure religion' in the lives of men; it is visiting 'the fatherless and widows in their affliction' and keeping ourselves 'unspotted from the world.' (James 1:27.)

"To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to bridle our

passions, control our appetites, and rise above carnal and evil things. It is to overcome the world as did he who is our prototype and who himself was the most valiant of all our Father's children. It is to be morally clean, to pay our tithes and offerings, to honor the Sabbath day, to pray with full purpose of heart, to lay our all upon the altar if called upon to do so.

"To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to take the Lord's side on every issue. It

is to vote as he would vote. It is to think what he thinks, to believe what he believes, to say what he would say and do what he would do in the same situation. It is to have the mind of Christ and be one with him as he is one with his Father."¹

Here I need to add something our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, taught during His earthly, mortal ministry:

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

*To be valiant
is to live our religion,
to practice what we preach,
and to keep the commandments.*



“For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

“And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.

“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

“And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

“He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it” (Matthew 10:34–39).

Our purpose in mortality is nothing more or less than to prepare to live once again in the presence of our beloved Heavenly Father as joint heirs with Jesus Christ (see Romans 8:16–18). This glorious existence in eternal families alongside our wife or husband and our children and extended family

is available to everyone even though some are to experience these blessings sometime beyond the veil of mortality.

Such blessings require that we take up our cross and remain valiant unto the end in testimony and devotion to our Lord and Savior.

Prepare to Act

The road each of us is required to chart is filled with countless opportunities and fraught with numerous challenges. We are required to make many decisions every day—some small and seemingly unimportant, others profound and lasting in their effects.

It is a glaring fact that each of us will be called upon to act in moments that are difficult and yet defining. These moments will determine who we are and what we have become. Often they come when it is inconvenient and



unpopular to act righteously and valiantly. As you write your life's story, you will find that the most defining moments you will ever face occur when you are standing alone.

I relate an account here of standing alone in the midst of great opposition. Sometime during November 1838, the Prophet Joseph Smith and others, including Elder Parley P. Pratt (1807–57), were chained and incarcerated in Richmond, Missouri, USA.

Elder Pratt records the following incident during their incarceration:

“In one of those tedious nights we had lain as if in sleep till the hour of midnight had passed, and our ears and hearts had been pained, while we had listened for hours to the obscene jests, the horrid oaths, the dreadful blasphemies and filthy language of our guards, Colonel Price at their head, as they recounted to each other their deeds of rapine, murder, robbery, etc., which they had committed

among the ‘*Mormons*’ while at Far West [Missouri] and vicinity. They even boasted of defiling by force wives, daughters and virgins, and of shooting or dashing out the brains of men, women and children.

“I had listened till I became so disgusted, shocked, horrified, and so filled with the spirit of indignant justice that I could scarcely refrain from rising upon my feet and rebuking the guards; but had said nothing to Joseph, or any one else, although I lay next to him and knew he was awake. On a sudden he arose to his feet, and spoke in a voice of thunder, or as the roaring lion, uttering, as near as I can recollect, the following words:

“‘SILENCE, ye fiends of the infernal pit. In the name of Jesus Christ I rebuke you, and command you to be still; I will not live another minute and hear such language. Cease such talk, or you or I die THIS INSTANT!’

“He ceased to speak. He stood erect in terrible majesty.

Chained, and without a weapon; calm, unruffled and dignified as an angel, he looked upon the quailing guards, whose weapons were lowered or dropped to the ground; whose knees smote together, and who, shrinking into a corner, or crouching at his feet, begged his pardon, and remained quiet till a change of guards.”²

The courage that the Prophet Joseph Smith showed is not reserved for prophets or members of the Church of a previous generation. An incident in the life of President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) bears this out. In the fall of 1857, while 19-year-old Joseph F. was returning from his mission in Hawaii, he joined a wagon train in California, USA. It was a volatile time for the Saints. Johnston’s Army was marching toward Utah, and many had bitter feelings toward the Church.

One evening, several hoodlums rode into the wagon train camp, cursing and threatening to hurt every Mormon they could find. Most in the wagon train hid in the brush, but Joseph F. thought to himself: “Shall I run from these fellows? Why should I fear them?”

With that, he walked up to one of the intruders, who, with pistol in hand, demanded, “Are you a ‘Mormon?’”

Joseph F. responded, “Yes, siree; dyed in the wool; true blue, through and through.”

At that, the hoodlum grasped his hand and said, “Well you are the ——— pleasantest man I ever met! Shake, young fellow, I am glad to see a man that stands up for his convictions.”³

You are now engaged in some of the most significant moments of your life! You are now writing and will yet write, moment by moment and day by day, your personal history. There will be times when you will need

to act, while on other occasions you will wisely hold your peace. Opportunities will abound, decisions will need to be made, and challenges will have to be confronted!

In our Heavenly Father’s great plan of happiness, ever remember that you are never alone! Many in this life, and more beyond the veil of mortality, even on this very day, are pleading your cause with the Lord. Great power has been given you through the ordinances you have received and the covenants you have made. Above all, your beloved Heavenly Father and His Son—our Savior Jesus Christ, our Advocate—are ever present to help you through life. In a deeply affecting teaching during the Savior’s mortal ministry, He extended an invitation to every living soul and therefore to each of us:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28–30).

I add my solemn witness of the living reality of our Eternal Heavenly Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. I also testify that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is in every conceivable way the Lord’s restored Church and kingdom of God upon the earth.

May I—and those who share this testimony—ever remain valiant to this great cause. ■

From an address, “Being Valiant,” delivered at LDS Business College on June 17, 2014. For the full address in English, go to ldsbc.edu.

NOTES

1. Bruce R. McConkie, “Be Valiant in the Fight of Faith,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, 35.
2. *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. (1938), 210–11.
3. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 104.



STAND FOR WHAT YOU BELIEVE

“May we ever be courageous and prepared to stand for what we believe, and if we must stand alone in the process, may we do so courageously, strengthened by the knowledge that in reality we are never alone when we stand with our Father in Heaven.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Dare to Stand Alone,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 67.



By Elder Gary E. Stevenson

Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

WITH ALL THY GETTING, GET Understanding

Real understanding will come to you as you realize the interdependence of study and prayer, as you maintain a commitment to serve while learning and earning, and as you trust in and rely on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Much of my life as a university student revolved around the library. Each time I entered, I was greeted by a sign over the entry that read, “And with all thy getting get understanding” (Proverbs 4:7).

We all know that recall follows repetition. I therefore have this scripture from the book of Proverbs engraved indelibly in my mind, having read it each time I entered the library during my four years of undergraduate work.

I offer the same exhortation to each of you: “And with all thy getting get understanding.” I also invite you to think about the meaning of this scripture and how it might benefit you. I have done so. I have turned it over in my mind time and time again, and my interpretation of its meaning has evolved considerably. Perhaps you can benefit from my observations.

An Understanding Heart

As a young missionary in Japan struggling to learn a difficult language, I heard some vocabulary words early and often. Greetings

such as *ohayo gozaimasu* (good morning) or *konnichiwa* (good afternoon) were two of these. Another was *wakarimasen*, which means, “I don’t understand.” This word, along with a side-to-side hand expression, seems to be a favorite response from Japanese contacts directed to young missionaries as they attempt to strike up conversations.

Initially, as I reflected on the meaning of “and with all thy getting get understanding,” I thought of *understanding* more in terms of this type of comprehension: what I might hear with my ears and understand in my mind. I thought of the Japanese saying *wakarimasen*. Do I understand or not understand?

As I have studied and observed the use of the word *understanding* in the scriptures and from the words of living prophets, however, I have come to realize a deeper meaning. Consider these words from Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles when he was the Presiding Bishop of the Church:

Sedna



Planet Nine?

silver 47 Ag 107.868	gold 79 Au 196.967 iridium
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TRUST IN THE LORD AND IN HIS WORD

"To be an example of faith means that we trust in the Lord and in His word. It means that we possess and that we nourish the beliefs that will guide our thoughts and our actions. Our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and in our Heavenly Father will influence all that we do. Amidst the confusion of our age, the conflicts of conscience, and the turmoil of daily living, an abiding faith becomes an anchor to our lives."

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

*To intelligence we add
knowledge, experience,
wisdom, and help
from the Holy Ghost
through prayer. Only
then do we reach an
understanding in
our hearts.*



"First, we start with the intelligence with which we were born. To our intelligence we add knowledge as we search for answers, study, and educate ourselves. To our knowledge we add experience, which should lead us to a level of wisdom. In addition to our wisdom, we add the help of the Holy Ghost through our prayers of faith, asking for spiritual guidance and strength. Then, and only then, do we reach an *understanding* in our hearts—which motivates us to 'do what is right; let the consequence follow.' (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 237.) The feelings of an *understanding* heart give us the sweet spirit of assurance of not only knowing but doing what is right no matter what the circumstances. The *understanding* in our hearts comes from a close interdependence of study and prayer."¹

Now consider again: "And with all thy getting get understanding." Understanding in this context follows intelligence, knowledge, experience, wisdom, and promptings from the Holy Ghost—all of which lead us to knowing and doing what is right.

Most of you are approaching or have entered a critical intersection or crossroads

in your life. You are becoming more independent with each passing year, and you are moving deeper into the "and with all thy getting" phase of your life. What is it that you are going to be getting? You may be getting a husband or a wife, your own family, a job, to name a few things.

To manage these very important things that we "get," we must also obtain "understanding," as the scripture teaches. This understanding comes through an interdependence of study and prayer. Said another way, we must trust in and rely on the Lord Jesus Christ. Alma described this when he likened the word unto a seed. As he stated, "It beginneth to enlighten my *understanding*, yea, it beginneth to be delicious to me" (Alma 32:28; emphasis added).

President Thomas S. Monson often quotes a scripture from Proverbs that adds another dimension to this understanding: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5).²

As we trust in and rely on the Lord, a greater measure of understanding comes from Him into our heart.

“The Hand of the Lord Is Over Us”

Let me offer an example of a powerful woman who played a key role in the Restoration, who trusted in the Lord, and who leaned not unto her own understanding.

Shortly after the Church was organized in Palmyra, New York, Joseph Smith’s mother, Lucy Mack Smith, remained in Waterloo, New York, with a large group of Saints while her husband, Joseph Sr., and some of their sons, including Joseph Jr., departed before her for Kirtland, Ohio. Her responsibility was to bring this group to Ohio when she received word from her son, the Prophet.

Word came in early spring 1831. Lucy, with the help of some of the brethren, began to move the group to Buffalo, New York, with the intention of making passage to Ohio by ship on Lake Erie. She said: “When the brethren considered the spring sufficiently open for traveling on the water, we all began to prepare for our removal to Kirtland. We hired a boat . . . ; and . . . we numbered eighty souls.”

Then, as they pushed off into the Erie Canal and headed to Buffalo, she said: “I then called the brethren and sisters together, and reminded them that we were traveling by the commandment of the Lord, as much as Father Lehi was, when he left Jerusalem; and, if faithful, we had the same reasons to expect the blessings of God. I then desired them to be solemn, *and to lift their hearts to God continually in prayer*, that we might be prospered.”

About halfway to Buffalo from Waterloo, passage along the canal became impossible. Conditions for the 80 Saints were uncomfortable, and murmuring began almost immediately. Lucy, relying on the Lord, had to unite their faith. She told them: “No, no, . . . you will not starve, brethren, nor anything of that sort; only do be patient and stop your murmuring. I have no doubt but the hand of the Lord is over us.”

When they arrived in Buffalo on the fifth day after leaving Waterloo, the harbor leading to Lake Erie was frozen. They took passage on a ship with Captain Blake, a man acquainted with Lucy Smith and her family.


After a couple of days, although conditions on the ship were not conducive for all of them to stay while

awaiting notice of departure, Lucy reported, “Captain Blake requested the passengers to remain on board, as he wished, from that time, to be ready to start at a moment’s warning; at the same time he sent out a man to measure the depth of the ice, who, when he returned, reported that it was piled up to the height of twenty feet [6 m], and that it was his opinion that we would remain in the harbor at least two weeks longer.”

This was devastating news to the group. Supplies were low and conditions were difficult. Lucy Mack Smith further recorded her admonition to the Saints: “You profess to put your trust in God, then how can you feel to murmur and complain as you do! You are even more unreasonable than the children of Israel were; for here are my sisters pining for their rocking chairs, and brethren from whom I expected firmness and energy, declare that they positively believe they shall starve to death before they get to the end of their journey. And why is it so? Have any of you lacked? . . . Where is your faith? Where is your confidence in God? Can you not realize that all things were made by him, and that he rules over the works of his own hands? And suppose that all the Saints here should lift their hearts in prayer to God, that the way might be opened before us, how easy it would be for him to cause the ice to break away, so that in a moment we could be on our journey!”

Now, please observe here the great faith of Mother Smith—how she chose to trust in the Lord and how she asked that the Saints with her not lean unto their own understanding:

“‘Now, brethren and sisters, if you will all of you raise your desires to heaven, that the ice may be broken up, and we be set at liberty, as sure as the Lord lives, it will be done.’ At that instant a noise was heard, like bursting thunder. The captain cried, ‘Every man to his post.’ The ice parted, leaving barely a passage for the boat, and so narrow that as the boat passed through[,] the buckets of the waterwheel were torn off with a crash, which, joined to the word of command from the captain, the hoarse answering of the sailors, the noise of the ice, and the cries and confusion of the



After encouraging her stranded brothers and sisters to cease murmuring and to raise their desires to heaven, Lucy Mack Smith recalled that “the ice parted, leaving barely a passage for the boat.” As soon as the Saints’ boat passed through, the ice closed up again.

spectators, presented a scene truly terrible. We had barely passed through the avenue when the ice closed together again, and the Colesville brethren were left in Buffalo, unable to follow us.

“As we were leaving the harbor, one of the bystanders exclaimed, ‘There goes the “Mormon” company! That boat is sunk in the water nine inches deeper than ever it was before, and, mark it, she will sink—there is nothing surer.’ In fact, they were so sure of it that they went straight to the [news] office and had it published that we were sunk, so that when we arrived at Fairport we read in the papers the news of our own death.”³

“Lean Not unto Thine Own Understanding”

“And with all thy getting get understanding,” or, said another way, “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5).

I have personally observed the heartbreak and personal havoc wrought upon those whose focus is on worldly “getting” and not on the Lord’s “understanding.” It seems that those who lean unto their own understanding or rely on the arm of the flesh are more likely to develop a disproportionate focus or obsession for material gain, prestige, power, and position. But keeping the “getting” in accordance with this scriptural guidance of “understanding” will temper your temporal appetite. It will allow the proper context for your activities as a productive member of society and of the Lord’s kingdom.

As a young student full of aspiration, I remember listening to a respected and successful mentor suggest that we appropriately manage ambitions by following an order of “learn, earn, serve.” President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) taught a pattern that leads to trusting the Lord and relying on Him rather than on ourselves. He said: “Each of us has a fourfold responsibility. First, we have a responsibility to our families. Second, we have a responsibility to our employers. Third, we have a responsibility to the Lord’s work. Fourth, we have a responsibility to ourselves.”

We must have a balance. President Hinckley suggested that we fulfill this fourfold responsibility through family prayer, family home evening, family scripture study, honesty and loyalty to our employer, fulfillment of our Church responsibilities, personal scripture study, rest, recreation, and exercise.⁴

American philosopher and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it.”⁵

Fortunately, Latter-day Saints never have to look very far to know what to do. With your knowledge of a loving Heavenly Father and the great plan of happiness, you have rudders deep in the water. Now, put your oars in deeply as well and pull hard and even.

In a general conference talk, President Monson quoted from Proverbs, as he had done before: “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” Then he said, “That has been the story of my life.”⁶ What a great life to emulate.

I have great expectations for each of you, as do the Father and the Son. I finish where I began—with the exhortation found in Proverbs: “And with all thy getting get understanding.”

Get real understanding. This will come to you as you realize the interdependence of study and prayer, as you maintain a commitment to serve while learning and earning, and as you lean not unto yourself but trust in and rely on the Lord. ■

From a devotional address, “Lean Not unto Thine Own Understanding,” delivered at Brigham Young University on January 14, 2015. For the full address in English, go to speeches.byu.edu.

NOTES

1. Robert D. Hales, “Making Righteous Choices at the Crossroads of Life,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 10; emphasis added.
2. See, for example, Thomas S. Monson, “A Word at Closing,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 112.
3. Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother, Lucy Mack Smith* (1979), see 195–99, 202–205; emphasis added.
4. See Gordon B. Hinckley, “Rejoicing in the Privilege to Serve,” *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, June 21, 2003, 22, 23.
5. Ralph Waldo Emerson, in “The American Scholar,” an address delivered on Aug. 31, 1837, at the University of Cambridge.
6. Thomas S. Monson, “A Word at Closing,” 112; quoting Proverbs 3:5–6.

RESPECTING WOMEN—NO MATTER WHAT AGE

I was called to teach the Aaronic Priesthood in my branch, and one Sunday the topic was respect for womanhood. During the lesson we discussed that respect should be shown to every female, from infant to adulthood, as stated in the Aaronic Priesthood manual.

Gabriel (name has been changed), one of the young men in the class, said that to him a woman is a female who is old enough to be his mother and any female younger than that should respect him because he is a man. No one else in the class agreed with him, which was hard for him to believe.

We continued to discuss ways to show respect to women, and I told them that one thing I do is give up my seat on the large public transportation van when a woman boards, even if it means standing for 30–40 minutes before arriving at my destination. I told

them that men ought to stand and let women have the seats. Gabriel was still uncomfortable with the lesson.

Two days later, I boarded a van and sat down in the front. All of the seats were full when a man and his young daughter boarded and walked to the rear. Soon after, an elderly woman entered the van, and I stood up and offered her my seat.

A man behind me tapped my shoulder, pointed to the back of the van, and told me a young man had asked him to get my attention. I walked back to see who this young man was. Everyone nearby was smiling because the young man had just given his seat to the man and his four-year-old daughter who had boarded earlier. It was Gabriel, the young man in my priesthood class, who had been uncomfortable with the topic of respect for womanhood.

He said to me, “I was watching to see if you would stand for the woman who entered the van. I was moved when I saw that you did, and I remembered our lesson on Sunday and had to stand up for the little girl and her father.”

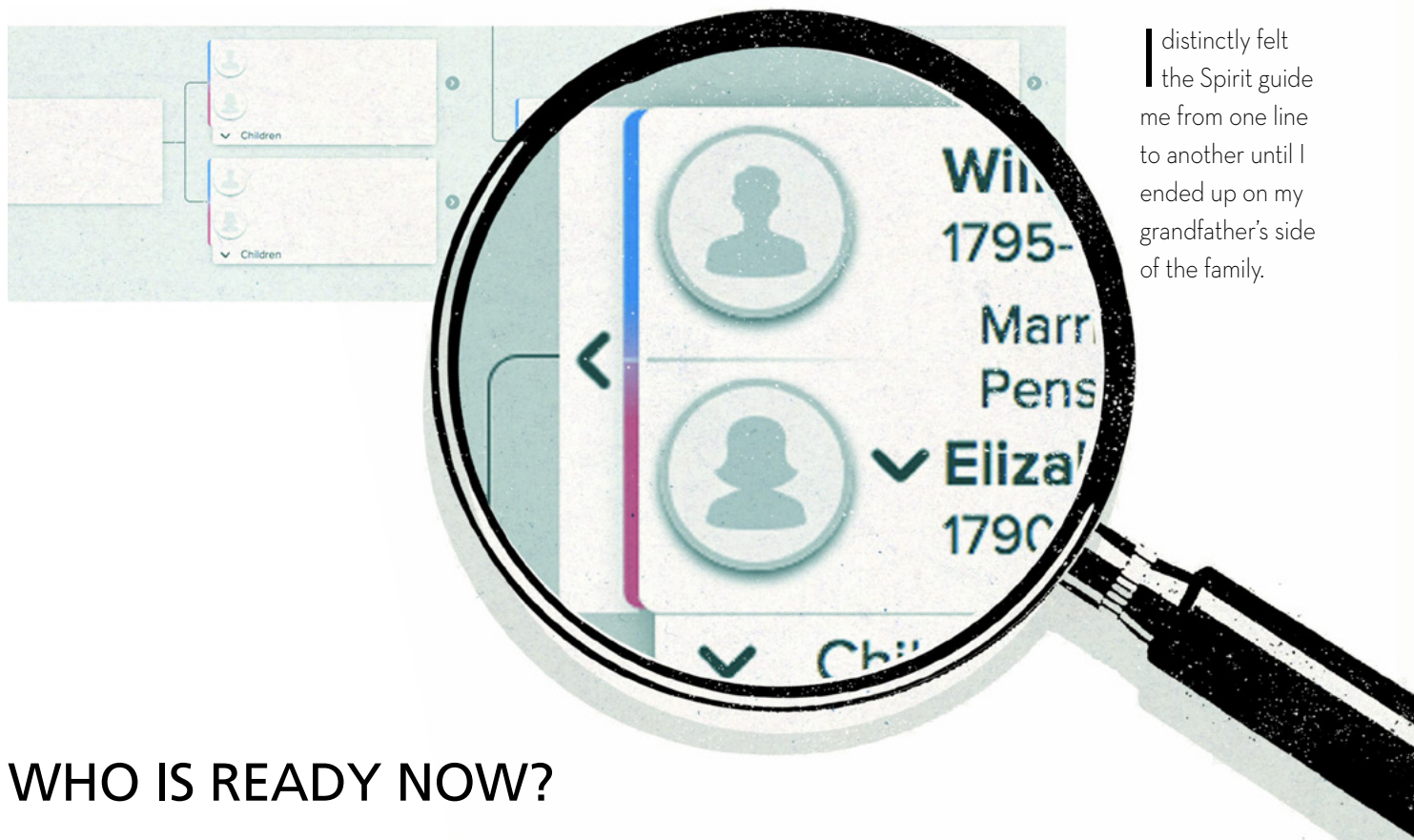
How happy I was to see that our young men live what they are taught in the Church. He used to think that respect was reserved only for older women, but after our Sunday lesson, he chose to show respect for a four-year-old girl.

I was also happy that I chose to live what I taught, helping him learn to show respect for women of all ages. I wondered what his feelings would have been if I had not stood up for the woman in the van. A scripture came to my mind: “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them” (John 13:17). ■

Owie Osaretin Friday, Edo, Nigeria

An elderly woman entered the van, and I stood up and offered her my seat.





I distinctly felt the Spirit guide me from one line to another until I ended up on my grandfather's side of the family.

WHO IS READY NOW?

One Sunday following the final session of a general conference, I felt a very specific prompting to sign into my FamilySearch account and do some family history. I was reluctant to work on my family history because I had never had much success with my other attempts. My family is quite vigilant in family history, and I just had a thought in the back of my mind that there was nothing left to do.

I sat back and sighed with frustration as I looked at the dead end I had tried working on for years, hoping that this would finally be the day where I would find some information. I began my regular searches through census, marriage, and birth records, and after an hour I found nothing.

Then the Spirit that had been whispering to me all weekend through the conference sessions prompted me to pray and find out who was ready for their work to be done now.

As I finished my prayer, I went back to my own name and moved forward through the line. I distinctly felt the Spirit guide me from one line to another until I ended up on my grandfather's side of the family. Over the next hour the Spirit flourished in the room, and I came away with six names to take to the temple. As I finished requesting the names for the temple, I glanced down at some of the records I had received information from. My eyes swelled with tears and my heart was full of joy—the

information had come from indexers who had volunteered their time to enter records for my ancestors. In gratitude, I indexed names for others for the next hour.

That day my testimony swelled with thankfulness for two reasons. One, that during general conference, the Spirit had led me to do family history work and to know which names to search for. Second, for Church members all over the world who index names so that people like me can find our ancestors clearly and quickly and hasten their work. It was a clear and powerful testimony to me of God's work spreading forth upon the whole earth. ■

Leisa Wimpee, Nevada, USA

A SCOUTMASTER'S PRAYER

I was a Scoutmaster leading 20 young men and two leaders on an activity trip in southern Utah, USA.

When we got to the turnoff that would take us to the campsite, I stopped and surveyed the desert in front of me. I had made this trip many times, but for some reason, I couldn't see anything that I recognized. I scanned left and right, looking for something familiar.

No matter how many roads I turned onto, they were all dead ends.

It was getting dark. Finally, I stopped and told everyone to stay

put. I grabbed a flashlight and told them that I'd find the road on foot and signal to them once I had found the way.

What I actually did was kneel down and beg Heavenly Father to help us out of this awkward situation. I poured my heart out to Him, detailing my preparedness, my love for the boys, my gratitude for the fathers who had come with us, and my absolute faith that He would answer my prayer quickly. I finished my prayer and stood up. I expected to get up off my knees, point my flashlight out into the

darkness, and have the beam immediately fall upon the right road.

But nothing happened.

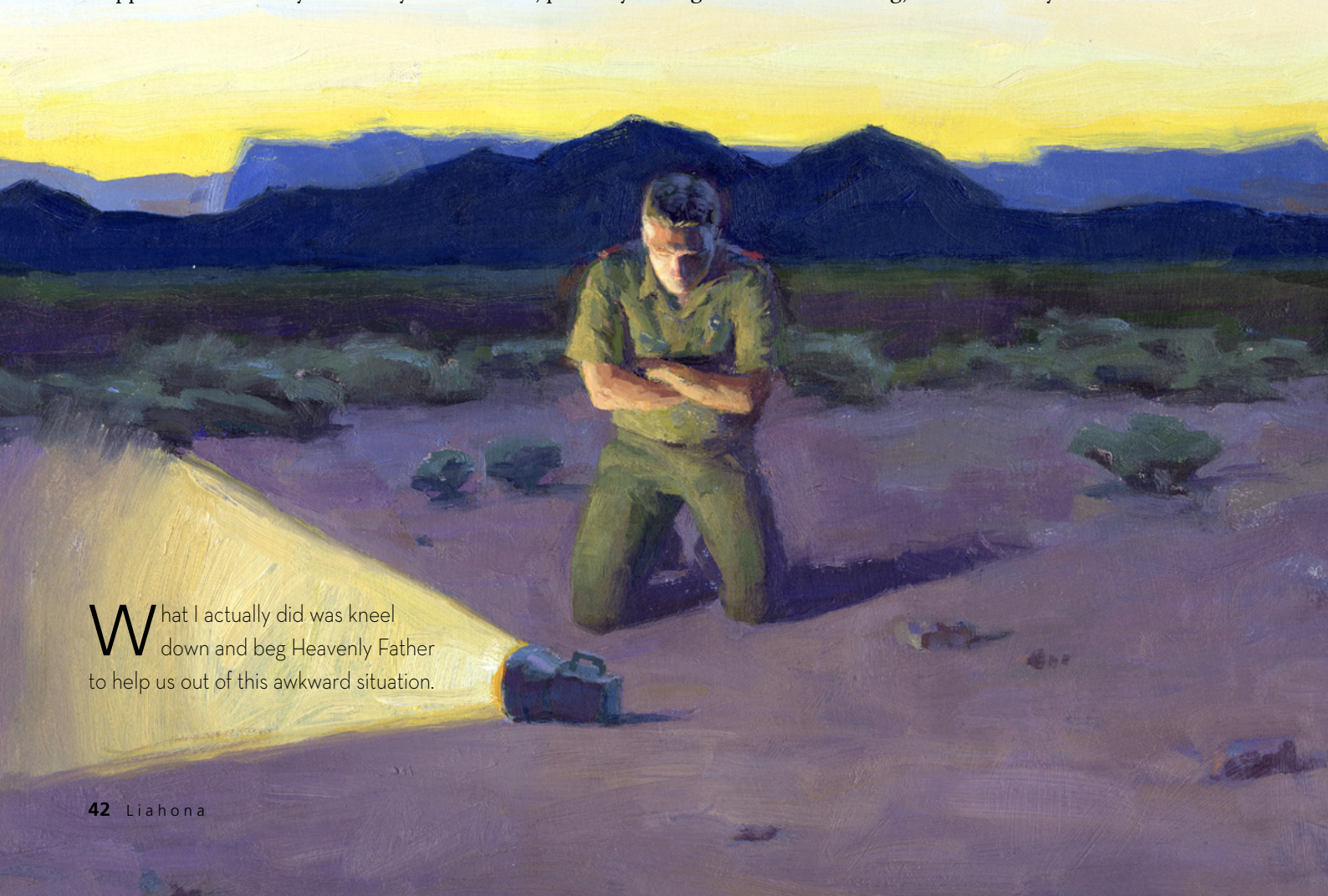
I silently scanned the horizon as far as my beam would reach.

Still nothing.

I couldn't believe it. I *knew* that as soon as I stood up, I would see the road. I *knew* that the Lord would not let me down, especially with so many people depending on me.

I now had to face two frustrated fathers and their vans full of rowdy, anxious young men, all of them asking, "Are we there yet?"

What I actually did was kneel down and beg Heavenly Father to help us out of this awkward situation.



I apologized and assured them that I had made this trip 20 times in my life and that I knew the road was there. I just couldn't see it.

Finally, we decided to drive into town and rent two motel rooms. We would start out fresh on Saturday morning.

Since we couldn't build fires to cook the campfire dinners we brought, we went to the local pizza place we'd seen at the end of town.

The pizza was delicious and the boys were happy, but I still felt guilty about the motel and dinner bills.

As we ate, I wondered why Heavenly Father hadn't answered my prayer, when suddenly I heard a loud boom.

I got up, swung open the door of the pizza place, and saw the biggest downpour of rain I had ever seen. There were lightning bolts to the northwest—right toward where I had been praying for an answer not an hour earlier. At that moment, the Spirit came over me, and I realized that the Lord *had* answered my prayer!

The next morning, the sky was blue, and as we headed back into the maze of dirt roads, I drove straight to the exact turnoff I had been searching for the night before. I know now how prayers are sometimes answered with a no, but they are *always* answered. ■

Tony Rogerson, Utah, USA

Sleep
Restart
Shut Down

Log Out



I had reclaimed a lot of time—time that I was now spending caring for and playing with my children, reading, and studying.



ADJUSTING MY PRIORITIES

Shortly after I started our family blog, I found myself spending all of my free time updating it and thinking about how to make it more creative or appealing. I spent a great deal of time reading others' blogs too.

Within a few weeks, blogging had taken priority over my daily scripture study and other reading. I couldn't concentrate while studying, I didn't want to read as much, and I felt a lack of the Spirit in my life. I had less patience with my children, and the time I should have been spending with them, I was spending on the computer.

It wasn't that blogging was inappropriate; after all, it is a great way to stay in touch with family and friends. But since I could feel my focus shift away from things that would give me a strong spiritual foundation, I knew something needed to change.

I started by admitting to myself that I didn't need to blog every day and that I didn't need to check other people's blogs daily either. I decided

I could still spend free time on the computer but only after I had finished my scripture study and other reading. By the time I got the most important things done, there usually wasn't much time for blogging, but that was OK. I had reclaimed a lot of time—time that I was now spending caring for and playing with my children, reading, and studying.

After just a few days of adjusted priorities, I noticed that I was feeling the Spirit more abundantly in my life again.

I know that as I make a priority each day of doing what will benefit me spiritually, I will feel the Spirit more and more on a daily basis. I know that making time for studying the scriptures, reading Church magazines and other good literature, and thinking about things that matter eternally can help me be a better wife, a better mother, and a better member of the Lord's Church. ■

Jinny Davis, Texas, USA



By Elder
C. Scott Grow
Of the Seventy

PROPHETIC PRINCIPLES OF *FAITHFULNESS*

More than 20 years ago, I completed my service as a mission president in South America. My wife, Rhonda, and I have seen great triumph as well as heartbreaking tragedy in the lives of our missionaries during those intervening 20 years.

The majority of our missionaries are happily sealed in the temple, raising righteous children and sending them on missions, and serving faithfully in Church auxiliary and priesthood callings. Some, however, are less active, some have been married and divorced, and some have been excommunicated from the Church.

What has made the difference in the lives of our former missionaries? What might some of them have done differently to avoid personal tragedy? What about you? Where will you be in 20 years? What decisions and commitments do you need to make now and in the future to help you remain faithful?

I suggest 10 principles that will help you.

1 CONTINUALLY NOURISH YOUR TESTIMONY

The Spirit-filled experiences of a mission establish a foundation of faith that can bless you throughout your life. That foundation of faith can be diminished only through neglect or sin.

Recently I interviewed a returned missionary who is less active and claimed to have lost his faith. I asked him if he was praying and studying the

What decisions and commitments do you need to make now and in the future to help you remain faithful?

Book of Mormon, as he did when he was a missionary. He said he wasn't because he had lost his faith in Joseph Smith.

I felt prompted to ask him this question: "Are you into pornography?" He answered yes. I told him it was no wonder he had lost his testimony.

I explained that a testimony is nothing more or less than the Holy Ghost bearing witness to our soul of the truthfulness of the gospel and of the restored Church. When we fail to pray and study the scriptures, the influence of the Spirit in our life is weakened, lowering our resistance to temptation. When we sin and become unclean, we lose the companionship of the Holy Ghost altogether. Without the ongoing witness of the Spirit, we can easily begin to think we don't have a testimony and maybe never did.

Our testimony needs to be continually nourished. That nourishment comes from personal prayer, daily scripture study—particularly the Book of Mormon—and serving in the Church throughout our life.



2 FOLLOW THE COUNSEL OF LIVING PROPHETS & APOSTLES

I am going to review prophetic counsel that can help you have a happy marriage, a faithful family, and a successful life. I refer to “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.” I am going to share some important parts of that proclamation, which was issued by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1995. We sustain these Brethren as prophets, seers, and revelators. They are the spokesmen for God to His children on earth.

On the day the Church was organized, God spoke regarding His prophet, saying, “For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith.” Then the Lord promises temporal blessings and eternal blessings when we follow the counsel of prophets: “For by doing these things the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name’s glory” (D&C 21:5–6).

What a blessing in these difficult times.



3 BE SEALED IN THE TEMPLE AND KEEP YOUR COVENANTS

The prophets, seers, and revelators “proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.” They add: “The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.”¹

The most important decision you make in life “is to marry the right person, in the right place, by the right authority”² and then to keep your temple covenants. There is no exaltation without a temple sealing.

To qualify for exaltation, couples must enter into “the new and everlasting covenant, and it [must be] sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed”—the prophet. If we keep our temple covenants, we will “inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths . . . and glory in all things, . . . which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever” (D&C 132:19; see also verse 7).

A temple sealing contains the promise of eternal blessings in the next life and increases the likelihood of a happy marriage in this life. As a consecrated son or daughter of God, you have covenanted to come to earth at this time to build up God’s kingdom. That kingdom-building includes your own temple marriage.

4 PARTNER WITH GOD IN BRINGING HIS SPIRIT CHILDREN TO EARTH

The family proclamation states: “The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God’s commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force.”

Families today are smaller than they were a generation ago—even LDS families. We can always find reasons to justify delaying or limiting the number of children we have. For example, “We need to graduate first” or “We need to get a better job so we can have more money” or “Why take all the fun out of marriage by having kids?”

You’ve been blessed with a testimony of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. You have the blessings of eternity to offer to your children. Don’t get hung up on the thought that you must provide all things temporal. The greatest gift you have to offer to your children is access to all things spiritual in the kingdom of God.

When you prayerfully counsel with your spouse about having children, remember that you are the youth of the noble birthright. Please don’t leave God out of your deliberations. Share that right to birth with as many spirit sons and daughters as God is prepared to send to your home. After all, these were His children long before they will be yours.

With faith in God and His prophetic word, go forward without excuse or hesitation and create your own eternal family.

5 DO NOT INDULGE IN PORNOGRAPHY OR OTHER IMMORAL BEHAVIOR

The proclamation continues, “Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity.”

Complete fidelity means being physically faithful as well as emotionally faithful to your spouse. Pornography and online relationships are examples of emotional infidelity. When a spouse engages in pornography, he or she violates a sacred trust of the most intimate nature. The innocent spouse feels betrayed. Confidence and trust in the marriage deteriorate. The harvest of adultery is sown in the seedbed of pornography.

I share some feelings from a man who had been sealed in the temple but lost his family because of pornography and an online relationship with a woman. In sorrow he writes: “I did not heed the words given to me in my patriarchal blessing, which stated that Satan would have no power in my life except that which I would give him. I gave him plenty, and slowly and surely he took it and used that power to destroy my life with my wife and my children. I loved them with all my heart and still do and always will, but that love was not enough to defeat the power I willingly gave Satan in my life to destroy it. The Church’s teachings provided [us] a way to return as a family sealed for time and all eternity to our Heavenly Father, would I have but listened and heeded them, but in the end I did not.”

What a tragedy.





6 TEACH AND LIVE THE GOSPEL IN YOUR HOME

The proclamation teaches us things we must do to be happy in our homes. “Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities.”

When my wife and I were a young married couple, we tried repeatedly to establish a firm habit of reading the scriptures together every day as a family. When our oldest child was about seven years old, we finally made it a daily habit. Reading first thing in the morning, we continued faithfully from that time forward. Once the habit was established with the other children, the younger children were eager to participate as they became old enough. Often we had to read before 6:00 a.m. because of early-morning seminary.

Young married couples are in a position to start their own righteous family traditions—holding daily family scripture study, having family prayer, and preparing their children for missions and temple marriage.

7 HONOR THE ROLES OF FATHER AND MOTHER IN RAISING CHILDREN

The proclamation also shares some important counsel about raising children: “Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as *equal partners*.”

Sometimes one parent may feel that he or she is better qualified to raise and discipline the children. The prophets of this dispensation have taught repeatedly that husbands and wives form a partnership in marriage, that all decisions relative to the family should be made jointly and harmoniously.

Equal partners are to be equal partners. Counsel together and pray together. Be guided by the Spirit to know the most effective way to raise your children together. Their eternal destiny will be affected by your decisions.

8 USE YOUR MORAL AGENCY TO CHOOSE TO FOLLOW THE SAVIOR

The decision as to where you will be in 20 years or 20 centuries is entirely up to you. You’re free to choose; however, eternal consequences flow from your choices. Because of the Savior’s Atonement, men “are redeemed from the fall [and] they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to *act for themselves* and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day, according to the commandments which God hath given.

“Wherefore, men are . . . free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power

of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself" (2 Nephi 2:26–27; emphasis added).

Satan hates you because of who you are and what you represent. He wants to make you miserable, as he is. Jesus Christ loves you. He paid the price for your sins. He gave His life for you. He invites you to follow Him and repent, if necessary. As you choose to follow the Savior, you will have “joy in this life and eternal life in the world to come.”³

9 DEVELOP FAITH TO ENDURE TO THE END

Faith comes as you are converted unto the Lord. The prophet Nephi taught: “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).

President Thomas S. Monson recently said in general conference, “The future is as bright as your faith.”⁴ That includes faith to endure and overcome all obstacles, including offenses, betrayals, and disappointments. Your faith to endure will determine your destiny, even your eternal destiny.



10 SUBMIT YOUR WILL TO THE WILL OF GOD

I pray that God has touched your soul with a desire to do better and be better and to follow the counsel of our living prophets. I hope that you have felt a desire to strengthen your commitment to become all that God has foreordained you to be.

“Brethren [and sisters], shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, . . . and on, on to the victory! . . . Let us, therefore, as a church and a people, and as Latter-day Saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness” (D&C 128:22, 24).

What might that offering be that you individually can give to God? It is that one gift He would never require of you. It is the offering of your will to submit to His will. It is to lay your agency on the altar of personal sacrifice.

One of the *Lectures on Faith*, prepared by the early Brethren in this dispensation, states: “A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation.”⁵

Your agency is the one thing that is truly yours that you can give as an offering to God. By volunteering your will to His will, you will become like Him.

I conclude with my witness of the Savior. To the degree that you exercise faith in Jesus Christ, submit your will to God’s will, follow the counsel of His prophets, and obey the promptings of the Spirit, you will be faithful, happy, and successful. ■

From a devotional address, “Where Will You Be in 20 Years?” delivered at Brigham Young University–Idaho on May 15, 2012. For the full address in English, go to web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches.

NOTES

1. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129; emphasis added.
2. Bruce R. McConkie, “Agency or Inspiration?” *New Era*, Jan. 1975, 38.
3. Gordon B. Hinckley, *Caesar, Circus, or Christ?* Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year (Oct. 26, 1965), 8; see also Russell M. Nelson, “Spiritual Capacity,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 16.
4. Thomas S. Monson, “Be of Good Cheer,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 92.
5. *Lectures on Faith* (1985), 69.

ASK

James 1:5-6

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed."
James 1:5-6



Why was this theme chosen, and what does it mean to you? Brother Stephen W. Owen, Young Men General President, and Sister Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women General President, share their thoughts.

WHY THIS SCRIPTURE?

Sister Oscarson: The Lord knows what message you are going to need, and it's remarkable how some of the issues that arise during the year are answered by the theme and how it really fits what's going on in your lives.

When we discussed James 1:5–6 as a possibility for this year's theme, the Spirit filled the room. And we all agreed that it would be a great scripture for our youth because it has several connections. It has connections to Church history—it's the scripture that Joseph Smith read that prompted him to go to the Sacred Grove and pray. And the second great connection is that it bears testimony of the divine mission of Joseph Smith, something we need in a time when his reputation and Church history are continually being questioned by the world. It's also a message of how we receive personal revelation in our lives, which everyone needs to know.

Brother Owen: There is so much going on in your lives today, and you have so many questions. With all of the social media and search engines we have, there are a lot of sources where you could turn to get answers for your questions of faith. This key scripture shows Joseph Smith's process of revelation, which is a model we can follow.

HOW CAN YOUTH PERSONALIZE AND USE JAMES 1:5–6?

Sister Oscarson: This scripture has such a great message. It says, "Ask in faith, nothing wavering" (James 1:6). This is particularly poignant. You need to ask in faith, not in doubt.

Brother Owen: And asking in faith means asking with real intent. When Joseph Smith got the answer of which church to join, he didn't just say, "Well, that's good to know, but . . ." He went forward in faith.

Sister Oscarson: Remember that a righteous prayer is not asking for what we want but finding out what God wants for us.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUTH ABOUT USING PRAYER IN THEIR LIVES?

Sister Oscarson: Make it a habit. You can't forget about it. You can't

neglect it. The brother of Jared gives us an example of that (see Ether 2:14).

Brother Owen: Forgetting to pray from time to time is one thing, but more troubling is turning away from the Lord and not wanting to pray. When you feel like you shouldn't pray, that's when you really need to pray. And if you're saying your prayers and reading the scriptures, you'll be in tune. And if you're not, you're going to distance yourselves.

Sister Oscarson: We can speak directly with God. He places no time limits. What a gift to know that we can do that and that He's always there.

HOW HAVE YOU LEARNED TO PRAY IN A MEANINGFUL WAY?

Sister Oscarson: I can't think of any one experience; it's a culmination of a lifetime. Praying has become one of the most meaningful parts of my day because I make an effort to be consistent. I've become much better at listening and receiving answers. We learn and we get better the more we engage in the process. It's just being consistent with it every single day, making sure that I don't miss that opportunity to talk to my Heavenly Father. The more we pray, the better we get at listening to those answers.

Brother Owen: In my youth when I really needed to know something, I remembered the First Vision and thought, “Joseph Smith did it. I don’t need a huge manifestation, but I need an answer.” And so in faith I followed that pattern. I remember kneeling down and bowing my head and saying a prayer out loud. Continuing to follow that pattern has blessed my life many times to receive personal revelation.

WHAT IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS YOUTH CAN LEARN FROM THIS SCRIPTURE?

Brother Owen: I just want to reemphasize the pattern of prayer that Joseph Smith established. At just 14 years old, he was confused, so he read his scriptures. The First Vision was not a fleeting moment where Joseph simply knelt down. There was a lot of work beforehand. He reflected on his question over and over again. When he found James 1:5–6, he said, “Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine” (Joseph Smith—History 1:12). It entered with great force into his heart, and then he acted upon it. He prayed with real intent and moved forward in faith. And that’s what we’re hoping you will be able to feel with this scripture throughout 2017. ■

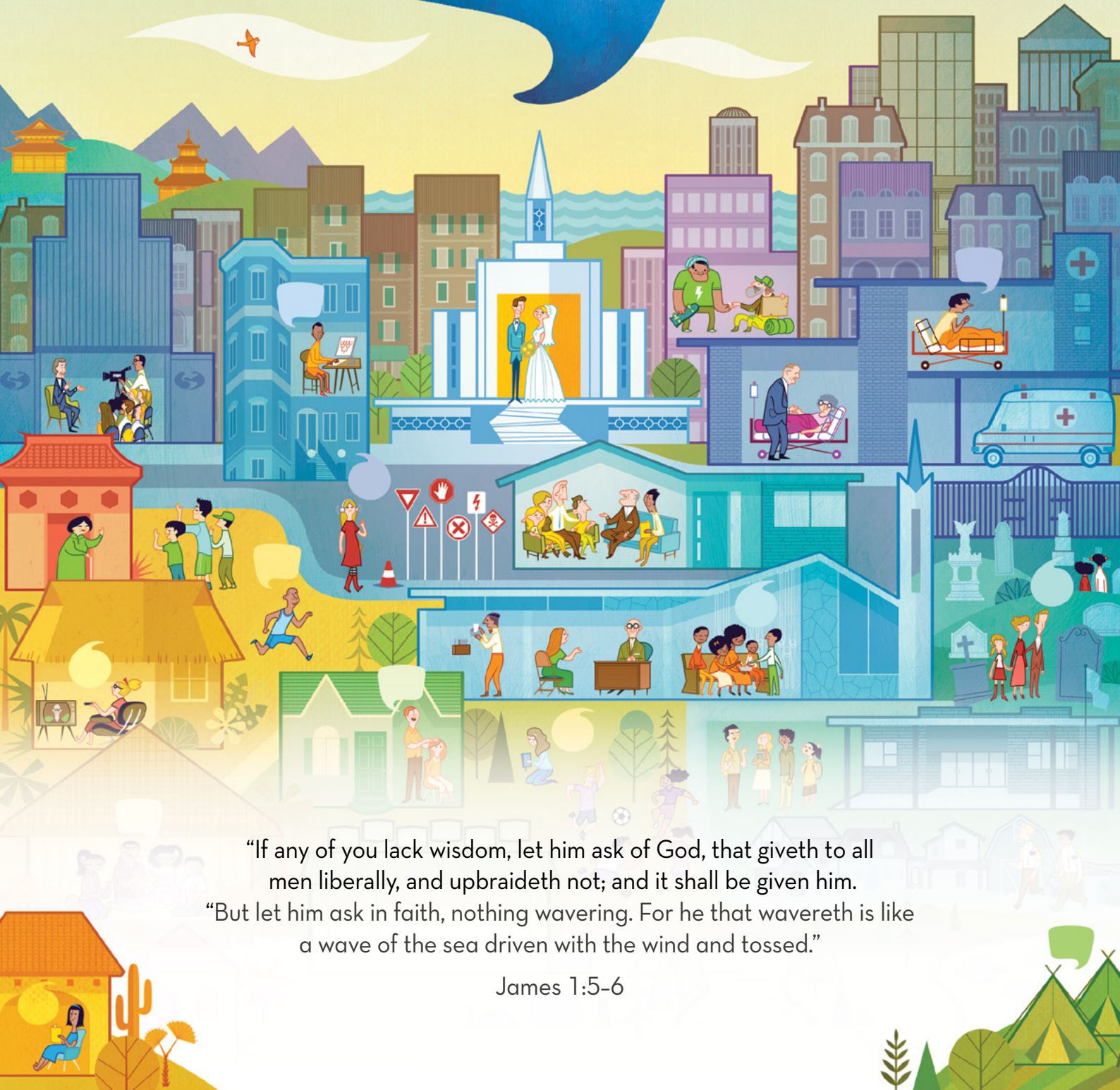


ONLINE RESOURCES

Whether you’re planning an activity or conference or simply thinking about the theme on your own, you’ll find art, music, and additional resources for this year’s Mutual theme at lds.org/go/11752.

ASK

James 1:5-6



"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.
"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed."

James 1:5-6

5 PROMISES OF PRAYER

By Carlisa Cramer

Heavenly Father provided prayer as a way to communicate directly with Him in order to give thanks, ask for blessings, and grow spiritually. Sometimes all it takes is a bowed head, folded arms, and a few simple and sincere words. Cool, huh? Here are five different promises or blessings we can receive if we pray:

1

STRENGTH TO OVERCOME

As humans, we can feel weakness in many ways—physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally. We can struggle trying to run a race or pass a test or withstand temptation or even feel the Spirit. But prayer can give us the strength we need to overcome anything that life hands to us.

As Nephi said, “The Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them” (1 Nephi 3:7). The Lord can give us strength to accomplish any good thing that we try to do if it’s His will.

Pray for the strength to overcome a temptation. Pray for the strength to focus and study productively for a test. Pray for the strength to run and not be weary. Pray for strength, and He will make you strong.



2

FORGIVENESS

Though it’s nice to think otherwise, we’re not perfect.

We make mistakes, and that’s just a part of life. But the Lord provides a way to fix them: the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. And one access point to His power is prayer.

When we ask for forgiveness through prayer, we can be forgiven of our sins through the Savior’s Atonement. Though bigger sins may need the assistance of a bishop or branch president, personal and sincere prayer will always be one of the first steps to forgiveness—whether we are asking Heavenly Father to forgive us or to help us forgive someone else. He’ll even help us learn how to forgive ourselves.



3

KNOWLEDGE AND GUIDANCE

Personal revelation might have been one of the first promised blessings of prayer that you thought of, especially with the new Mutual theme running around in your head. Joseph Smith lacked knowledge about which church to join, so he got on his knees in the Sacred Grove, asked his question, and received an answer—in a pretty big way.

But revelation isn't just for prophets, and it doesn't have to be an earth-shattering experience. If any of us lack wisdom on anything, we *can* and *should* ask of God. He will answer, though sometimes not in the way we would expect.

The Lord will answer our questions and help guide our lives, but we have to first ask!



4

DESIRE TO DO THE LORD'S WILL

It may be harder to see this one as a blessing—because, honestly, sometimes we want things for ourselves that the Lord doesn't want for us. But as we pray to be truly converted and to have the desire to do the Lord's will, we'll notice something pretty amazing: what we want starts to look more like what He wants.

This change of heart won't happen immediately, though. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: "For many of us, conversion is an ongoing process and not a one-time event that results from a powerful or dramatic experience. Line upon line and precept upon precept, gradually and almost imperceptibly, our motives, our thoughts, our words, and our deeds become aligned with the will of God" ("Converted unto the Lord," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 107-8).



5

PEACE

One of the blessings we are promised if we pray is peace and comfort through the Holy Ghost. After all, He is called the Comforter. Be reassured that peace will come even in difficult times. Remember the Lord's promise in John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Peace will eventually come if we ask.



Prayer is a direct way to communicate with our loving Father. Use it and let Him bless you for it. But after receiving these blessings from sincere prayer, remember to express your heartfelt gratitude in—you guessed it—a prayer. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

5 QUESTIONS TO ASK

When Prayers Feel Unanswered

By Margaret Willden

Have you ever offered a prayer and waited for an answer that never seemed to come? You're not alone—but you can be sure that Heavenly Father does indeed hear your prayers. It's important to remember that answers may not come *when* or *how* you want them to and that our Father in Heaven always knows best.

Here are a few questions you might ask yourself when you're struggling to receive answers to a prayer:

2 Have I done everything in my power?

Let's say that you didn't study for your science test because you were hanging out with friends instead. Will Heavenly Father help you pass your test if you simply ask for His help?

We need to do our part to receive the blessings. So in studying for a test, you could pray for the strength to do well according to your preparation.

Consider the example of the sons of Mosiah, who were successful in their missionary work when they put in the extra effort: "They had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority of God" (Alma 17:3).

1 Am I ready to act on the answer?

Praying in faith means being ready to act on the answer you receive—whether or not it's the answer that you expect. The Prophet Joseph Smith once received the following instruction: "Prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same" (D&C 132:3). If you pray about whether or not you should attend that party, will you obey no matter what (even if the answer is no)?

3 Have I ignored the answer?

Heavenly Father always hears you, so it's possible that He has already answered your prayer! As it says in Doctrine and Covenants 6:14, "As often as thou hast inquired thou hast received instruction of my Spirit." You can pray for the spiritual eyes to recognize the answer, because prayers are sometimes answered in subtle or indirect ways—like through the actions of others.

Also, don't forget to take time to listen. Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: "[Heavenly Father's] answers will seldom come while you are on your knees praying. . . . Rather, He will prompt you in quiet moments when the Spirit can most effectively touch your mind and heart" ("Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2007, 9).

4 Are my desires righteous?

If you ever asked for something that wasn't in your best interest, it's pretty likely your request wasn't granted. The Savior taught that we "must always pray unto the Father in [Jesus Christ's] name" (3 Nephi 18:19), which suggests that we ask for things that are right so they can be granted. Ask yourself, "How would the Savior feel about my wants?" If your wishes are rooted in selfishness or any other form of unrighteousness, pray to have a change of heart and to know what the Savior would have you desire.

5 Is it the right time?

What we ask for must be right, but the timing must be right too. Heavenly Father has a grand plan in store for us, but our schedule is sometimes a little different from His. "My words are sure and shall not fail. . . . But all things must come to pass in their time" (D&C 64:31–32). It might mean waiting a little bit longer for that injury to heal or for a lost pet to be found, and sometimes the Lord's timing includes the next life—but you can be sure that He will hear and help you along the way.

It can be hard to be patient, especially when the answer to your prayer isn't obvious. But as you search, you can take courage in knowing that you will always find the answers you need if you seek with real intent: "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). ■

The author lives in New York, USA.

ASK OF GOD

Words and music by
Nik Day

Steadily ♩ = 156-170

9

1. You've been told _____ so ma - ny _____ things, _____ And you've been search -
 2. Line by line _____ it slow - ly _____ grows, _____ — so much clear -

14

- ing high and low. _____ You're won - d'ring what _____
 - er than be - fore. _____ A lit - tle time, _____

19

— to be - lieve. _____ There's on - ly _____ one _____ way to know. _____
 a lit - tle hope. _____ And you're not _____ won - d'ring an - y - more. _____

Chord progression: Eb, Ab, Cm, Ab, Eb, Bb, Eb, Bb, Eb, Bb, Cm, Ab, Eb, Bb, Cm, Ab, Eb, Bb.

24

— If you ask, — then He will an - swer. If you kneel, He'll make you whole.

(2nd verse) 'Cause

A \flat E \flat B \flat

28

— If you close — your eyes and whis - per, He will whis-per to — your soul. — If you're hurt-

E \flat E \flat /G A \flat E \flat B \flat E \flat E \flat /G

33

- ing, He will heal — you. If you're hum - ble, He — will come. —

A \flat E \flat B \flat C \flat

37

To Coda
(Third time)

If you lack wis - dom, ask of God. — Ask — of God. —

A \flat E \flat B \flat E \flat

41

And where you used — to be a-fraid, cold, and lost — out on the waves, Now your faith

A \flat E \flat G



46

— will pull you through. — And where the wind — tossed you a-round,

46

Cm Bb/D Eb A♭

51

Now you're stand - ing on the ground, firm-ly an - chored in the truth. — And if you ask,

51

E♭/G Fm7 E♭/G A♭ B♭

57

CODA Ask — of God. —

57

B♭ A♭ E♭ B♭

62

62

E♭ E♭/G A♭ E♭ B♭ E♭

James 1:5-6

James taught us how to ask God so that we will receive an answer.



ASK IN FAITH

“The requirement to ask in faith [implies] the necessity to not only express but to do, the dual

obligation to both plead and to perform, the requirement to communicate and to act.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Ask in Faith,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2008, 94.

LACK WISDOM

To some extent or other, we all lack the kind of wisdom that only God can give us. “The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:11). That’s why we all need to ask of Him.

LIBERALLY

Liberal—The Greek word this is translated from denotes “simplicity,” which may imply a single-mindedness in God’s purpose to give to us openly and generously.

UPBRAIDETH NOT

God will answer you and will never *upbraid* (criticize, scold, or reproach) you for humbly asking Him for an answer to a sincere question.

5 “If any of you lack ^bwisdom, let him ask of God, that ^cgiveth to all *men* liberally, and ^dupbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6 But let him ^aask in ^bfaith, nothing ^cwavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

GIVETH TO ALL MEN

“He denieth none that come unto him, . . . and all are alike unto God.”

2 Nephi 26:33



NOTHING WAVERING

“In times of distress, let your covenants be paramount and let

your obedience be exact. Then you can ask in faith, nothing wavering, according to your need, and God will answer.”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Power of Covenants,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 22.

ASK OF GOD

“Prayers are addressed to our Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ. . . .

“The object of prayer is not to change the will of God, but to secure for ourselves and for others blessings that God is already willing to grant, but that we must ask for in order to obtain.”

Guide to the Scriptures, “Prayer,” scriptures.lds.org.

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



Celestial MOMENTS

Sometimes it feels like heaven isn't that far away.

By Hollie Megan Laura Hunter

One day, my Young Women leaders taught us about special moments when you really feel the Spirit and feel close to God. They called them “celestial moments,” a simple phrase that was easy to remember. For me, I knew exactly what a “celestial moment” was; I’d felt it before, such as when you feel a tiny glimmer or taste of what life in the celestial kingdom might be like. And I’ve had plenty of these moments!

After our leaders introduced the idea, we went outside. The sun was gleaming through the trees. We shut our eyes. I felt the sun on my face as a warm breeze blew. Birds sang and trees swished in the wind as we enjoyed God’s creations. That was a celestial moment.

Another time I had a celestial moment was after my best friend was baptized. As we walked back to the chapel for the rest of the service, she took my hand and talked about how great it was that we were friends and always would be—even into the eternities. I’ll never forget that. I was excited and happy and grateful!

A year or so later, we were both able to feel that joy together once again as we stood at the font and watched her mother enter into the waters of baptism. There really was beauty all around.

Perhaps the best place to have these experiences is inside the Lord’s house. The first time I entered the temple, I was blessed to attend with my parents and my sister. I was baptized for my great-grandmother, and I felt that she was happy.

Celestial moments can occur anywhere and at any time—while listening to music or during family home evening or at school. I remember one family home evening where everyone couldn’t stop laughing! That was one of my favorite moments.

These celestial moments have strengthened my testimony and helped me to have a more grateful spirit. They’ve taught me great lessons. Most of all, they’ve made me happy and excited about the gospel! I know that if I continue to choose to live the gospel, all the beauty, happiness, peace, and love I feel in each celestial moment will be something I can always feel—in much greater measure—in the celestial kingdom. ■

The author lives in North Lanarkshire, Scotland.

OUR SPACE



Above: This picture represents the love of God for me personally and for my sisters, one of whom is now a full-time missionary. The gospel of Jesus Christ has been an indescribable joy in our lives.

Kenia R. at the Monterrey Mexico Temple



Photograph of Nauvoo Illinois Temple by Michaela S., Florida, USA

ACCEPTING THE #TEMPLECHALLENGE

I was baptized in 2012 and attended a branch in the Ipoméia Brazil District. Since 2014, I have been really engaged in family history. It started with the invitation from Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles at RootsTech to do baptisms for my own family names. I felt really committed to do family history, knowing that if I “knocked,” it would be “opened” (see Matthew 7:7).

Now I have many more generations, pictures, documents, and, most important, more family stories, which is awesome. Having this information, I wrote a book with pictures and dates from my family history. This project helped me contact my nonmember family members and gave me the opportunity to share my testimony that families can be eternal.

This work has helped me stand in holy places, stay active in the Church, and accept the calling to serve the Lord on a mission.

I have a testimony that the work of salvation done by this Church on both sides of the veil is true and inspired by our Heavenly Father. Before my mission, I had the opportunity to do baptisms for my ancestors, and now as a missionary I have the opportunity to baptize people who are alive and want to change their lives forever. ■

Elder Claudio Klaus Jr., Arizona Mesa Mission



**By Elder
M. Russell Ballard**
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

HOW TO SHARE THE GOSPEL

We need not apologize for our beliefs nor back down from that which we know to be true. But we can share it in a spirit of loving understanding—**boldly and confidently**, with an eye single to the glory of God—without pressuring our listeners or feeling that we have failed in our duty if they do not immediately accept what we believe.

When we have the companionship of the Holy Ghost, we can then do simple things to help bring better understanding of the gospel into the lives of the less-active members of the Church as well as those who are not of our faith. There is no need for any new program to do this. We don't need a handbook or a calling or a training meeting. The only need is for good members of the Church to learn to **rely upon the power of the Holy Ghost** and, with this power, reach out and touch the lives of our Father's children. There is no greater service we can render than sharing our **personal testimonies** with those who lack an understanding of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

So, brothers and sisters, are we ready to do something? Can each one of us resolve today to **increase our personal spiritual preparation** by seeking the guidance of the Holy Ghost and then, with His power as our companion, bless more of our Father's children with understanding and knowledge that the Church is true?

I testify that the Savior lives and He will bless each one of us if we will do all that we can to move this great work of His Church forward. May each one of us resolve to do something more. ■

From an April 2000 general conference address.



HOW HAVE YOU APPLIED THIS?

I'm so grateful that I've been raised in the Church. I love sharing the gospel, and I try to be a good example, because I know my friends and others are watching me, especially my Heavenly Father. Nothing you do is looked over or ignored by our Father in Heaven. You must strive to do what's right and share the gospel with His children, for there are an unlimited number of opportunities to do that; you just have to pray to find and use those opportunities.

Chari G., Arkansas, USA

TO THE POINT

Why is it a **greater sin to not forgive** than to wrong someone?

The Lord has taught: “Ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.

“I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men” (D&C 64:9–10).

When we withhold our forgiveness, we are placing our limited judgment above the Lord’s perfect judgment. He has a perfect view of people’s hearts and circumstances, and judgment belongs to Him alone. He will ultimately deal out perfect justice and perfect mercy to all—both those who wrong others and those who are wronged.

In addition, by requiring us to forgive, the Lord is helping us to choose happiness over misery, to abandon our bitter grudges and resentments and receive healing through His grace. Then we discover that, as Elder Kevin R. Duncan of the Seventy has reminded us, “The Savior’s Atonement is not just for those who need to repent; it is also for those who need to forgive” (“The Healing Ointment of Forgiveness,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2016, 35). ■

What is the Church’s view on **depression**, and how should I deal with depression?

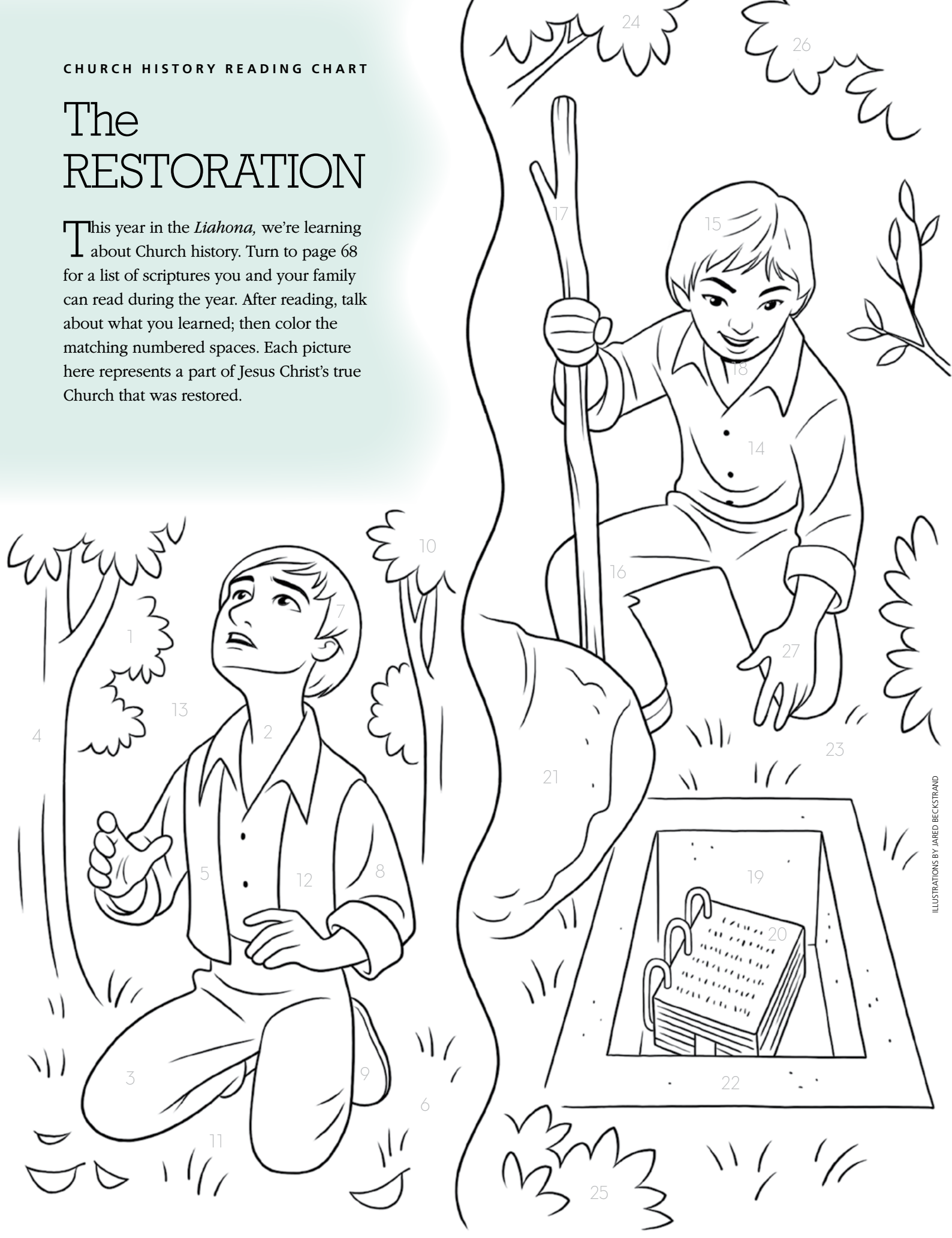
Everyone feels down from time to time, and the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and the support of family, leaders, and others can help us again find comfort, joy, and peace. But Church leaders have acknowledged that severe depression, or major depressive disorder (MDD), is a much more serious condition that can interfere with a person’s ability to function fully. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles suggested several things to do if you’re facing extreme depression:

- Don’t lose faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.
- Do the things that bring the Spirit into your life (pray, study the scriptures, and so on).
- Seek counsel from parents and priesthood leaders.
- Obtain priesthood blessings.
- Take the sacrament every week, and hold fast to the promises of Jesus Christ’s Atonement.
- Watch for stress indicators such as fatigue, and then make changes.
- If your problem persists, talk to parents or priesthood leaders about seeking the advice of a certified professional with good values.

(See “Like a Broken Vessel,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 40–42.) ■

The RESTORATION

This year in the *Liahona*, we're learning about Church history. Turn to page 68 for a list of scriptures you and your family can read during the year. After reading, talk about what you learned; then color the matching numbered spaces. Each picture here represents a part of Jesus Christ's true Church that was restored.





SCRIPTURE LIST

Most of these scriptures are revelations from the Lord to Joseph Smith. Color the illustration on pages 66–67 as you read them!

1. Joseph Smith—History 1:10–13	27. Doctrine and Covenants 59:9–10, 15–19
2. Joseph Smith—History 1:14–17	28. Doctrine and Covenants 64:9–11
3. Joseph Smith—History 1:30, 33–34	29. Doctrine and Covenants 64:33–34
4. Joseph Smith—History 1:51–53	30. Doctrine and Covenants 76:19–24, 40–41
5. Joseph Smith—History 1:66–69	31. Doctrine and Covenants 78:17–19
6. Doctrine and Covenants 1:37–38	32. Doctrine and Covenants 81:5–6
7. Doctrine and Covenants 2:1–2	33. Doctrine and Covenants 82:3, 10, 14
8. Doctrine and Covenants 4:1–7	34. Doctrine and Covenants 84:46–47, 62
9. Doctrine and Covenants 6:34–37	35. Doctrine and Covenants 88:78–80
10. Doctrine and Covenants 8:2–3, 9–10	36. Doctrine and Covenants 88:118–120
11. Doctrine and Covenants 10:5, 69	37. Doctrine and Covenants 88:123–126
12. Doctrine and Covenants 11:6–7	38. Doctrine and Covenants 89:1, 18–21
13. Doctrine and Covenants 13:1	39. Doctrine and Covenants 90:15, 24
14. Doctrine and Covenants 18:10–13	40. Doctrine and Covenants 97:15–16, 21
15. Doctrine and Covenants 18:15–16	41. Doctrine and Covenants 98:11–12
16. Doctrine and Covenants 19:16–19, 23–24	42. Doctrine and Covenants 100:5–8
17. Doctrine and Covenants 20:75–79	43. Doctrine and Covenants 101:16, 32, 36
18. Doctrine and Covenants 25:10–13	44. Doctrine and Covenants 105:39–41
19. Doctrine and Covenants 27:15–18	45. Doctrine and Covenants 107:6, 8, 13
20. Doctrine and Covenants 39:20–23	46. Doctrine and Covenants 110:1–10
21. Doctrine and Covenants 46:10–12, 32–33	47. Doctrine and Covenants 119:4, 6–7
22. Doctrine and Covenants 49:25–28	48. Doctrine and Covenants 121:7–9, 46
23. Doctrine and Covenants 50:40–46	49. Doctrine and Covenants 121:41–45
24. Doctrine and Covenants 51:13, 19	50. Doctrine and Covenants 122:7–9
25. Doctrine and Covenants 58:26–28	51. Doctrine and Covenants 130:20–23
26. Doctrine and Covenants 58:42–43	52. Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–4



By Elder
Dallin H. Oaks

Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

Will Heavenly Father ALWAYS answer my prayers?

Heavenly Father knows more than we do. He will answer our prayers in the way that is best.

When we have faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, we trust Them.

Trust that Heavenly Father knows you and loves you. Trust that He will hear your prayers and answer them with what is best for you. (See 3 Nephi 18:20.)

From "Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ," Ensign, May 1994, 98–100.

OUR PAGE



By Alexandra M., age 10, Maryland, USA



The Lord did the Creation for Heavenly Father's children. I love animals and nature.

Samuel M., age 7, Madrid, Spain

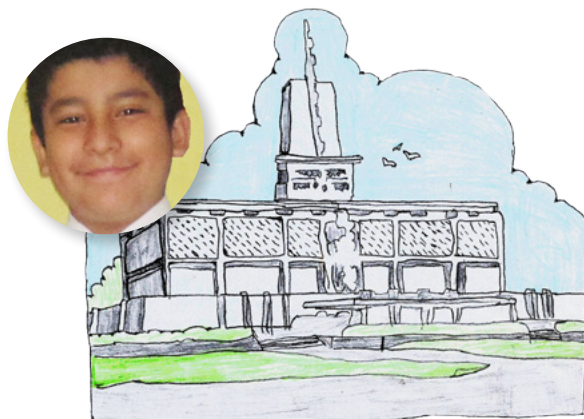


By Lissette N., age 5, Madrid, Spain



I have learned in sacrament meeting and in my Sunday classes that some things are not as important as others. The most important things are the gospel of Jesus Christ and being obedient to our Heavenly Father. I love learning.

Ian A., age 5, Morelos, Mexico



When I visit the temple with my family, I feel the Spirit strongly because I know the Lord is with us. He said, "Come unto me, my little ones" (see Matthew 19:14).

Heitor A., age 10, Paraná, Brazil



By Elder
Walter F.
González
Of the Seventy

"Search, ponder, and pray are the things that I must do" (Children's Songbook, 109).

I was 12 when I heard about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I met two LDS missionaries on the bus. They asked if they could come teach my family.

The missionaries left us a copy of the Book of Mormon and a pamphlet of Joseph Smith's testimony. My parents were wonderful people.

But they did not join the Church at that time.

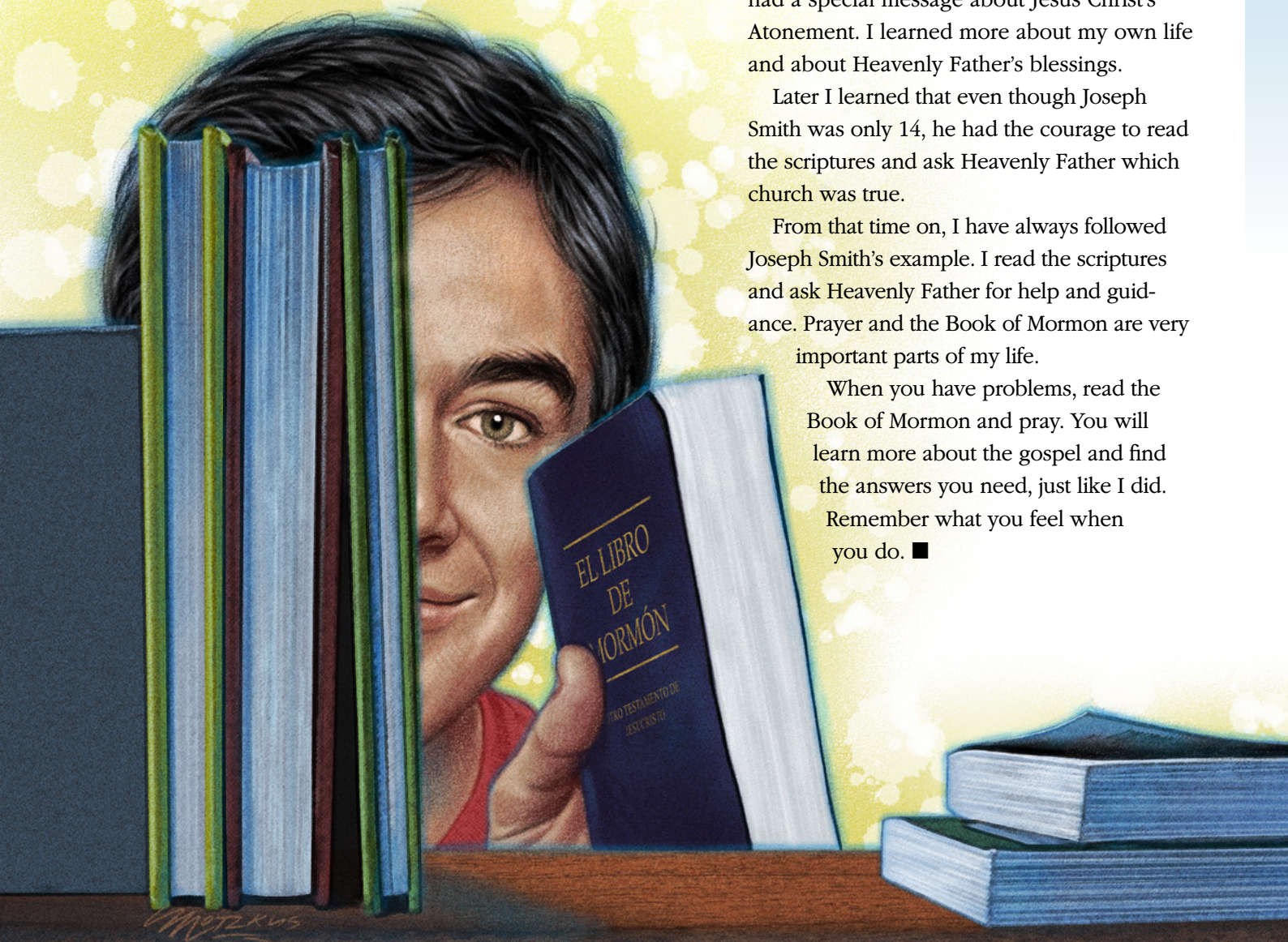
The two items stayed on our bookshelf for many years. Then one day when I was 18, I looked through our bookshelf for something good to read. I picked up the Book of Mormon and read the first chapter. A special feeling came to me as I read.

I had a unique experience by which I knew the book was true. The Book of Mormon had a special message about Jesus Christ's Atonement. I learned more about my own life and about Heavenly Father's blessings.

Later I learned that even though Joseph Smith was only 14, he had the courage to read the scriptures and ask Heavenly Father which church was true.

From that time on, I have always followed Joseph Smith's example. I read the scriptures and ask Heavenly Father for help and guidance. Prayer and the Book of Mormon are very important parts of my life.

When you have problems, read the Book of Mormon and pray. You will learn more about the gospel and find the answers you need, just like I did. Remember what you feel when you do. ■



Min-Jun Measures Up

By Kelly Hunsaker

Based on a true story

"Jesus is our loving friend. . . . Ev'ry child is dear" (Children's Songbook, 58).

Min-Jun stared out the window at the clouds. "It looks like it will rain tomorrow," he said.

Grandfather looked up from his newspaper and nodded. It was late summer in Seoul, South Korea, and monsoon season had begun.

Min-Jun set an umbrella next to his clothes for Sunday. "I think we should leave early tomorrow."

Grandfather smiled. "Good idea. We'll have to walk the longer way, in case the lower road floods."

"Do you think the Church building will be all right?" Min-Jun

asked. Last year the basement had flooded during monsoon season.

"Yes," said Grandfather. "But it never hurts to pray."

"Then I'll pray for the church tonight. And that we can make it there safely. *Jal-ja-yo* (good night)." Min-Jun bowed and went to bed.

In the morning they left the apartment early. Min-Jun looked up at the dark clouds that filled the sky.

"Have faith," Grandfather said.

Min-Jun followed Grandfather up the narrow staircase on the hill near their apartment. They paused at the top to catch their breath. Their white shirts were already damp from the heavy humidity in the air.

Grandfather held out his hand to feel the first raindrops. "Do you feel that? The rain is starting."





KEEP TRYING

"The great thing about the gospel is we get credit for *trying*, even if we don't always succeed."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Tomorrow the Lord Will Do Wonders among You," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2016, 125–126.

They opened up their umbrellas. By the time they reached the next staircase, the rain was coming down fast. Min-Jun squinted to see each step through the rain. "Whoa!" he cried as he slipped and landed on his knee.

"Are you hurt?" Grandfather asked. He leaned down to look at the hole in Min-Jun's trousers.

"It's just a scrape," Min-Jun said, his voice shaking.

"We can fix it up at the church," said Grandfather.

Min-Jun and Grandfather climbed the rest of the stairs and turned onto the upper road.

"The wind is worse up here," Grandfather said, clutching his umbrella. Min-Jun could barely control his umbrella. Suddenly a gust of wind came and flipped it inside out, tearing the umbrella at the seams. Min-Jun's shoulders drooped.

Grandfather held out his umbrella. "Come under mine. We're almost there."

Min-Jun and Grandfather shared the umbrella, but it did little to keep out the constant rain. As they came near the church, Min-Jun heard music playing.

"They've already started!" Min-Jun ran to the front doors. Then he saw his reflection in the glass. His hair was matted and dripping, his trousers were torn, and his

shoes were muddy. He shrank away from the door and back down the steps.

"I . . . I can't go in," Min-Jun stuttered.

"You're just fine," Grandfather said.

"But I'm all dirty and wet!" Grandfather looked at Min-Jun, then looked at the rain gauge tied to the fence.

"It's easy to measure the rain, Min-Jun, but how do we measure ourselves?"

Min-Jun blinked up at Grandfather.

"You see muddy shoes, a scraped knee, and messy hair, and you think you don't measure up to much," Grandfather said. "But Jesus Christ has a better way of measuring. He sees your heart and knows that you're doing what's right.

If you measure yourself His way, you'll see that the gauge is overflowing."

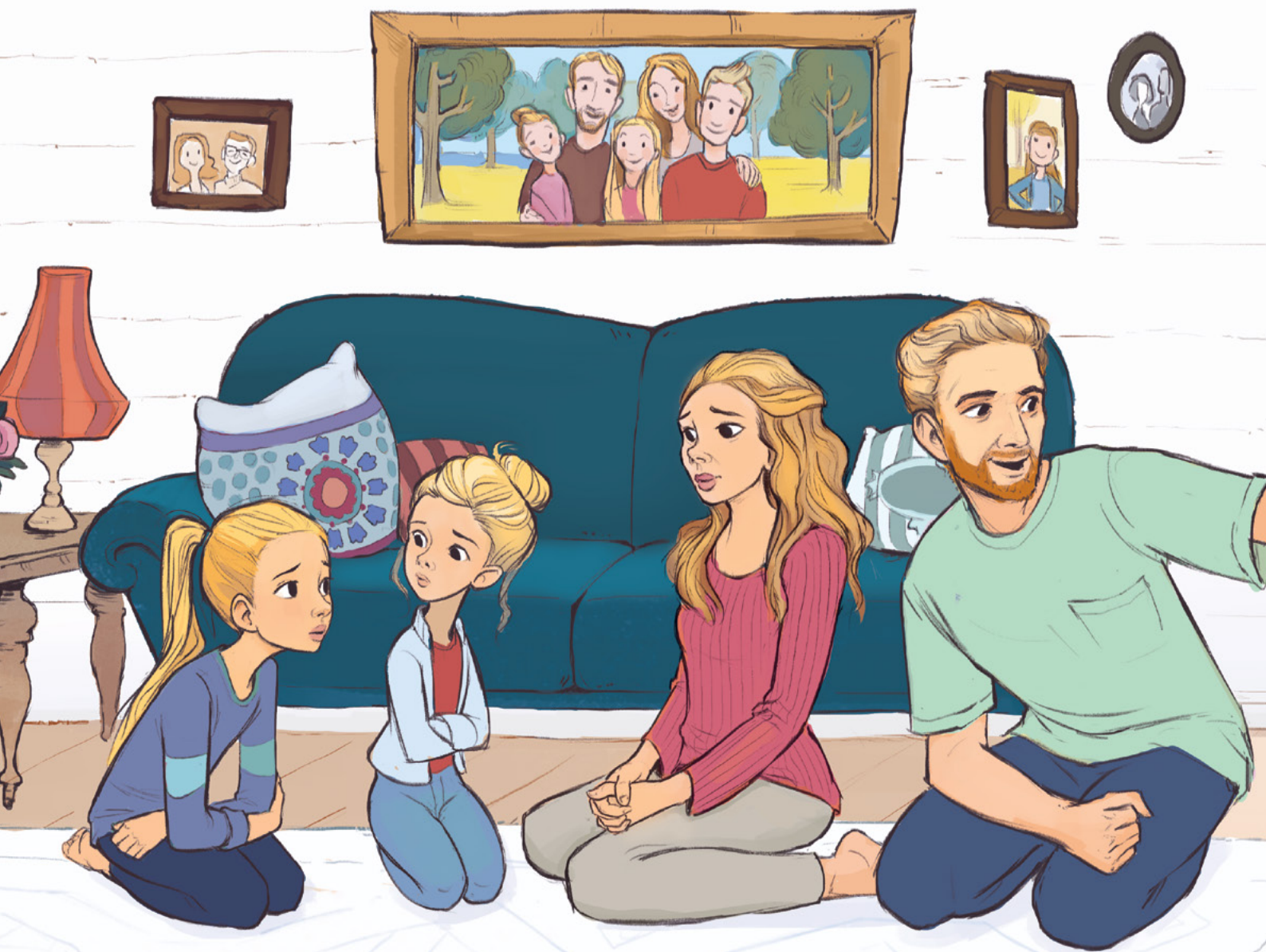
Min-Jun looked at the rain gauge. It kept rising with each raindrop. He thought of how hard he had worked to get to church and how warm and happy he felt when he was there. He thought about how much he loved the Savior and how much the Savior loved him.

Min-Jun hugged Grandfather, and together they walked into church. ■

The author lives in Colorado, USA.



Don't Forget to Pray for Erik



By Julie Cornelius-Huang

Based on a true story

"Ev'ry soul is free to choose his life and what he'll be"
(Hymns, no. 240).

Kari's family knelt by the couch for family prayer. Everyone reverently folded their arms. Papa asked Kari's little sister, Liv, to say the prayer.

"Don't forget to thank Heavenly Father for our *many* blessings," Papa reminded her.

"And don't forget to pray for Erik," Mama added. Mama always reminded them to pray for Erik.

Erik was Kari's older brother. Before he left for university, he and Kari were best friends. She really missed all the fun things they used to do together.



Then a few months ago, Erik told Mama and Papa that he didn't want to be a member of the Church anymore. Kari and her family were surprised and sad. They started praying for Erik every night. Sometimes they prayed that he would feel the Holy Ghost and want to go back to church. Papa prayed that Erik's mind would be clear to make good choices. Mama often prayed that somebody he trusted could help him find the right path. After all of their prayers, Kari couldn't help feeling a little angry. Why hadn't Heavenly Father brought Erik back to church?

Finally, just as Liv had opened her mouth to pray, Kari couldn't hold it in anymore. "Why hasn't Heavenly Father answered our prayers?" she blurted out. Everyone looked at Kari in surprise, but she was too upset to care. For a minute nobody said anything.

"Kari," Papa said, "when you got home from school today, did you put your backpack away?"

"Huh?" Kari asked, confused. What did her backpack have to do with anything? She glanced at the front door and saw her backpack thrown against the wall instead of hung up beside Liv's. "No . . . sorry."

"Didn't Mama remind you to hang it up?"

"Yes," Kari answered. She looked down at her knees.

"Doesn't Mama often remind you to hang up your backpack?"

"Yes," Kari muttered. She still didn't know what this had to do with anything. Wasn't Papa taking her question seriously?



"I know that when we pray for Erik, Heavenly Father *does* answer our prayers—every time. The problem is that Erik may not be listening right now. Erik gets to choose whether he listens to the Holy Ghost, just like you choose whether to listen to Mama about your backpack. But do you think that you will *always* ignore Mama when she asks you to hang up your backpack?"

"No, I guess not," Kari said.

"Someday she'll listen!" Mama said, winking at Kari. Kari smiled.

"So maybe someday Erik will listen too," Kari added.

"Absolutely," Mama said. "Listening to the Holy Ghost is a skill you have to develop. Maybe Erik hasn't learned that skill yet." Kari began to feel a little better.

They all bowed their heads while Liv said the prayer. She prayed that Erik would learn to listen to the Holy Ghost. While Liv was praying, Kari felt peaceful and warm. She knew that Heavenly Father was hearing

their prayers. As Liv listed some of the ways their family had been blessed,

Kari thought of another blessing to add to the list—she understood more about prayer now!

As the prayer ended, Kari knew that Heavenly Father hadn't forgotten Erik. She also knew that He would never forget her. ■

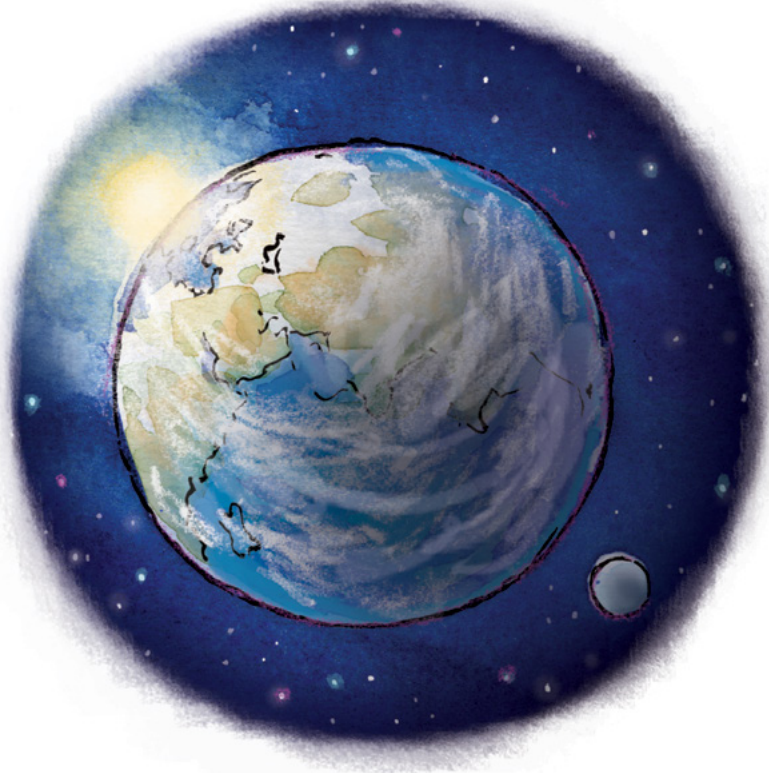
The author lives in Nevada, USA.

WHAT IS AGENCY?

Agency is a gift Heavenly Father has given to everyone. It is the gift to choose what we will do. Heavenly Father helps us, but He doesn't force us to do things. Instead, He lets us choose for ourselves.

Jesus Loves Me

By Kim Webb Reid

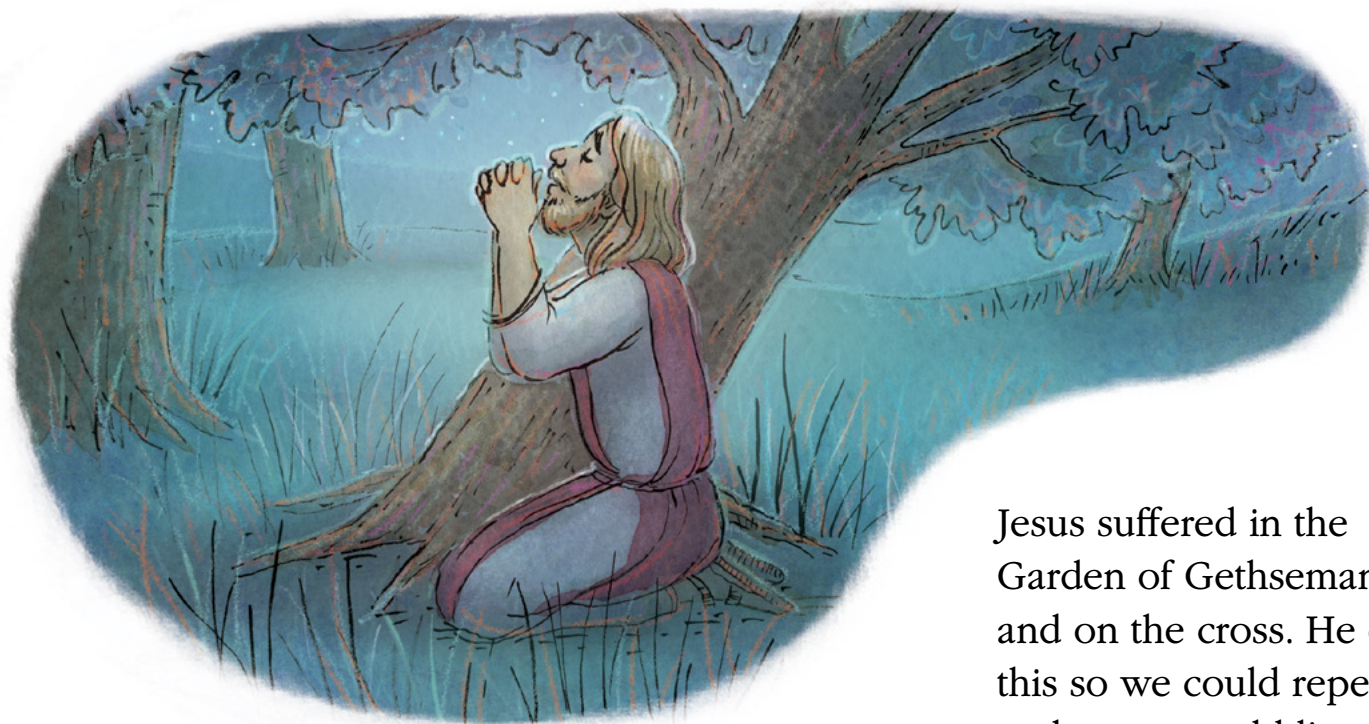
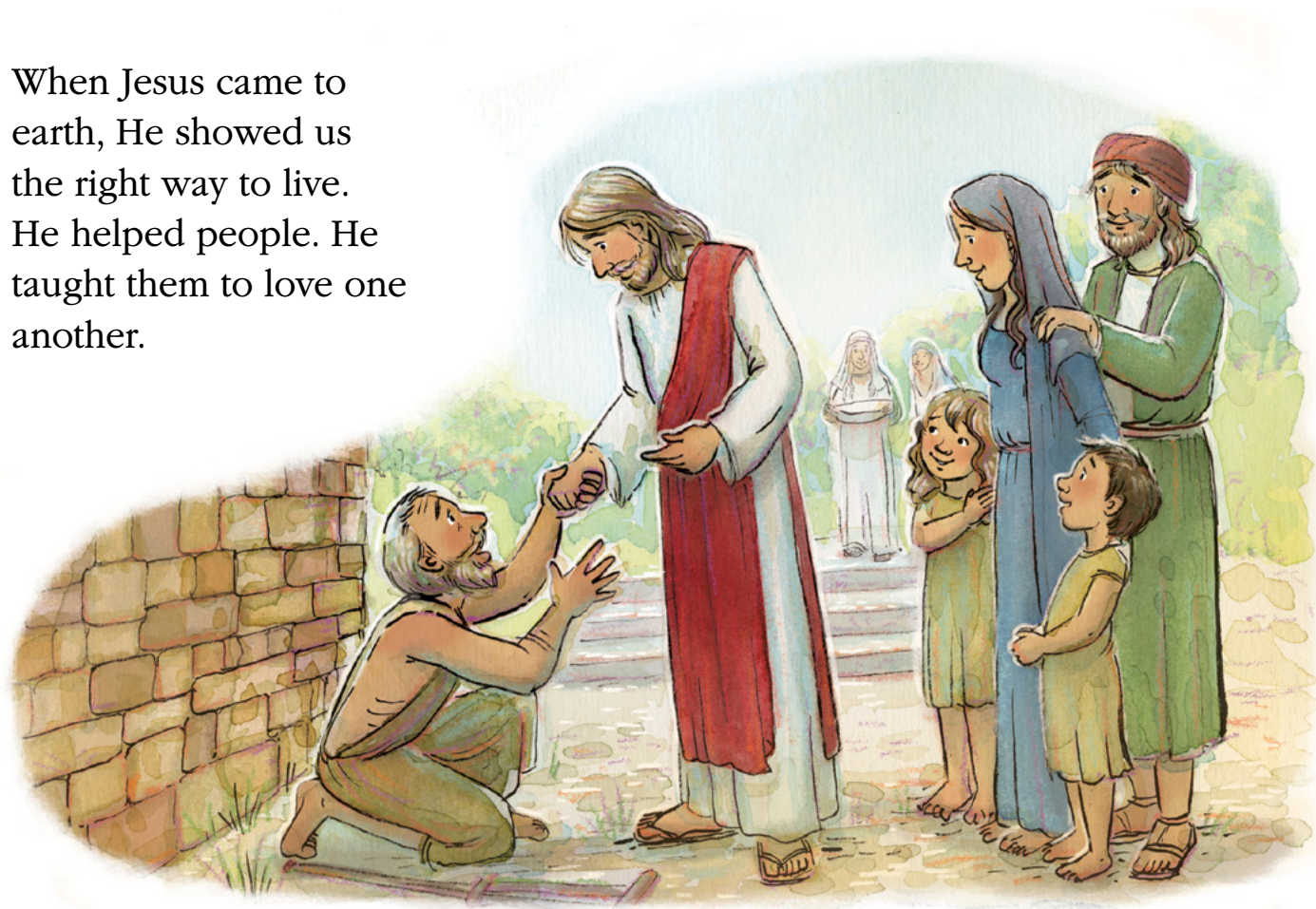


Before the earth was made, we all lived in heaven with our heavenly parents and our older Brother, Jesus. We were happy, and we loved each other very much.

One day Heavenly Father told us He would make an earth for us to live on. He knew we would sometimes not keep His commandments while we were on earth. We would need a Savior to help us return home to Him. Heavenly Father chose Jesus to be our Savior.



When Jesus came to earth, He showed us the right way to live. He helped people. He taught them to love one another.



Jesus suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross. He did this so we could repent and so we could live again after we die.



When I learn about Jesus, I feel His love for me. ■

I Am a Child of Heavenly Parents

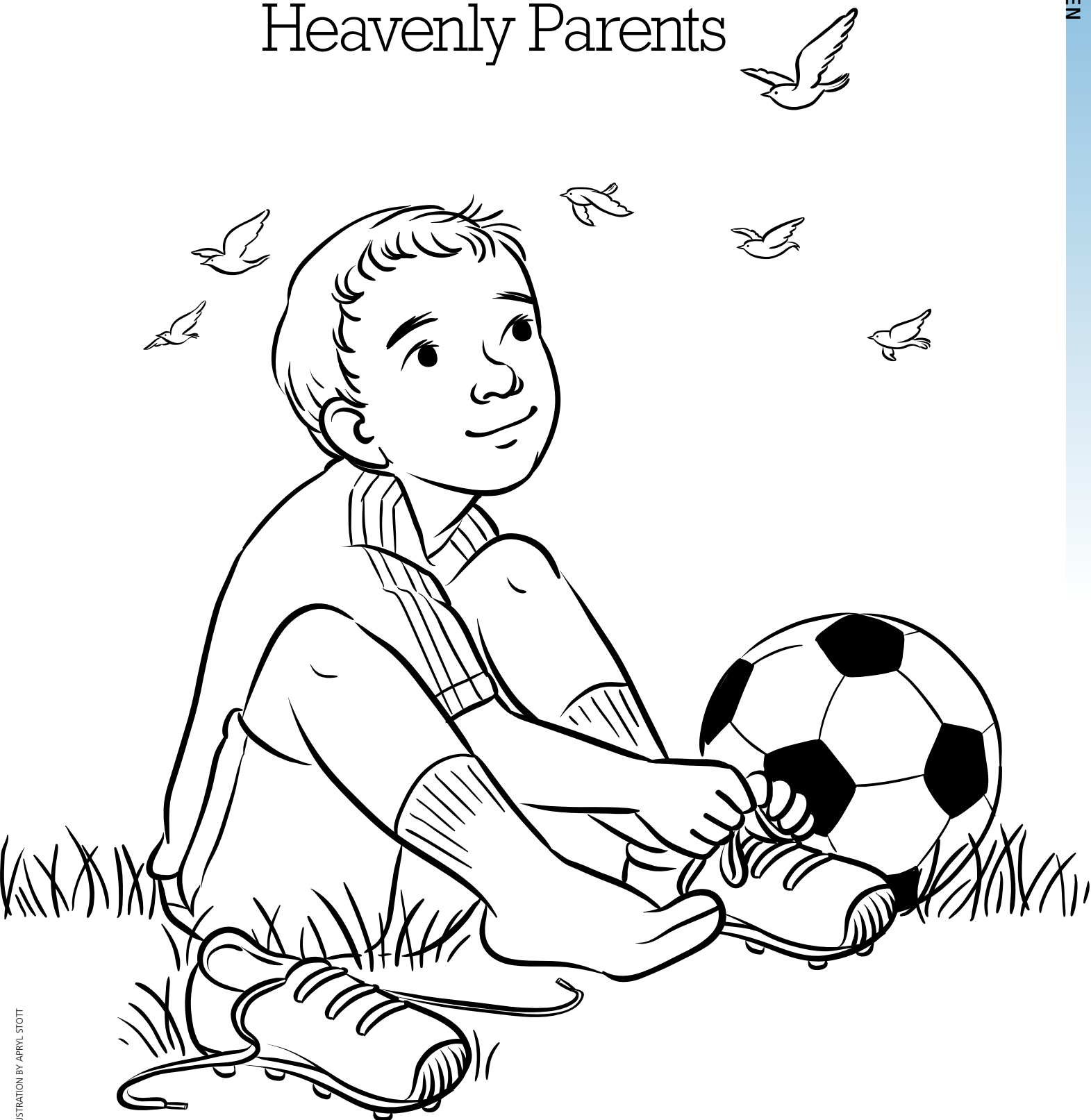


ILLUSTRATION BY APRYL STOTT



By President Hugh B. Brown (1883–1975)

First Counselor in the First Presidency

THE CASE FOR A LIVING PROPHET

In 1939, before the outbreak of World War II, Brother Brown was invited by a member of England's House of Commons to present a legal argument for Brother Brown's claim that Joseph Smith was a prophet. In an address given at Brigham Young University on October 4, 1955, titled "The Profile of a Prophet," President Brown described their conversation (see speeches.byu.edu).

I began . . . , "You say that my belief that God spoke to a man in this age is fantastic and absurd?"

"To me it is."

"Do you believe that God ever did speak to anyone?"

"Certainly, all through the Bible we have evidence of that."

"Did He speak to Adam?"

"Yes."

"To Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jacob, Joseph, and on through the prophets?"

"I believe He spoke to each of them."

"Do you believe that contact between God and man ceased when Jesus appeared on the earth?"

"No, such communication reached its climax, its apex, at that time."

"Do you believe, sir, that after Jesus was resurrected, a certain



lawyer—who was also a tentmaker by the name of Saul of Tarsus—when on his way to Damascus talked with Jesus of Nazareth, who had been crucified, resurrected, and had ascended into heaven?"

"I do."

"Whose voice did Saul hear?"

"It was the voice of Jesus Christ, for He so introduced Himself."

"Then, I am submitting to you in all seriousness that it was standard procedure in Bible times for God to talk to man."

"I think I will admit that, but it stopped shortly after the first century of the Christian era."

"Why do you think it stopped?"

"I can't say."

"You think that God hasn't spoken since then?"

"I am sure He hasn't."

"There must be a reason. Can you give me a reason?"

"I do not know."

"May I suggest some possible reasons? Perhaps God does not speak to man anymore because He cannot. He has lost the power."

He said, "Of course that would be blasphemous."

"Well, then, if you don't accept that, perhaps He doesn't speak to men because He doesn't love us anymore and He is no longer interested in the affairs of men."

"No," he said, "God loves all men, and He is no respecter of persons."

"Well, then, if He could speak, and if He loves us, then the only other possible answer, as I see it, is that we don't need Him. We have made such rapid strides in science and we are so well educated that we don't need God anymore."

And then he said—and his voice trembled as he thought of impending war—"Mr. Brown, there never was a time in the history of the world when the voice of God was needed as it is needed now. Perhaps you can tell me why He doesn't speak."

My answer was: "He *does* speak, He has spoken; but men need faith to hear Him." ■



**THE FIRST VISION, BY JORGE
COCCO SANTANGELO**

"When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!" (Joseph Smith—History 1:17).

Also in This Issue

FOR YOUNG ADULTS



p. 44

PROPHETIC PRINCIPLES OF *FAITHFULNESS*

What decisions do you need to make now
in order to remain faithful in the future?
Consider these 10 principles.

FOR YOUTH

2017 MUTUAL THEME

Want to draw closer to
Heavenly Father? Study this
year's Mutual theme about
prayer.



p. 50

FOR CHILDREN

The Restoration

Try this activity for a fun way to get
into the Doctrine and Covenants.

p. 66

