

YOUR MISSION IN LIFE IS **NOW**

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Three principles can help us step into the future with greater confidence, energy, and faith.

In my young adult years, I spent a lot of time wondering about my future. Mission, marriage, education, career—all of these were open questions, and I didn't have many answers. I was willing to fulfill whatever mission the Lord had in mind for me, if I could only find out what it was.

My patriarchal blessing gave me the big picture of my life's purpose. But in some ways I felt like I was trying to find my way to the grocery store using a map of the solar system. What if I made a wrong turn somewhere? Would I still be able to find and fulfill the mission the Lord had for me?

Since then, I have discovered three principles that have helped me step into the unknown with greater confidence, energy, and faith.

1. For a Little Season

The first principle has to do with the preciousness of the present.

Starting in 1831, many of the early Saints spent about seven years in Kirtland, Ohio. They had left behind

homes, businesses, and farms in New York and Pennsylvania to venture to an unfamiliar place. And the Lord told them that this place would be only temporary:

“And I consecrate unto them this land for a little season, until I, the Lord, shall provide for them otherwise, and command them to go hence;

“And the hour and the day is not given unto them, wherefore let them act upon this land as for years, and this shall turn unto them for their good” (D&C 51:16–17).

I like to picture those early Saints hearing the Lord's instructions and getting right to work. They plowed fields they didn't know they would harvest, planted trees whose fruit they might never eat, and built a beautiful temple they would ultimately have to leave. I picture them living busy, productive lives, not peering endlessly into the unknown, wondering where they would go next and when. They acted “as for years,” trusting that their work would not be in vain.

By the time they left Ohio in 1838,



The early Saints in Kirtland acted “as for years,” trusting that their work would not be in vain. As you too trust in the Lord and act “as for years,” you can make the most of every stage of your life.

the Saints had helped lay a strong foundation for the Church’s future growth. Consider what transpired during that precious and productive period:

- The Prophet Joseph Smith organized the School of the Prophets, finished his inspired translation of the Bible, and received many important revelations.
- The First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and the Seventy were organized.
- The Kirtland Temple was built and dedicated. There Joseph Smith and

Oliver Cowdery saw Jesus Christ and received priesthood keys from Moses, Elias, and Elijah.

- The first missionaries were sent to England.

My young adult years were an extremely valuable “little season” given to me by the Lord. During our young adult years, physical and mental energy are at their peak. We can make the most of them by determining to trust in the Lord and act “as for years.” Then these years can become a consecrated period of extraordinary productivity, growth, learning, and service.

2. A Mission Every Day

A second useful principle came from a simple realization. My mission in life was not waiting for me in the vague and distant future. It was daily and ongoing.

President Brigham Young (1801–77) explained: “There is neither man nor woman in this Church who is not on a mission. That mission will last as long as they live.”¹ In other words, my mission in life had already started. I didn’t so much need to find it as to recognize it.

I found one way to recognize it by understanding three elements that were already part of my life:

- A unique set of personal gifts.
- A unique set of personal challenges.
- Specific needs in the world that the Lord wants me to respond to.

Simply put, we fulfill our mission whenever these three elements intersect and we choose to act. Consider how this worked in the life of Joseph in the Old Testament (see Genesis 37–47).

Joseph had many gifts. He was raised in a family that had a knowledge of God, and he was an heir to the Abrahamic covenant. He had the spiritual gift of interpreting dreams.

He also had many challenges. It seems to me that some of Joseph’s challenges included a father who showed favoritism, jealous brothers, and his own lack of tact in dealing with them. In his young life he was sold into slavery in a foreign land, falsely accused of immoral behavior, and cast into prison.

But Joseph was also willing to act, using both his gifts and his challenges to respond to specific needs in his world. On several occasions, including in prison, he chose to use his spiritual gift to interpret people's dreams. This choice, in turn, opened up an opportunity to work for the pharaoh, storing food for the Egyptian people. Because he was faithful and diligent in this assignment, Joseph was able to perform a life-saving mission, rescuing many, including his own family, from starvation.

Joseph's gifts and his challenges combined to put him in a unique position to respond when famine came to the land. Because Joseph was who he was and where he was and because he chose to act faithfully and obediently, he fulfilled a unique mission in serving the Lord, the people of Egypt, and his own family.

But these three elements don't intersect just in the lives of people we read about in the pages of scripture. They intersect every day in each of our lives.

A young adult woman had a gift for writing and some personal experience with depression. When her teenage sister was dealing with a difficult situation at school, she was able to recognize that her sister was slipping into despondency. Heeding the Spirit's promptings, she wrote her sister a series of beautiful notes, expressing her love and confidence, one for each day of an especially trying two-week period. In that small



Because of his gifts, his challenges, and his faithfulness, Joseph of Egypt could fulfill a unique mission in serving the Lord and others. These same three elements intersect every day in each of our lives.

choice to meet her sister's need, this young woman was living her mission.

When this choice to heed the Spirit and to act continues day after day, week after week, and year after year, it creates a larger pattern that we will later come to recognize as the mission the Lord had for us to fulfill.

3. Be Still and Know

Years beyond my 20s now, I can finally recognize that my life has unfolded in the very way described in my patriarchal blessing many years ago. That certainly wasn't because I knew exactly what I was doing and where the future would take me. I most definitely didn't.

My life had some twists and turns and disappointments that made me wonder if it was going off track. But

as it turns out, I didn't need to worry. The Lord always knew where I was and where He wanted me to go. I kept trying my best to follow His commandments, serve Him, and listen to the Spirit. Even though I often couldn't discern it at the time, I now recognize that His hand was always guiding my life.

The young adult years are filled with crucial decisions and some inherent uncertainty and stress. But greater confidence comes when we learn to rely on the Lord's ability to bring about His purposes for our life—day by day. Then we are better able to “be still, and know that [He is] God” (Psalm 46:10). And in so doing, we experience peace. ■

NOTE

1. Brigham Young, “Remarks,” *Deseret News*, July 3, 1867, 201.