

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • JUNE 2014

# Liahona



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*“The father has the authority and responsibility to teach his children and to bless and to provide for them the ordinances of the gospel and every other priesthood protection necessary. He is to demonstrate love and fidelity and honor to the mother so that their children can see that love.”*

President Boyd K. Packer,  
President of the Quorum of  
the Twelve Apostles, “These  
Things I Know,” *Ensign* or  
*Liahona*, May 2013, 7.



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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 ideas.*



**“Priesthood Power—Available to All,”** page 18: Before family home evening, read the four questions Sister Burton asks in this article. Bring a small lamp to family home evening (make sure it is unplugged). Have different family members try turning it on. Liken the power needed to operate the lamp to priesthood power. Plug in and turn on the lamp and discuss how we can all benefit from the light of the lamp, or the power of the priesthood. Have family members consider ways they have been blessed by the priesthood. You could begin memorizing the scriptures in Doctrine and Covenants 84 that Sister Burton asks us to memorize.

**“Will’s Great Idea,”** page 78: You could begin by singing “I Love to See the Temple” (*Children’s Songbook*, 95) or another song about temples. Read this article as a family and discuss why temples are important. Have each member of the family draw a picture of the temple, perhaps the one closest to where you live. Consider hanging up the drawings and the picture on page 79 in your home where they will be seen every day. Talk about how seeing a picture of the temple can remind us to make decisions that will keep us worthy to enter the temple.

## IN YOUR LANGUAGE

The *Liahona* and other Church materials are available in many languages at [languages.lds.org](http://languages.lds.org).

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By President  
Thomas S. Monson

# HASTENING THE WORK

**D**o you realize that the restored Church was 98 years old before it had 100 stakes? But less than 30 years later, the Church had organized its second 100 stakes. And only eight years after that the Church had more than 300 stakes. Today we are more than 3,000 stakes strong.

Why is this growth taking place at an accelerated rate? Is it because we are better known? Is it because we have lovely chapels?

These things are important, but the reason the Church is growing today is that the Lord indicated it would. In the Doctrine and Covenants, He said, “Behold, I will hasten my work in its time.”<sup>1</sup>

We, as spirit children of our Heavenly Father, were sent to earth at this time that we might participate in hastening this great work.

The Lord has never, to my knowledge, indicated that His work is confined to mortality. Rather, His work embraces eternity. I believe He is hastening His work in the spirit world. I also believe that the Lord, through His servants there, is preparing many spirits to receive the gospel. Our job is to search out our dead and then go to the temple and perform the sacred ordinances that will bring to those beyond the veil the same opportunities we have.

Every good Latter-day Saint in the spirit world is busy, said President Brigham Young (1801–77). “What are they

doing there? They are preaching, preaching all the time, and preparing the way for us to hasten our work in building temples here and elsewhere.”<sup>2</sup>

Now, family history work is not easy. For those of you from Scandinavia, I share your frustration. For example, on my Swedish line, my grandfather’s name was Nels Monson; his father’s name was not Monson at all but Mons Okeson. Mons’s father’s name was Oke Pederson, and his father’s name was Peter Monson—right back to Monson again.

The Lord expects you and me to perform our family history work well. I think the first thing we must do if we are to perform our work well is to have the Spirit of our Heavenly Father with us. When we live as righteously as we know how to live, He will open the way for the fulfillment of the blessings that so earnestly and diligently we seek.

We are going to make mistakes, but none of us can become an expert in family history work without first being a novice. Therefore, we must plunge into this work, and we must prepare for some uphill climbing. This is not an easy task, but the Lord has placed it upon you, and He has placed it upon me.

As you pursue family history work, you are going to find yourself running into roadblocks, and you are going to say to yourself, “There is nothing else I can do.” When you



come to that point, get down on your knees and ask the Lord to open the way, and He will open the way for you. I testify that this is true.

Heavenly Father loves His children in the spirit world just as much as He loves you and me. Regarding the work of saving our dead, the Prophet Joseph Smith said, “And now as the great purposes of God are hastening to their accomplishment, and the things spoken of in the Prophets are fulfilling, as the kingdom of God is established on the earth, and the ancient order of things restored, the

#### TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

**T**hink of a favorite story from your family history and share this story with those you visit. You may want to use the questions in the children’s section of the First Presidency Message (page 6) to encourage those you visit to share their stories. Consider reading Doctrine and Covenants 128:15 and discussing the importance of performing temple ordinances on behalf of our ancestors.

Lord has manifested to us this duty and privilege.”<sup>3</sup>

Regarding our ancestors who have passed on without a knowledge of the gospel, President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) declared, “Through our efforts in their behalf their chains of bondage will fall from them, and the darkness surrounding them will clear away, that light may shine upon them and they shall hear in the spirit world of the work that has been done for them by their children here, and will rejoice with you in your performance of these duties.”<sup>4</sup>

There are millions upon millions of spirit children of our Heavenly Father who never heard the name of Christ before dying and going into the spirit world. But now they have been taught the gospel and are awaiting the day when you and I will do the research necessary to clear the way so that we can go into the house of the Lord and perform for them the work that they themselves cannot perform.

My brothers and sisters, I testify that the Lord will bless us as we accept and respond to this challenge. ■

#### NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 88:73.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 280.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 409.
4. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 247.

## Could I Enjoy Indexing?

By Emma Abril Toledo Cisneros

I participated in our stake goal to index 50,000 names. At first it was hard. On several occasions the batch I downloaded had difficult handwriting, and sometimes I wanted to return it and download a different one. But then I realized that if everyone thought like that, those batches would be left to the end. I could imagine many lines of people waiting in the spirit world, and I decided to continue trying to read those names and transcribe them without making a mistake.

I learned to have love for those people. I understood

that they truly did need help, and we also needed help from them. I came to better understand that Heavenly Father's perfect plan takes everyone into consideration. When we follow the inspiration and instructions of His chosen leaders, we will witness His mercy and infinite love.

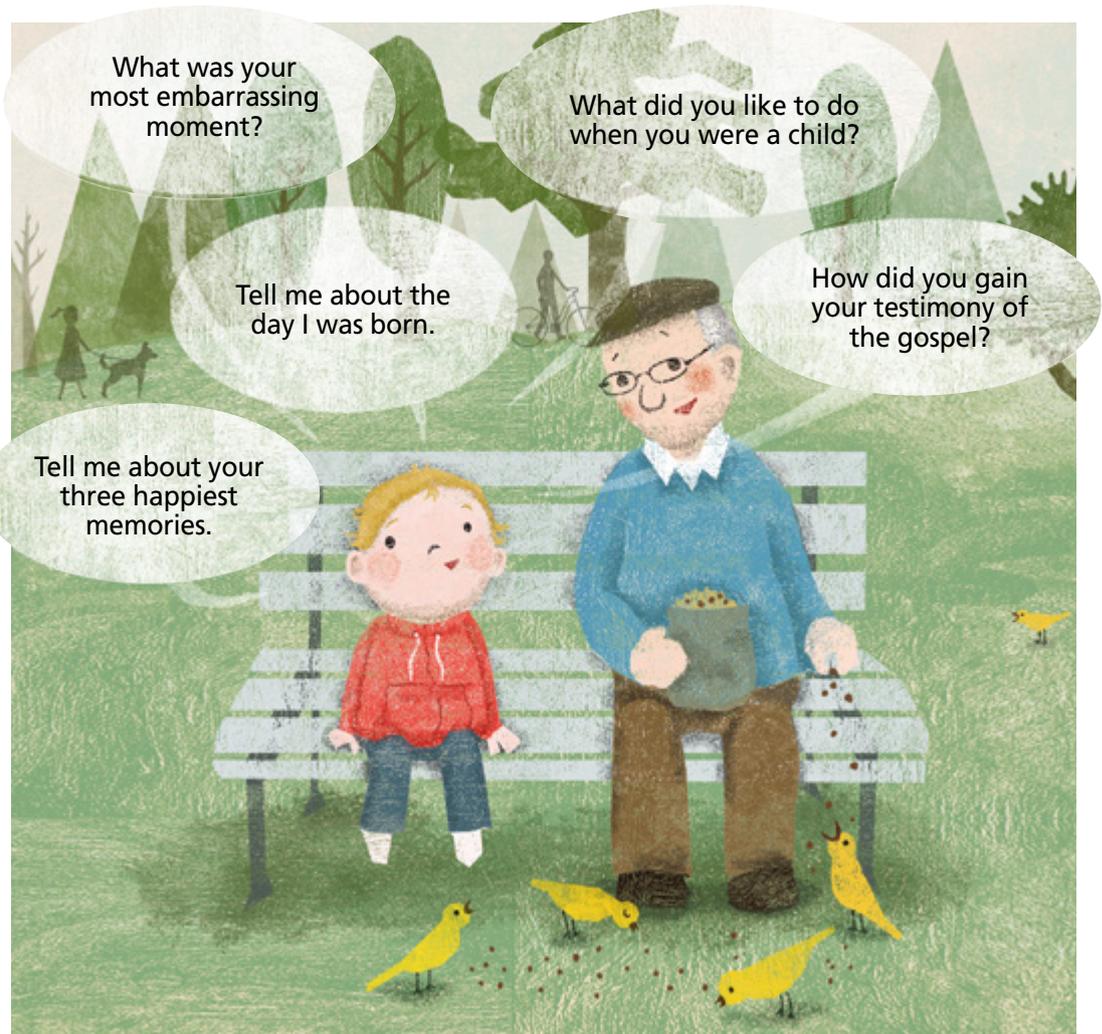
Indexing has been a lovely experience for me. I learned to value and love many things about family history. I also obtained gifts of great value from our Lord by obeying something as simple as participating in indexing.

*The author lives in Veracruz, Mexico.*

## CHILDREN

### Know Your Stories

Your parents and grandparents have had many adventures—some you don't even know about! Some of their stories will make you laugh, and they can help you have faith in Heavenly Father. But even adults feel shy sometimes. Use these questions to help them remember some of their favorite stories and write down or draw pictures of their answers.



## VISITING TEACHING MESSAGE

Prayerfully study this material and seek to know what to share. How will understanding the life and mission of the Savior increase your faith in Him and bless those you watch over through visiting teaching? For more information, go to [reliefsociety.lds.org](http://reliefsociety.lds.org).

# The Divine Mission of Jesus Christ: Minister

This is part of a series of Visiting Teaching Messages featuring aspects of the mission of the Savior.

As we minister to others, we become true followers of Jesus Christ, who set the example for us. President Thomas S. Monson said: “We are surrounded by those in need. . . . We are the Lord’s hands here upon the earth, with the mandate to serve and to lift His children.”<sup>1</sup>

Linda K. Burton, Relief Society general president, taught: “With practice, each of us can become more like the Savior as we serve God’s children. To help us better [minister to] one another, I would like to suggest four words to remember: ‘First observe, then serve.’ . . . As we do so, we are keeping covenants, and our service, like President Monson’s, will be evidence of our discipleship.”<sup>2</sup>

We can pray each morning to recognize opportunities to serve others. “Heavenly Father will guide you, and angels will assist you,” said David L. Beck, Young Men general president. “You will be given power to bless lives and rescue souls.”<sup>3</sup>



### From the Scriptures

Matthew 20:25–28; 1 Nephi 11:27–28; 3 Nephi 28:18

### NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “What Have I Done for Someone Today?” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 86.
2. Linda K. Burton, “First Observe, Then Serve,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 78, 80.
3. David L. Beck, “Your Sacred Duty to Minister,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 56.
4. Lucy Meserve Smith, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 36–37.
5. George Albert Smith, in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 77.

### Consider This

1. How can prayer lead us to be instruments in the Lord’s hands?
2. How can ministering to others help us keep our covenants?

## Faith, Family, Relief



### From Our History

At the October 1856 general conference, President Brigham Young (1801–77) announced that handcart pioneers were still crossing the plains and that everyone was to help gather supplies for them immediately. Lucy Meserve Smith wrote that women “stripped off their petticoats [large underskirts], stockings, and every thing they could spare, right there in the Tabernacle, and piled [them] into the wagons.”

As the rescued pioneers began to arrive in Salt Lake City, Lucy wrote, “I never took more . . . pleasure in any labor I ever performed in my life, such a unanimity of feeling prevailed. I only had to go into a store and make my wants known; if it was cloth, it was measured off without charge.”<sup>4</sup>

President George Albert Smith (1870–1951) said of ministering to others: “Our eternal happiness will be in proportion to the way that we devote ourselves to helping others.”<sup>5</sup>

# AMAZED AT THE LOVE JESUS OFFERS ME

By Cesar Lima Escalante

One Sunday before sacrament meeting, the bishop approached me and asked, “Can you help us bless the sacrament?” I said of course I would.

I went and got my hymnbook and then washed my hands before taking my place at the sacrament table. I opened the hymnbook, and the first hymn I saw was “I Stand All Amazed” (*Hymns*, no. 193). The meeting hadn’t started yet, so I began to read the first line: “I stand all amazed at the love Jesus offers me.” Immediately a feeling of profound love filled my heart.

The previous night I had been reading in the Bible about the end of the life of Jesus Christ—the parts involving the Last Supper, the Garden of Gethsemane, and His death and Resurrection. I imagined Jesus being tortured, beaten, and ridiculed by the executioners. I also pictured Jesus carrying out His atoning sacrifice in the Garden of Gethsemane while His disciples slept.

I realized that I was about to bless the bread and water that represent His body and blood. The sacrament

allows us to renew the covenant we made when we were baptized, which is to always remember Him, to keep His commandments, and to take His name upon us.

When sacrament meeting started, all of these thoughts were in my head. I felt profoundly that Jesus suffered in such a painful and incredible way that it is incomprehensible to us. The thought then came to me that He

endured the suffering because of His love for us—for me.

I felt so loved by the Lord that I couldn’t control my tears. I felt like I wasn’t worthy of what the Savior did for me. But I also felt that His love for me is perfect. A friend will lay down his life for his friends (see John 15:13). When the sacrament hymn started, I stood with another brother to begin the ordinance.



## A SPIRITUALLY CLEANSING EXPERIENCE

“For the sacrament to be a spiritually cleansing experience each week, we need to prepare ourselves *before* coming to sacrament meeting. We do this by deliberately leaving behind our daily work and recreation and letting go of worldly thoughts and concerns. As we do, we make room in our minds and hearts for the Holy Ghost. . . .

“As we sing the sacrament hymn, participate in the sacrament prayers, and partake of the emblems of His flesh and blood, we prayerfully seek forgiveness for our sins and shortcomings. We think about the promises we made and kept during the previous week and make specific personal commitments to follow the Savior during the coming week.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Coming to Ourselves: The Sacrament, the Temple, and Sacrifice in Service,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2012, 34.



We folded back the beautiful white tablecloth that covered the bread. As I held the bread, I knew I had the responsibility of breaking it as part of the ordinance, but I hesitated. The bread represents the body of Christ. I thought of the soldiers hurting the Lord, and I didn't want to break the bread. When I broke the first piece, I thought of the painful and humiliating way Jesus was treated prior to His death—the crown of thorns, the whipping, the suffering. The tears continued to roll down my cheeks as I prepared the bread.

Then the thought came to me that these painful and humiliating events were necessary. They were part of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and He made the sacrifice because of His love for me and each one of us.

I began to feel a great peace and joy. I broke every piece of bread carefully and slowly, knowing that what I held in my hands was about to be blessed and sanctified for a special purpose and represented something

very precious, beautiful, and extraordinary. I felt the great responsibility of doing this ordinance so that those in the meeting could renew a covenant with the Lord and receive the blessings of the Atonement.

When we finished, I saw the trays filled with the broken bread. The sight was marvelous and sublime. My companion said the prayer. Never before had I so clearly understood the phrase “that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son” (D&C 20:77).

When I partook of the bread, I felt my Savior's love once again. I felt protected, humbled, and determined to do what's right. I wanted to examine my life and repent of all I had done wrong.

I'm thankful to Jesus Christ for His love for me. I'm thankful that we can receive the blessings of His Atonement: to be forgiven of our sins and have the chance to return to our Heavenly Father. ■

*The author lives in Mexico City, Mexico.*

## QUESTIONS TO PONDER

What can I do during the week to prepare better to take the sacrament? What do I think about during the sacrament? Do I feel forgiveness and receive inspiration as I take the sacrament?

# THE CHALLENGES ARE THE BLESSINGS

By Rachel Harrison

*What I thought were challenges of temple marriage turned out, instead, to be wonderful blessings.*

I was talking with a good friend about the blessings of being married in the temple. I jokingly said I could think of only a few blessings, but I could think of plenty of challenges. “Well,” she said, “maybe those *are* the blessings!”

I knew she was right.

Being sealed in the temple has blessed me with an eternal perspective on marriage and family. My temple covenants have been the “glasses” by which my husband and

I have always viewed the options before us, even as a young, newly married couple.

## **An Eternal Perspective**

We started our marriage with an eternal perspective, and we felt that meant we should not postpone or limit the children waiting to come to our family. My husband continued his tertiary (undergraduate) studies as our family grew. By the time he entered the workforce full-time, we had five children. I continued my studies part-time so I could care for our children at home. I look back fondly on those early years. They were awesome! We were in a little apartment with two children under 15 months, living on our meager student allowance and eating a lot of mince (hamburger).

I think of those early years as our pioneer years—we were crossing the “plains” of tertiary study, starting our family, and living on limited financial resources. I feel akin—but only to a small degree—to what one of the survivors of the Martin handcart company said of their journey: “Everyone of us came through with the absolute knowledge that God lives for we

became acquainted with him in our extremities.”<sup>1</sup>

In the eyes of the world, what we chose to do in those initial years of marriage did not make sense. Postponing my graduation to have children, living on one income, and sacrificing some luxuries may have seemed foolish. But the Lord told Isaiah:

“My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8–9).

Sacrificing worldly goals to follow Heavenly Father’s will for our family has been a humbling blessing in our lives.

## **Facing Challenges Together**

We read in the Doctrine and Covenants that those who “are willing to observe their covenants by sacrifice . . . are accepted of [the Lord].

“For I, the Lord, will cause them to bring forth as a very fruitful tree which is planted in a goodly land, by a pure stream, that yieldeth much precious fruit” (D&C 97:8–9). Our five children are our precious fruit. They are

**M**arriage brings some of life’s most important responsibilities—and some of life’s most joyful moments. We want to hear about the joyful moments you’ve had in your marriage. Share your stories at [liahona.lds.org](http://liahona.lds.org) (click “Submit Your Work”) or by email to [liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org).



undoubtedly our greatest blessings.

As the years have passed, my husband and I have faced many challenges in our married life, and in retrospect I can honestly say I am grateful for them. The Lord blesses us with trials to refine us as individuals and to help us turn to Him and to our companions.

Temple marriage is the supreme covenant of exaltation. When this covenant is kept, it leads to the highest degree in the celestial kingdom, or eternal life, meaning eternal increase (see D&C 131:1–4). Because of this great reward, we should expect a temple marriage to stretch us, to change our very natures.

Elder Bruce C. Hafen, emeritus member of the Seventy, said: “We may start off being married for comfort. But then problems come along. If we

try seriously to solve them, we may not always be comfortable, but we will grow. Then we will end up being married not simply for comfort but for joy.”<sup>2</sup> Solving our problems together has not always been comfortable, but it has indeed brought us joy.

### Hard Work and Joy

Being a mother is the hardest endeavor I have ever undertaken. Before having children, I thought motherhood would be mostly, if not always, joyful—interspersed with a moment or two of hard work. But I have come to understand that it is the other way around. Because of my eternal partnership with my husband, my parenthood and marriage have become a laboratory for becoming like Heavenly Father. The responsibility of parenthood in this life is

analogous to the work and purposes of our Heavenly Father, “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). Being a wife and mother demands heavenly patience, strength, and love. Being a mother is helping me to become more like God in nature, desires, and possibilities.

Being sealed in the temple has blessed me in ways I had not expected. It is a source of strength to me and stability to my children. It is a welding link back to my ancestors and blesses them as I do their temple work. My temple marriage is worth every sacrifice, and I know it brings great blessings. ■

*The author lives in New Zealand.*

### NOTES

1. Francis Webster, in William R. Palmer, “Pioneers of Southern Utah,” *The Instructor*, May 1944, 217–18.
2. Bruce C. Hafen, *Covenant Hearts: Marriage and the Joy of Human Love* (2005), 13.

# SAMUEL

*“The experience of the boy Samuel, as he responded to the Lord’s call, has ever been an inspiration to me.”<sup>1</sup> —President Thomas S. Monson*

**M**y mother, Hannah, was barren and prayed at the temple for a son, vowing to give him to the Lord. God answered her prayers; she gave birth to me. While I was still young, she brought me to the temple to serve Him. There the priest Eli cared for and taught me.<sup>2</sup>

As a child, I heard a voice calling my name one night. Three times I went to Eli, but he had not called me. He said it was the Lord calling me. I followed Eli’s counsel when I heard my name the fourth time and answered, “Speak; for thy servant heareth.”<sup>3</sup> The Lord spoke to me, and as I grew older, He was with me. He called me to be His prophet.

When I grew old, I appointed my sons as judges over Israel. My sons

were unrighteous, so the elders of Israel asked for a king. I warned the people of the dangers of having a king, but they persisted in their pleas. The Lord commanded that I should “hearken unto their voice.”<sup>4</sup>

The Lord sent me Saul—“a choice young man”<sup>5</sup>—and I anointed him as “captain over [the] people Israel.”<sup>6</sup> He became their king. However, when the Lord commanded Saul to destroy the Amalekites and all they had, he disobeyed. He kept the Amalekites’ animals and offered them as sacrifices. I taught Saul that “to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”<sup>7</sup>

Due to Saul’s disobedience, the Lord commanded me to anoint a new king from among the sons of Jesse.

Jesse presented his seven oldest sons to me, but the Lord had not chosen them.<sup>8</sup> The Lord revealed to me that the youngest son, David, should be the king. By countenance or stature, David’s older brothers may have looked more like future kings, but the Lord had chosen this young shepherd boy to lead His people. From this experience I learned that “the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.”<sup>9</sup> ■

## NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “The Priesthood in Action,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 47.
2. See 1 Samuel 1–2.
3. 1 Samuel 3:10.
4. 1 Samuel 8:22.
5. 1 Samuel 9:2.
6. 1 Samuel 9:16.
7. 1 Samuel 15:22.
8. See 1 Samuel 16:10.
9. 1 Samuel 16:7.



# TITHES AND OFFERINGS



By paying tithes and offerings, children can learn that the Lord keeps His promises.

In an article on pages 60–61 of this issue, Elder Anthony D. Perkins of the Seventy talks about how paying tithing before spending his earnings as a youth taught him to distinguish between wants and needs.

Elder Perkins says that when he kept this commandment, “my faith grew stronger and so did my desire to keep [the Lord’s] other commandments.” He practiced a principle taught in *For the Strength of Youth*: “Your attitude is important in paying tithing. . . . Pay it willingly with a thankful heart” ([2011], 38).

## Suggestions for Teaching Youth

- Youth can often learn from the examples of others. See “The Blessings of Tithing” (*Ensign*, Mar. 2013, 60; *Liahona*, Mar. 2013, 26) to read about five individuals who were blessed because they paid tithing. Discuss how tithing has blessed your family. You may also wish

to talk about how tithes and offerings bless all members of the Church.

- Consider reading together the section on tithes and offerings in *For the Strength of Youth* (pages 38–39). You might discuss how fasting and fast offerings are related and how your family pays fast offerings.

## Suggestions for Teaching Children

- Consider using the following demonstration: Place 10 coins on a table. Ask family members how they would feel if you said you would give them nine of the coins and you would keep just one to help build the Lord’s kingdom. Would they be willing to accept such an offer? You could then explain the parallels between this situation and the law of tithing.
- You could use the “For Young Children” section in the August 2011 *Liahona* (pages 70–72), which includes a real-life experience in which a boy learns

## SCRIPTURES ON THIS TOPIC

- Leviticus 27:30, 32
- Deuteronomy 26:12
- Nehemiah 10:38
- Malachi 3:8, 10; see also 3 Nephi 24:8, 10
- Luke 18:12
- Alma 13:15
- Doctrine and Covenants 64:23; 97:10–12; 119:3

that paying tithing is a good choice—even if his contribution is a single coin. You could also complete the related activities with your children. ■

*Previous editions of the Liahona can be found online at [liahona.lds.org](http://liahona.lds.org).*



By Katherine Nelson

**W**hen Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were brought to King Nebuchadnezzar’s court, they were told to eat the king’s meat and drink the king’s wine. But they decided to eat pulse (a food made of grain) and drink water instead. After 10 days, “their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king’s meat. . . . [And] God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams” (Daniel 1:15, 17).

Although we often use this story to illustrate important principles about the Word of Wisdom and the food we *literally* consume, it teaches other principles about what we *figuratively* consume. This includes the media we use for entertainment—anything from fine arts, books, dance, and music to digital and social media. Just as Daniel and his friends made a conscious decision to avoid the lavish, heavy foods that would not have given them the nourishment they needed—and might have distracted them from their training in the king’s court—so we must be discerning in selecting wholesome entertainment (see D&C 25:10).

The following suggestions can help us choose which entertainment is worth our valuable time in this probationary state.



### Avoid Light-Mindedness

We turn to entertainment for relief from daily cares. It can be a time to relax and share laughter and good discussion with family and friends.<sup>1</sup> The refreshment we feel from these activities comes from the influence of the Holy Ghost, whose fruits are “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, [and] temperance” (Galatians 5:22–23). In order to feel refreshed after our recreation, we must choose entertainment that keeps us open to the promptings and healing power of the Holy Ghost.

To avoid losing the Holy Ghost’s companionship and harming our spirits, we are counseled not to “attend, view, or participate in anything that is vulgar, immoral, violent, or pornographic in any way.”<sup>2</sup> But sometimes media that seems void of immoral content can be just as harmful by distracting us from our purpose in life.

While wholesome entertainment can help us feel lighthearted, other forms of entertainment can lead us to become light-minded. In the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord commands us: “Cease from all your light speeches, from all laughter, from all your lustful desires, [and] from

all your pride and light-mindedness” (88:121). Some entertainment distracts us from the purpose of the plan of salvation by occupying our minds with what Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described as idle thoughts and trivial things.<sup>3</sup> Such light-minded entertainment can quickly ensnare us and become “deliberate irreverence that trivializes the sacred and at worst becomes sacrilege and blasphemy.”<sup>4</sup>

# MEDIA WITH MERIT



### Be an Active Agent

Although it can be easier to passively allow the entertainment we listen to, view, and read to enter our hearts and minds unchecked, an essential part of life is to learn how to become agents—to learn “to act for [ourselves] and not to be acted upon” (2 Nephi 2:26). Part of becoming a true agent is being judicious about the entertainment you use.

Rather than thoughtlessly consuming media for entertainment, we must become aware of how much time we’re spending with it and what messages—overt or covert—it is sending. Ryan Holmes, director of Digital Media Group at Brigham Young University, explains that we must make “deliberate use of technology” and carefully consider “all its consequences.”<sup>5</sup> Amy Petersen Jensen, chair of the

department of Theatre and Media Arts at Brigham Young University, says that it's essential to "choose to engage in active media conversations and avoid passive media consumption."<sup>6</sup>



### Spend Time Wisely

Part of being a more active agent is becoming conscious of how much time we spend on entertainment. With so much to choose from, it's easy to get caught up ingesting "whatever comes your way via text, email, data feeds, streams, and notifications."<sup>7</sup> But when we do, we while away the "days of [our] probation" (2 Nephi 9:27) with time-wasting activities that do not help us become stronger, wiser, more charitable representatives of Jesus Christ.

Instead of wasting whole evenings on the latest viral video, hot new show, or status update, we could consciously carve out time to enjoy meaningful entertainment that rejuvenates us. Brother Holmes says, "Make a conscious choice. You decide what, when, and how you are going to interact digitally."<sup>8</sup>



### Choose Media That Edifies

Another important part of carefully selecting our entertainment is being mindful of what messages the media is sending.

Every form of entertainment communicates something, whether its messages are intentional or not. While enjoying a film or a book, for example, ask yourself what messages it communicates to you through its symbols, characters, lyrics, and images. What are its values? What behaviors does it endorse? Most importantly, does it help you think about and reverence Jesus Christ? Does it help you understand His divinity? Does it teach you something about sacrifice? about love? about selflessness? Does it say something about the importance of families or the sanctity of marriage? If you can't glean some gospel-related truth from your entertainment's messages, it's not valuable and not worth your time.

Some might be tempted to say, "It's just entertainment—not school or church. I don't need to be learning something from it." But whether you are conscious of it or not, "whatever you read, listen to, or look at has an effect on you."<sup>9</sup>

When we engage our minds and hearts in evaluating the media we consume, we have moments of reflection. Professor Jensen calls these moments a "conversation": "an interchange—a back and forth or give and take in which we listen and respond. The best conversations that we have often become moments of private repentance, because it is often during conversations that we change our minds, find a new path, or decide to do better. The changes we make to our souls in these moments are usually small, simple, incremental, comforting, and productive."<sup>10</sup>

We seek after "anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy"—even in our leisure time (Articles of Faith 1:13). As representatives of Jesus Christ we must insist "that everything [we] read or [watch] . . . teach something good or build something good in [ourselves] or [our families]." Our engagements with entertainment should be "purposeful, consecrated actions . . . that [help us] obtain and share the vision of our Heavenly Father."<sup>11</sup>

We know that such virtuous, lovely, and praiseworthy entertainment—media with merit—edifies us, prepares us for life's challenges, and strengthens our discipleship. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

#### NOTES

1. See "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129, which lists "wholesome recreational activities" as one of the principles that build a happy family.
2. *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), 11.
3. See Dallin H. Oaks, "Powerful Ideas," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 27.
4. Brad Wilcox, "If We Can Laugh at It, We Can Live with It," *Ensign*, Mar. 2000, 29.
5. Ryan Holmes, "The Truth of All Things" (Brigham Young University devotional, May 7, 2013), [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).
6. Amy Petersen Jensen, "Some Hopeful Words on Media and Agency" (Brigham Young University devotional, Mar. 20, 2012), [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).
7. Holmes, "The Truth of All Things," [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).
8. Holmes, "The Truth of All Things," [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).
9. *For the Strength of Youth*, 11.
10. Jensen, "Media and Agency," [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).
11. Jensen, "Media and Agency," [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).

# Parenting, Unplugged

By Jan Pinborough  
Church Magazines

The Savior spoke four simple words: “Behold your little ones.” The Nephites turned their eyes toward their children. And what followed is among the most sacred events in all of scripture. (See 3 Nephi 17:23–24.)

I first experienced “beholding” when my first daughter was a newborn. Her small, insistent cry had awakened me at about midnight, and I was getting ready to feed her when it happened. She opened her eyes wide and looked for several long, precious moments straight into my eyes. As she and I truly “beheld” each other for the first time, I sensed something about the eternal bond we would share.

The study of neurobiology has confirmed the vital importance of parent-child “beholding.” According to neurobiologist Dr. Allan N. Schore, the non-verbal communication of “mutual gaze” is essential to the proper development of the infant brain.<sup>1</sup> In later years, this connection remains crucial to the development of the minds, hearts, and spirits of our growing children.

“Beholding” is not giving a casual, distracted glance. It is the act of attending to another with the heart and mind. It is giving the kind of focused attention that says, “I see you. You are important to me.”

For today’s parents, this kind of beholding often requires the discipline to unplug, a conscious choice to turn away from our screens and turn off our digital devices. It may mean resisting the temptation to check our text messages or scroll through social media posts. It may involve thoughtfully establishing personal and family media rules, setting boundaries that will protect the sacred time that we give to one another in our families daily.

By striving to more fully and more frequently behold our little ones, we will nourish our children’s sense of worth, enrich our relationships with one another, and enjoy more of those sacred moments when we see into the hearts of our children. ■

#### NOTE

1. See Relational trauma and the developing right brain: The neurobiology of broken attachment bonds,” in Tessa Baradon, ed., *Relational Trauma in Infancy* (2010), 19–47.



#### DISCONNECT AND LISTEN WITH LOVE

“The answer to our prayer of how to meet our children’s needs may be to more often technologically disconnect. Precious moments of opportunity to interact and converse with our children dissolve when we are occupied with distractions. Why not choose a time each day to disconnect from technology and reconnect with each other? Simply turn everything off. When you do this, your home may seem quiet at first; you may even feel at a loss as to what to do or say. Then, as you give full attention to your children, a conversation will begin, and you can enjoy listening to each other.”

**Rosemary M. Wixom, Primary general president, “The Words We Speak,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2013, 82.**





By Linda K. Burton  
Relief Society  
General President

# PRIESTHOOD POWER



## AVAILABLE TO ALL

*Priesthood authority is conferred by ordination, but priesthood power is available to all. Righteousness is the qualifier for each of us to invite priesthood power into our lives.*

**W**e are privileged to live in this season of Church history when questions are being asked about the priesthood. There is great interest and desire to know and understand more about the authority, power, and blessings associated with the priesthood of God. It is my hope that the doctrine

of the priesthood may “*distil* upon [our souls] as the dews from heaven” (D&C 121:45; emphasis added). I testify that the Lord is hastening His work, and it is imperative for us to understand how the Lord accomplishes His work so that we may receive the power that comes from being aligned with His plan and purposes.

The Lord has always accomplished His work, which is to “bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39), through the power of His priesthood. By it the heavens and earth were created. Through priesthood ordinances, the effects of the Fall can be overcome because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Because the authority of



the priesthood is entrusted to man to bless Heavenly Father's children, He wants us to invite the power of the priesthood into our homes to bless and strengthen our families and our individual lives.

In the 2013 worldwide leadership training, Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles emphatically stated: "Men are not the priesthood!"<sup>1</sup> To me, that was a wake-up call as well as an invitation to all of us to study, ponder, and come to better understand the priesthood. If someone, perhaps a child or a friend who is a member of another faith, asked you the following questions, could you give an answer?

- What is the priesthood?
- Why is the priesthood so important?
- What are the keys of the priesthood?
- Who holds priesthood keys?

### What is the priesthood?

The priesthood is the eternal power and authority of God by which He blesses, redeems, and exalts His children. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained the priesthood this way: "Priesthood is the means whereby the Lord acts through men to save souls. . . . A priesthood holder is expected to exercise this sacred authority in accordance with God's holy mind, will, and purposes. *Nothing about the priesthood is self-centered. The priesthood always is used to serve, to bless, and to strengthen other people.*"<sup>2</sup>

"Nothing about the priesthood is self-centered. The priesthood always is used to serve, to bless, and to strengthen other people."

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



As I have studied, pondered, and sought to understand the priesthood, it has been helpful for me to consider what the world would be like *without* it. Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explored this idea when he said: "Can you imagine how dark and empty mortality would be if there were no priesthood? If the power of the priesthood were not upon the earth, the adversary would have freedom to roam and reign without restraint. There would be no gift of the Holy Ghost to direct and enlighten us; no prophets to speak in the name of the Lord; no temples where we could make sacred, eternal covenants; no

authority to bless or baptize, to heal or comfort. . . . There would be no light, no hope—only darkness."<sup>3</sup>

The thought of no priesthood power is sobering. I, for one, stand up and rejoice that this sacred power has been

restored to the earth through a prophet of God in this last and glorious dispensation of the fulness of times!

Elder Oaks cautions us, however, in our references to the priesthood: "While we sometimes refer to priesthood holders as 'the priesthood,' we must never forget that the priesthood is not owned by or embodied in those who hold it. It is held in *a sacred trust to be used for the benefit of men, women, and children alike.*"<sup>4</sup>

### Why is the priesthood so important?

We know that "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.”<sup>5</sup> As Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, “Priesthood authority has been restored so that families can be sealed eternally.”<sup>6</sup>

“Priesthood authority is required to perform the ordinances of the gospel. . . . Each ordinance opens the door to rich spiritual blessings.”<sup>7</sup> Jesus bestowed the sacred keys of the kingdom on Peter with the charge that “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).

### **What are the keys of the priesthood?**

A simple explanation of priesthood keys is found in the May 2012 *New Era*:

“With a set of keys, you can do a lot of things that you wouldn’t otherwise be able to do—enter buildings, drive cars, and open trunks, among other things. Keys, basically, mean authority and access.

“The same is true of priesthood keys. They control access to the blessings and ordinances of the priesthood. . . . Priesthood keys are the right to preside over and direct the Church. . . . Keys usually apply to a geographic area, like a ward, stake, or mission. They also usually include authority over specific ordinances and activities (for instance, baptism,

the sacrament, missionary work, and temple work).”<sup>8</sup>

### **Who holds priesthood keys?**

“Jesus Christ holds all the keys of the priesthood pertaining to His Church. He has conferred upon each of His Apostles all the keys that pertain to the kingdom of God on earth. The senior living Apostle, the President of the Church, is the only person on earth authorized to exercise all priesthood keys (see D&C 107:91–92). . . . [He then] delegates priesthood keys to other priesthood leaders so they can preside in their areas of responsibility. . . . Auxiliary presidents and their counselors do not receive keys. They receive delegated authority to function in their callings.”<sup>9</sup>

There is a difference, however, between priesthood authority and priesthood power. Priesthood authority is conferred by ordination, but priesthood power is available to all. Since priesthood power is something we all desire to have in our families and homes, what do *we* need to do to invite that power into our lives? Personal righteousness is imperative to having priesthood power.

### **Understanding the Doctrine of the Priesthood**

First, seek to be worthy of the gift of the Holy Ghost. Because the doctrine of the priesthood is best understood by revelation, it is essential to have the help of the Holy Ghost to reveal and distill the doctrine upon our souls.

Second, attend the holy temple. We know that temples “are the most holy of all places of worship”<sup>10</sup> and provide the ideal setting to learn about the priesthood by the spirit of revelation.



Third, read the scriptures. Searching, pondering, and studying the scriptures are invitations for the Holy Ghost to reveal to us important truths about the priesthood. I recommend the following to you for your careful and prayerful consideration: Doctrine and Covenants sections 13, 20, 84, 107, and 121, and Alma 13. Then I invite you to memorize the oath and covenant of the priesthood, which can be found in Doctrine and Covenants 84:33–44. By doing so, I promise you that the Holy Ghost will expand your understanding of the priesthood and inspire and uplift you in wonderful ways.

I would also invite you to ponder Doctrine and Covenants 121:34–46 and ask yourselves questions such as:

- Is my heart set upon the things of this world?



- Do I aspire to the honors of men or women?
- Do I try to cover my sins?
- Am I prideful?
- Do I exercise control or domination or compulsion upon my children, my spouse, or others?
- Am I earnestly striving to practice righteous principles such as persuasion, meekness, long-suffering, kindness, gentleness, love unfeigned (meaning genuine, sincere, or heartfelt love)?
- Does virtue garnish my thoughts unceasingly?
- Do I long for the Holy Ghost to be my constant companion?

The words *persuasion, meekness, long-suffering, kindness, gentleness, and love unfeigned* took on a new and very personal meaning to me as I remembered a blessing I requested of my father years ago.

When I was a young single adult, I was struggling with a difficult decision. As I had done on several occasions, I approached my dad and requested a father’s blessing. Expecting him to immediately act on my request, I was surprised when he responded by saying, “I’ll need some time to prepare to give you this blessing. Are you OK with waiting a couple of days?”

Interestingly, 40 years later, I have forgotten what he said in that father’s blessing, but I’ll never forget the profound reverence my dad had for the holy priesthood as he prepared himself spiritually to pronounce a father’s blessing upon my head. He understood the principles taught in Doctrine and Covenants 121 and was determined to live them in order to qualify for priesthood power to bless his family.

### Words of the Living Prophets

It is my privilege to work with inspired prophets, seers, and revelators on an almost daily basis. If we really want to know the doctrine of the priesthood, we have a reliable and God-given living resource: prophets, seers, and revelators. I testify that they are men of God possessing priesthood power by personal righteousness.

In a recent general conference,

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “In our Heavenly Father’s great priesthood-endowed plan, men have the unique responsibility to administer the priesthood, but they are not the priesthood. Men and women have different but equally valued roles. Just as a woman cannot conceive a child without a man, so a man cannot fully exercise the power of the priesthood to establish an eternal family without a woman. In other words, in the eternal perspective, both the procreative power and the priesthood power are shared by husband and wife.”<sup>11</sup>

I am learning that women’s moral influence is a complementary gift to priesthood power. Speaking to the women in the Church, President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) urged, “We entreat you to minister with your powerful *influence* for good in strengthening our families, our church, and our communities.”<sup>12</sup> In a recent general conference, Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said to the women, “Whether you are single or married, whether you have borne children or not, whether you are old, young, or in between, your moral authority is vital.”<sup>13</sup>

Similarly, Elder Ballard remarked, “There is nothing in this world as personal, as nurturing, or as life changing as the *influence* of a righteous woman.”<sup>14</sup>

We have addressed a few of the questions associated with the holy

priesthood of God, but there are undoubtedly others.

### First Obey, Then Understand

I conclude with an experience that has helped me to deal with unanswered questions. A few years ago, my husband and I were invited to a gathering of many experienced Church leaders. A new presiding officer had recently been called, and at the end of the meeting a very difficult and contentious question was asked. Realizing the difficulty of the question, my husband and I immediately offered up our sincere prayers to Heavenly Father on behalf of this new leader. As he came to the pulpit to respond to the question, I witnessed a change in his countenance as he stood majestically, squared his shoulders, and spoke with the power of the Lord.

His response was something like this: “Brother, I do not know the answer to your question. But I will tell you what I do know. I know that God is our Eternal Father. I know that Jesus Christ is the Savior and Redeemer of the world. I know that Joseph Smith saw God the Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and was the instrument through which the power of the priesthood was restored to the earth. I know the Book of Mormon is true and contains the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I know we have a living prophet today who speaks for the Lord to bless our lives. No, I do not know the answer to your question,

The priesthood of God is a sacred trust given to bless men, women, and children so we can return as families to live eternally together in God’s presence.



but these things I know. The rest I take on faith. I try to live this simple statement of faith I learned years ago from Marjorie Hinckley, wife of President Gordon B. Hinckley, who said, ‘First I obey, then I understand.’”

The priesthood of God is a sacred trust given to bless men, women, and children so we can return as families to live eternally together in God’s presence. Righteousness is the qualifier for each of us to invite priesthood power into our lives. May this doctrine distill upon our souls and draw us closer to Him whose Church and priesthood power and authority this is. ■

From an address given for Women’s Conference at Brigham Young University on May 2, 2013.

#### NOTES

1. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Power of the Priesthood in the Family” (worldwide leadership training meeting); *wwlt.lds.org*.
2. David A. Bednar, “The Powers of Heaven,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 48; emphasis added.
3. Robert D. Hales, “Blessings of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 32.

4. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Relief Society and the Church,” *Ensign*, May 1992, 36; emphasis added.
5. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129.
6. Russell M. Nelson, “Nurturing Marriage,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2006, 37.
7. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 2.1.2.
8. “Priesthood Keys,” *New Era*, May 2012, 38.
9. *Handbook 2*, 2.1.1.
10. Guide to the Scriptures, “Temple, House of the Lord”; *scriptures.lds.org*.
11. M. Russell Ballard, “This Is My Work and Glory,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 19.
12. *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 157; emphasis added.
13. D. Todd Christofferson, “The Moral Force of Women,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 30.
14. *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 156; emphasis added.

The following web page teaches key ideas about the priesthood and could be helpful in home evening, Sunday lessons, or missionary work: [lds.org/go/b614000](https://www.lds.org/go/b614000).



# LATTER-DAY SAINTS IN Italy A LEGACY OF FAITH

By Lia McClanahan

**T**he history of the Church in Italy begins in New Testament times, when the capital of the Roman Empire was home to a group of faithful Christians. The Bible doesn't record who originally took the gospel to Rome, but a branch of the Church had been there for "many years" (Romans 15:23) when the Apostle Paul sent a letter to the Romans in about A.D. 57.

Paul described the Christians in Rome as "full of goodness" (15:14). He was acquainted with some of them, and his epistle contained a long list of beloved Saints to whom he sent greetings (see 16:1–15).

Paul extolled the faith of those Christians and told them that he prayed fervently for them. He longed to see them and hoped God would grant that he might visit them soon (see 1:8–15).

When he did at last go to Rome, it was as a prisoner, but the Church members' anticipation of his arrival was such that some of the brethren traveled 43 miles (69 km) to meet him at the Appii forum. Seeing them, "he thanked God, and took courage" (Acts 28:15).

Later, Paul suffered martyrdom in Rome, where Christians were severely persecuted by Nero and other emperors. Eventually the Church fell into apostasy, but the early Roman Saints left a legacy of faith at the center of the empire, setting the stage for Christianity to spread throughout the world.



*Youth of the Rome Italy East Stake help clean and paint a homeless shelter.*

TIME LINE

*\* 63 B.C.: Roman military leader Pompeius conquers Jerusalem, which becomes part of the Roman Empire*

*A.D. 45: The Apostle Paul, a Roman citizen, begins first missionary journey throughout Roman Empire*

*64: Christians blamed for the great fire of Rome and begin to be persecuted by Roman government*



*◀ 313: Constantine becomes the first Christian Roman emperor and legalizes Christian worship*

*380: Emperor Theodosius I makes Christianity the official state religion of Roman Empire and paves the way for Christianity to spread throughout the world*

## A People Hidden Up by the Lord

In 1849, Elder Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was called to establish a mission in Italy. As he was contemplating where to commence, he learned about the Waldensians, a religious community in the Piedmont mountains of northwestern Italy.

The Waldensians had endured extreme persecutions over seven centuries because of their beliefs. Predating the Protestant Reformation by several hundred years, they preached that Christ’s early Church had fallen into apostasy. They separated themselves from the Roman Catholic Church and were declared heretics, driven from cities, tortured, and slaughtered. Rather than renounce their faith, they fled to the upper mountains.<sup>1</sup>

“A flood of light seemed to burst upon my mind when I thought upon [the Waldensians],” recorded Elder Snow. In a letter home he wrote, “I believe that the Lord has there hidden up a people amid the Alpine mountains.”<sup>2</sup>

In other regions of Italy, laws were not favorable for missionary activity. But two years before Elder Snow arrived, the Waldensians in the Piedmont region had been granted religious freedom after centuries of persecution.<sup>3</sup> Not only that, but several among them had received remarkable dreams and visions preparing them to receive the missionaries’ message.<sup>4</sup>

Elder Snow, accompanied by two missionary companions, dedicated Italy for the preaching of the gospel on September 19, 1850. Elder Snow recorded, “From that day opportunities began to occur for proclaiming our message.”<sup>5</sup>

Over the next four years, the missionaries’ efforts met with both success and opposition. They published two missionary tracts and an Italian translation of the Book of Mormon. They baptized a number of converts. But by 1854, the work had dwindled—the missionaries were called away to other areas, the staunchest converts were immigrating to Utah, and persecution was growing. In 1862 all active proselyting was discontinued, and the mission was closed in 1867.

*\* All early dates are approximate.*

The Italian Mission was active only 12 years, but during that time, 12 families and seven individuals were converted and immigrated to Utah. The Waldensians who embraced the gospel infused the Church in Utah with strength, and today tens of thousands of members trace their heritage back to the 72 faithful Waldensians who left the home of their forefathers to join the Latter-day Saints in the Rocky Mountains.<sup>6</sup>

### Hastening the Work

After the Italian Mission closed, no official missionary work was done in Italy for almost a hundred years.

Twelve offered a prayer rededicating Italy for the preaching of the gospel.

Ten years from the time the mission opened, the number of members in Italy had increased from about 300 to 5,000. That number had doubled by 1982. In recent years, growth has been dramatic. From 2005 to 2010, four new stakes were created, taking the total number of stakes to seven. Today there are nearly 25,000 Latter-day Saints in Italy.

### Establishing the Church

Elder Craig A. Cardon of the Seventy is one of thousands of Latter-day Saints who trace their ancestry back

► 1173: Waldo of Lyons, France, starts a movement to return to the original gospel taught by Christ and His Apostles



1215: Waldo and his followers, the Waldensians—some of whom live in Italy—are declared heretics and are persecuted

1843: Giuseppe (Joseph) Toronto baptized in Massachusetts, USA—the first Italian to join the Church

1848: King Carlo Alberto of Piedmont-Sardinia grants religious liberty to the Waldensians



◀ 1850: Elders Lorenzo Snow, Joseph Toronto, and B. H. Stenhouse begin missionary efforts in Italy

1852: An Italian translation of the Book of Mormon published

When the light of the gospel began to shine again in Italy, it was amid World War II, when Latter-day Saint military personnel from the United States were stationed in cities throughout Italy. These members formed groups that met for Sunday meetings, and the groups continued after the war as the members were assigned to military bases in Italy.

Over the next 20 years, the Lord hastened His work. Native Italians began to join the Church after encountering missionaries in nearby countries. Military members' groups in Naples and Verona were organized into branches under the direction of the Swiss Mission. The mission had the Book of Mormon retranslated into Italian and published. The time for missionaries to be sent to Italy was drawing near.

In 1964, Italy was organized as a district of the Swiss Mission, and soon Italian-speaking missionaries were sent to several cities. In 1966, the Italian Mission was organized, 99 years after the original Italian Mission had closed. Elder Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) of the Quorum of the

Elder Ezra Taft Benson (center) meets with missionaries of the newly formed Italian Mission.





to Phillipe Cardon, a Waldensian convert who immigrated to Utah in 1854. Elder Cardon has witnessed the Lord’s work unfolding in the land of his ancestors, first as a missionary in the newly opened Italian Mission in the 1960s and then as president of the Italy Rome Mission in the 1980s.

When Elder Cardon was called to be a mission president in 1983, all but one of the chapels in Rome were rented buildings. In those days new Church buildings were paid for partly by donations from members

the Church. I am convinced that their commitment was a central part of what allowed the Church to continue to grow to the point for a stake to be organized and now a temple constructed in Rome.”<sup>7</sup>

Prior to being called as a General Authority, Elder Cardon returned to Italy in 2005 to be present when the Rome Italy Stake was created. It was a sweet experience. “Here was priesthood strength,” he says, “the keys of the priesthood, the scriptural definition of a place of refuge—a stake—now established in Rome.”

▲ **Meet some Italian Saints:**

The inspiring stories of three modern Italian Latter-day Saints are found in the online version of this article at [liahona.lds.org](http://liahona.lds.org).

*1854: Missionary work dwindles as persecution grows and missionaries shift their focus to Switzerland; Waldensian converts begin immigration to Salt Lake City, Utah*

*1862: All active proselyting in Italy stops*

*1944: LDS military members’ groups are established in Italy*



◀ *1964: The Church publishes a new Italian translation of the Book of Mormon; the Swiss Mission organizes an Italian district*

▶ *1966: The Italian Mission organized; Elder Ezra Taft Benson rededicates Italy for the preaching of the gospel*



in the area. Because funds were needed to construct several buildings, it looked impossible on paper for the members to be able to contribute so much. After the matter was given prayerful consideration, the Italian members were invited to take the money they would have spent on Christmas that year and donate it to the building fund. Instead of gifts, families would place a brick under their Christmas trees to represent their sacrifice.

“What happened on that occasion was miraculous,” says Elder Cardon. “The contributions exceeded the need. Because of this and the Saints’ continued tithing faithfulness, the Lord poured out a rich spiritual blessing upon the mission and upon the Saints throughout the area as they willingly responded to do all they could to establish



*The meetinghouse of the Catania Ward on the coast of Sicily. The Catania Branch was formed in 1967, a year after the Italian Mission was organized.*

## A Temple in Rome

In the October 2008 general conference, when President Thomas S. Monson announced that a temple would be built in Rome, an audible gasp and whispers of excitement swept across the Conference Center. In Italy, congregations of Saints watching by satellite let out shouts of joy. One sister remembers, “We went to our homes as if on wings, with joy in our hearts.”

Why is the idea of a temple in Rome so meaningful? Besides being aware of the temple’s profound spiritual significance, members have a sense of the city’s historical significance, says Elder Cardon: “Its governance and power

## MEMBERS IN ITALY



## THE CHURCH IN ITALY TODAY\*

Members: 25,453  
 Missions: 2  
 Stakes: 7  
 Wards: 46  
 Branches: 52  
 Districts: 5  
 Temples: 1 (under construction)  
 Family history centers: 49

\* As of December 2013



1972: President Harold B. Lee visits members in Italy, the first Church President to visit in latter days

1981: The Milan Italy Stake organized, the first stake in Italy

1993: The Church given legal recognition to formally own property and perform government-recognized marriages



◀ 2008: The Rome Italy Temple announced by President Thomas S. Monson

2012: The Church given the highest legal status granted to religions in Italy

during its particular season; its explorers, artists, scientists, and inventors who have contributed so much to the world; and the blessing that the religious power of Rome has been in helping to introduce Christianity throughout the world are all a part of Rome’s history, now graced by a temple of the Lord.” At the 2010 groundbreaking ceremony, President Monson said, “With regard to the temple which will be built upon this site, it means everything to Latter-day Saints.”<sup>8</sup>

For over 40 years, Italian members have traveled to the Bern Switzerland Temple, some journeying two days to get there. Massimo De Feo, former president of the Rome stake and now an Area Seventy, believes the Rome Temple is a sign that the Lord has seen the years of service and sacrifice from the Latter-day Saints and recognizes their great desire for a temple.

When the announcement about the temple was made, Elder De Feo says the excitement was like that felt in a stadium when a team wins at the last second; the joy was

similar to what he imagines we felt in the premortal life when the plan of salvation was announced. The Saints were hugging, smiling, and crying. It was true happiness.

“It is marvelous to serve the Lord in these days,” says Elder De Feo, “so special for Italy, for Rome.” He testifies, “I know that the Lord is greatly blessing this part of His kingdom.”<sup>9</sup> ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

## NOTES

1. See Ronald A. Malan, “Waldensian History: A Brief Sketch,” Waldensian Families Research, [www.waldensian.info/History.htm](http://www.waldensian.info/History.htm).
2. Lorenzo Snow, *The Italian Mission* (1851), 10–11.
3. Lorenzo Snow, *The Italian Mission*, 10–11.
4. Diane Stokoe, “The Mormon Waldensians” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1985), 26–27. For an example of one such dream, see Elizabeth Maki, “Suddenly the Thought Came to Me’: Child’s Vision Prepares Her Family for the Gospel,” June 3, 2013, [history.lds.org/article/marie-cardon-italy-conversion](http://history.lds.org/article/marie-cardon-italy-conversion).
5. Lorenzo Snow, *The Italian Mission*, 15, 17.
6. Stokoe, “The Mormon Waldensians,” 1–5, 71–84.
7. Craig A. Cardon, from an interview with the author in June 2013.
8. Thomas S. Monson, in Jason Swenson, “Rome Italy Temple Groundbreaking,” *Church News*, Oct. 23, 2010, [ldschurchnews.com](http://ldschurchnews.com).
9. “Interview with President Massimo De Feo—Italy—Episode 1,” *Into All the World* (archived radio program); [mormonchannel.org](http://mormonchannel.org).



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

# THE CALL TO Be Christlike

**I**n the history of Israel down through the ages, when things got too sinful or society became too secular or life with the Gentiles began undermining the moral code and commandments God had given, the children of the covenant would be sent fleeing into the wilderness to start all over and reestablish Zion.

In Old Testament times, Abraham, the father of the covenant, had to flee for his life from Chaldea—literally Babylonia—in his quest for a consecrated life in Canaan, which we now call the Holy Land (see Abraham 2:3–4). But it wasn't many generations before the descendants of Abraham lost their Zion and were in bondage in far-off, pagan Egypt (see Exodus 1:7–14). So Moses had to be raised up to lead the children of promise into the wilderness again.

Not many centuries later, a story of special interest to us unfolded when one of those Israelite families, headed by a prophet named Lehi, was commanded to flee Jerusalem because, alas, Babylon was again at the door! (See 1 Nephi 2:2.) Little did they know that they were going to an entirely new continent to establish a whole new concept of Zion (see 1 Nephi 18:22–24). And little did they know that such an exodus had already happened with a group of their forefathers called the Jaredites (see Ether 6:5–13).

It is of interest to all who celebrate the Restoration of the gospel that the colonization of America was born of a group fleeing their former homelands in order to worship as they wished. A distinguished scholar of the Puritan settlement in America described this experience as Christianity's "errand into the wilderness"—the effort of modern Israelites to free themselves of Old World godlessness and once again seek the ways of heaven in a new land.<sup>1</sup>

*God is calling to Israel in these latter days to be more Christlike and to be more holy than we now are in our determination to live the gospel and establish Zion.*



I remind you of one last flight. It was that of our own Church, led by our own prophets, leading our own religious ancestors. With Joseph Smith being hounded through the states of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Missouri, and finally being murdered in Illinois, we were to see the latter-day reenactment of Israel's children again seeking a place of seclusion. President Brigham Young (1801–77), the American Moses, as he has been admirably called, led the Saints to the valleys of the mountains as those foot-weary Saints sang:

*We'll find the place which God for us prepared,  
Far away in the West,  
Where none shall come to hurt or make afraid;  
There the Saints will be blessed.*<sup>2</sup>

Zion. The promised land. The New Jerusalem. For more than 4,000 years of covenantal history, this has been the pattern: Flee and seek. Run and settle. Escape Babylon. Build Zion's protective walls.

Until this, our day.

### **Build Zion Where You Are**

One of the many unique characteristics of our dispensation is the changing nature of how we establish the kingdom of God on earth. This dispensation is a time of mighty, accelerated change. And one thing that has changed is that the Church of God will never again flee. It will never again leave Ur in order to leave Haran in order to leave Canaan in order to leave Jerusalem in order to leave England in order to leave Kirtland in order to leave Nauvoo in order to go who knows where.

No, as Brigham Young said for us all, "We have been kicked out of the frying-pan into the fire, out of the fire into the middle of the floor, and here we are and here we will stay."<sup>3</sup>

Of course, that statement became a statement for members of the Church all over the world. In these last days, in our dispensation, we have become mature enough to stop running. We have become mature

enough to plant our feet and our families and our foundations in every nation, kindred, tongue, and people *permanently*. Zion is everywhere—wherever the Church is. And with that change, we no longer think of Zion as *where* we are going to live; we think of it as *how* we are going to live.

To frame this new task, I draw upon three incidents.

### **Three Incidents and Three Lessons**

1. A few years ago a young friend of mine—a returned missionary—was on one of the college basketball teams in Utah. He was a great young man and a very good ball-player, but he wasn't playing as much as he had hoped he would. His particular talents and skills weren't exactly what his team needed at that stage of its development or his. That happens in athletics. So, with the full support and best wishes of his coaches and teammates, my young friend transferred to another school, where he hoped he might contribute a little more.

Things clicked at the new school, and my friend soon became a starter. And wouldn't you know it—the team's schedule had this young man returning to play against his former team in Salt Lake City.

The vitriolic abuse that poured out of the stands that night on this young man—a newlywed who paid his tithing, served in the elders quorum, gave charitable service to the youth in his community, and waited excitedly for a new baby coming to him and his wife—should not have been experienced by any human being anywhere, anytime, whatever his sport or university or whatever his personal decisions had been about either of them.

The coach of this visiting team, something of a legend in the profession, turned to him after a spectacular game and said: "What is going on here? You are the hometown boy who has made good. These are your people. These are your



friends.” But worst of all, he then said in total bewilderment, “Aren’t most of these people members of your church?”

2. I was invited to speak at a stake single-adult devotional. As I entered the rear door of the stake center, a 30-something young woman entered the building at about the same time. Even in the crush of people moving toward the chapel, it was hard not to notice her. She had a couple of tattoos, a variety of ear and nose rings, spiky hair reflecting all the colors now available in snow cones, a skirt that was too high, and a blouse that was too low.

Some questions leapt to my mind: Was this woman a struggling soul not of our faith, who had been led—or even better, had been brought by someone—to this devotional under the guidance of the Lord to help her find the peace and the direction of the gospel she needed in her life? Or was she a member who had strayed from some of the hopes and standards the Church encourages for its members but who was still affiliating and had chosen to attend this Church activity that night?

3. While participating in the dedication of the Kansas City Missouri Temple, Sister Holland and I were hosted by Brother Isaac Freestone, a police officer by profession and a high priest in the Liberty Missouri Stake. In our conversations he told us that late one evening he was called

to investigate a complaint in a particularly rough part of the city. Over the roar of loud music and with the smell of marijuana in the air, he found one woman and several men drinking and profaning, all of them apparently totally oblivious to five little children—about two to eight years of age—huddled together in one room, trying to sleep on a filthy floor with no bed, no mattress, no pillows, no anything.

Brother Freestone looked in the kitchen cupboards and in the refrigerator to see if he could find a single can or carton or box of food of any kind—but he could find nothing. He said the dog barking in the backyard had more food than those children had.

In the mother’s bedroom he found a bare mattress, the only one in the house. He hunted until he found some sheets, put them on the mattress, and tucked all five children into the makeshift bed. Then, with tears in his eyes, he knelt, offered a prayer to Heavenly Father for their protection, and said good night.

As he arose and walked toward the door, one of the children jumped out of bed, ran to him, grabbed him by the hand, and pled, “Will you *please* adopt me?” With more tears in his eyes, Brother Freestone put the child back in bed, found the stoned mother (the men had long since fled), and said to her: “I will be back tomorrow, and heaven



help you if some changes are not evident by the time I walk in this door. And there will be more changes after that. You have my word on it.”<sup>4</sup>

What do these three incidents have in common? They give three tiny, very different real-life examples of Babylon—one as silly as deplorable behavior at a basketball game, one more cultural and indicative of one-on-one challenges with those who live differently than we do, and one a very large and very serious matter.

### ***Lesson 1: Never Check Your Religion at the Door***

First, let’s finish the basketball incident. The day after the game, when there was some public reckoning and a call to repentance over the incident, one young man said, in effect: “Listen. We are talking about basketball here, not Sunday School. If you can’t stand the heat, get out of the kitchen. We pay good money to see these games. We can act the way we want. We check our religion at the door.”

“We check our religion at the door”? Lesson number one for the establishment of Zion in the 21st century: You *never* check your religion at the door.

That kind of discipleship cannot be—it is not discipleship at all. As the prophet Alma taught, we are “to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that [we] may be in” (Mosiah 18:9)—*not* just some of the time, in a few places, or when our team has a big lead.

Whatever the situation or provocation or problem, no true disciple of Christ can check his or her religion at the door.

### ***Lesson 2: Be Compassionate but Be Loyal to the Commandments***

That leads me to the young woman at the devotional. However one would respond to her, the rule forever is that our behavior has to reflect our religious beliefs and our gospel commitments. Therefore, how we respond in any situation has to make things better, not worse. We can’t act or react in such a way that we are guilty of a greater offense than, in this case, she is.

That doesn’t mean we don’t have opinions, we don’t have standards, or we somehow completely disregard divinely mandated “thou shalt” and “thou shalt not.” But it does mean we have to live those standards and defend

those commandments in a righteous way to the best of our ability, the way the Savior lived and defended them. And He always did what should have been done to make the situation better—from teaching the truth to forgiving sinners to cleansing the temple.

So with our new acquaintance, we start, above all, by remembering she is a daughter of God and of eternal worth. We start by remembering that she is someone's daughter. We start by being grateful that she is at a Church activity, not avoiding one. In short, we try to be at our best in this situation in a desire to help her be at her best.

We keep praying silently: What is the right thing to do here? What is the right thing to say? What *ultimately* will make this situation and her better? Asking these questions and really trying to do what the Savior would do is what I think He meant when He said, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24).

This Church can never dumb down its doctrine in response to social goodwill or political expediency or any other reason. It is only the high ground of revealed truth that gives us any footing on which to lift another who may feel troubled or forsaken. Our compassion and our love—fundamental characteristics and requirements of our Christianity—must *never* be interpreted as compromising the commandments.

When we face such situations, it can be very challenging and confusing. Young people may ask, "Well, we don't believe we should live or behave in such and such a way, but why do we have to make other people do the same? Don't they have their free agency? Aren't we being self-righteous and judgmental, forcing our beliefs on others, demanding that *they* act in a certain way?"

In those situations you are going to have to explain sensitively why some principles are defended and *some* sins opposed *wherever they are found* because the issues and the laws involved are *not* just social or political but eternal in their consequence. And while not wishing to offend those who believe differently from us, we are even more anxious not to offend God.

It is a little like a teenager saying, "Now that I can drive, I know I am supposed to stop at a red light, but do we really have to be judgmental and try to get everyone else to stop at red lights? Does *everyone* have to do what we do? Don't others have their agency? Must they behave as we do?" You then have to explain why, yes, we do hope *all* will stop at a red light. And you have to do this *without* demeaning those who transgress or who believe differently than we believe because, yes, they do have their moral agency.

There is a wide variety of beliefs in this world, and there is moral agency for all, but no one is entitled to act

***Our behavior has to reflect our religious beliefs and our gospel commitments. Therefore, how we respond in any situation has to make things better, not worse.***

as if God is mute on these subjects or as if commandments matter only if there is public agreement over them. In the 21st century we cannot flee any longer. We are going to have to fight for laws and circumstances and environments

that allow the free exercise of religion and our franchise in it. That is one way we can tolerate being in Babylon but not of it.

I know of no more important ability and no greater integrity for us to demonstrate in a world from which we cannot flee than to walk that careful path—taking a moral stand according to what God has declared and the laws He has given but doing it compassionately and with understanding and great charity.

### ***Lesson 3: Use Gospel Values to Benefit Communities and Countries***

Not many of us are going to be police officers or social service agents or judges sitting on a legal bench, but all of us should care for the welfare of others and the moral safety of our extended community. In speaking of the need for us to influence society beyond the walls of our own home, Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said:



“In addition to protecting our own families, we should be a source of light in protecting our communities. The Savior said, ‘Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.’ . . .

“In our increasingly unrighteous world, it is essential that values based on religious belief be [evident in] the public square. . . .

“Religious faith is a store of light, knowledge, and wisdom and benefits society in a dramatic way.”<sup>5</sup>

If we don’t take gospel blessings to our communities and our countries, we will never have enough policemen—there will never be enough Isaac Freestones—to enforce moral behavior even if it were enforceable. And it isn’t. Those children in that home without food or

clothing are sons and daughters of God. That mother, more culpable because she is older and should be more responsible, is also a daughter of God. Such situations may require tough love in formal, even legal, ways, but we must try to help when and where we can because we are not checking our religion at the door, even as pathetic and irresponsible as some doors are.

No, we can’t do everything, but we can do something. And in answer to God’s call, the children of Israel are the ones to do it—not to flee Babylon this time but to attack it. Without being naive about it, we can live our religion so broadly and unfailingly that we find all kinds of opportunities to help families, bless neighbors, and protect others, including the rising generation.



***Latter-day Saints are called upon to be the leaven in the loaf, the salt that never loses its savor, the light set upon a hill never to be hidden under a bushel.***

### **Reflect Your Love of Jesus Christ**

Latter-day Saints are called upon to be the leaven in the loaf, the salt that never loses its savor, the light set upon a hill never to be hidden under a bushel. So start presenting!

If we do right and talk right and reach out generously with our words and our deeds, then, when the Savior cuts short His work in righteousness, says time is no more in this last dispensation, and comes in His glory, He will find us doing our best, trying to live the gospel, trying to improve our lives and our Church and our society the best way we can.

When He comes, I so want to be caught living the gospel. I want to be surprised right in the act of spreading the faith and doing something good. I want the

Savior to say to me: “Jeffrey, I recognize you not by your title but by your life, the way you are trying to live and the standards you are trying to defend. I see the integrity of your heart. I know you have tried to make things better first and foremost by being better yourself and then by declaring my word and defending my gospel to others in the most compassionate way you could.”

He will certainly add: “I know you weren’t always successful with your own sins and with the circumstances of others, but I believe you honestly tried. I believe in your heart you truly loved me.”

I want to have something like that encounter someday as I want nothing else in this mortal life. And I want it for you. I want it for us all. “Israel, Israel, God is calling”<sup>6</sup>—calling us to live the gospel of Jesus Christ personally in small ways and large ways, to reach out to those who may not look or dress or behave quite as we do, and then (where we can) to go beyond that to serve in the widest community we can address.

I love the Lord Jesus Christ, whose servant I am trying to be. And I love our Heavenly Father, who cared enough to give Him to us. Regarding that gift, I know that God is calling to Israel in these latter days to be more Christlike and to be more holy than we now are in our determination to live the gospel and establish Zion. I also know that He will give us the strength and the holiness to be true disciples if we plead for them. ■

*From a CES devotional address, “Israel, Israel, God Is Calling,” delivered at Dixie State University in St. George, Utah, on September 9, 2012. For the full address, go to [lds.org/broadcasts](http://lds.org/broadcasts).*

#### **NOTES**

1. See Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (1956), 2–3.
2. “Come, Come, Ye Saints,” *Hymns*, no. 30.
3. Brigham Young, in James S. Brown, *Life of a Pioneer: Being the Autobiography of James S. Brown* (1900), 121.
4. Isaac Freestone, experience shared with the author, May 5, 2012.
5. Quentin L. Cook, “Let There Be Light!” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 28, 29.
6. “Israel, Israel, God Is Calling,” *Hymns*, no. 7.

## MY NOTE ON THE GRAVESTONE

During the summer of 2003, I was in Michigan, USA, researching my great-great-uncle Robert Hall. At the end of my trip, I revisited a cemetery I had been to 20 years earlier.

When I had visited the cemetery before, I noticed flowers on one of the headstones with the last name Hall. This time I wrote a note, dated it, and laminated it to protect it from the weather. Then I prayerfully left the note at the headstone, hoping that someone who could help me learn more about Robert Hall would find it. I returned home to California

hopeful but skeptical that anything would come of this note.

A week later I received a letter from a distant cousin named Deke Bentley.

“Yesterday I had a strange experience,” he wrote. “At 3:00 p.m. I was headed to buy strawberries when I decided to stop by the Plains Road Cemetery to check out my ancestors’ graves. I had not been there for several years. Next to the graves was your postcard.”

Deke had gone to the cemetery the same day I had left the note. I called him immediately. During our

conversation I found out that he lived in Hillsdale, more than 50 miles (80 km) from the cemetery.

A few months later I eagerly returned to Michigan to visit Deke. He told me he had relatives buried in the cemetery directly across from his home, and he asked if I would like to go there. He told me that the cemetery had four gravestones of Halls, two that he knew nothing about.

At the cemetery, Deke showed me the gravestones. The two he didn’t know about belonged to Martin and Anna Hall. I hadn’t brought my records, but I distinctly remembered having researched a Martin Hall.

We rushed to the county courthouse an hour before it closed, hoping a death record would identify Martin’s parents. It did! Martin’s father was Robert Hall! The Holy Ghost confirmed to me that my long search had ended.

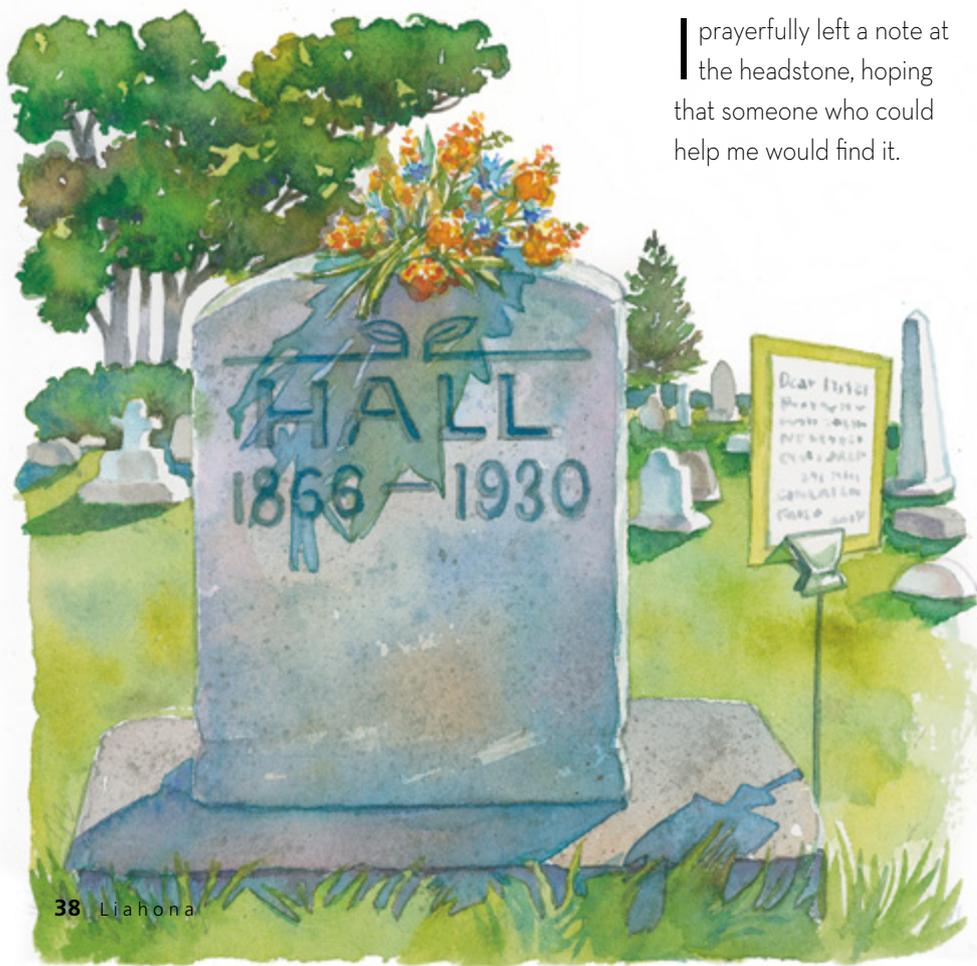
Deke, not a member of the Church, said finding Robert Hall seemed “almost spiritual.” I smiled, knowing that the Spirit had led me.

“You may have been disappointed that you didn’t leave your note 20 years ago,” Deke said, “but the fact is that I moved to Hillsdale just three years ago!”

This experience was a lesson to me that family history is indeed part of God’s work and that He leads us in our righteous efforts. ■

Marianne Chaplin Stovall, California, USA

I prayerfully left a note at the headstone, hoping that someone who could help me would find it.



## WILL THE LORD HEAL OUR SON?

When our son was four years old, he would frequently ask me to sing “Master, the Tempest Is Raging” (*Hymns*, no. 105). His little eyes would shine during the chorus when the Lord commands the winds and the waves to be still. He would ask me about Jesus’s power. I would answer that Jesus can do anything in righteousness because He has all power. The Savior was our son’s hero.

But when our son was 13 years old, he went into a deep depression. He no longer had any desire to speak or even to eat. He lost interest in his former activities, and he especially did not want to participate in family prayers or family home evenings. He seemed to no longer have an interest in church or the gospel.

The rest of our family prayed and fasted often for him, as did many brothers and sisters from our ward and stake and many of our friends and relatives. Our efforts felt like Alma the Elder’s experience of praying for his son (see *Mosiah* 27:14, 22–23).

We did not want to force the gospel on our son, so we told him that he did not have to participate in our family prayers or family home evenings but that we would like him to be there with us. As we followed the Savior’s words to “pray in your families unto the Father . . . that your . . . children may be blessed” (3 *Nephi* 18:21), both our family prayers and our family home evenings became more powerful. We

felt the Spirit in our home. And though our son was silent, he was there.

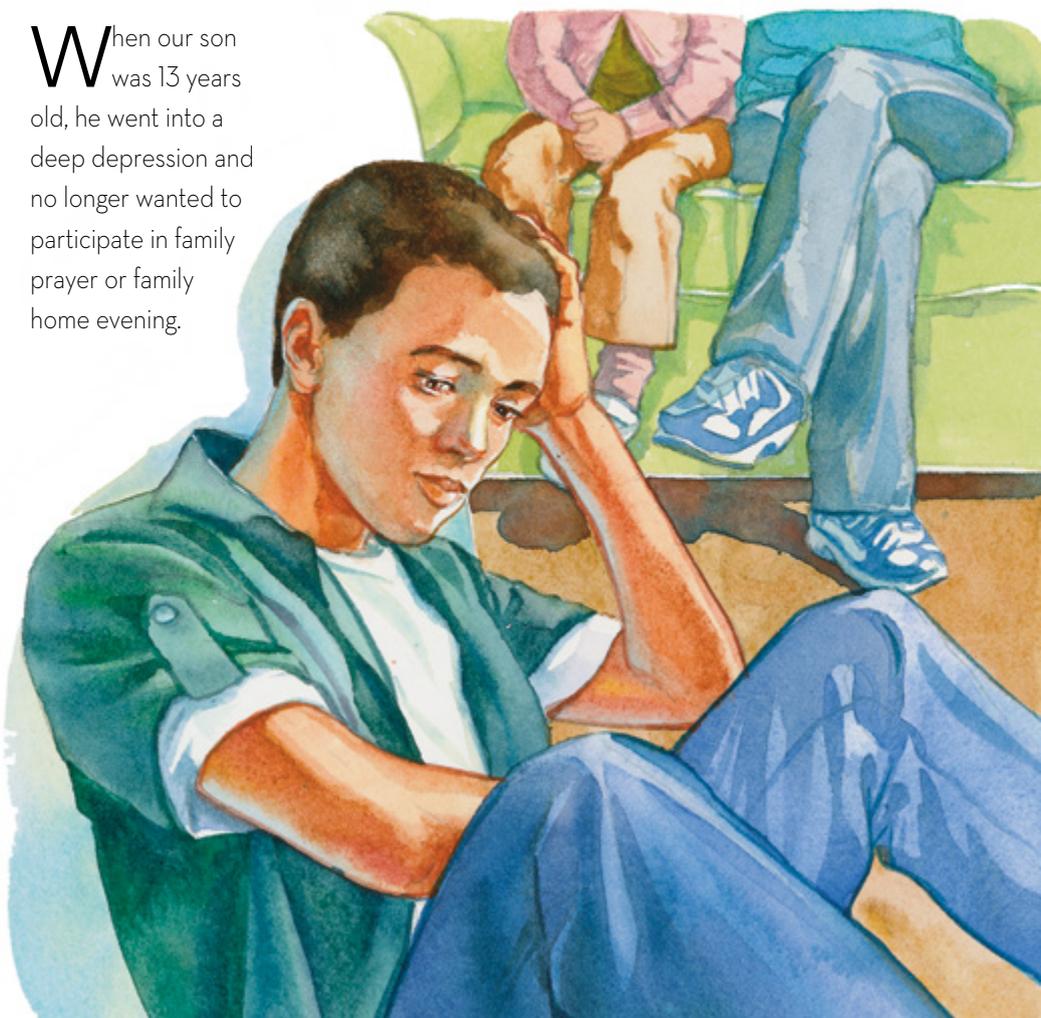
Little by little over the next two years, we saw that our prayers and family home evenings were having an influence on our son. During one family home evening, he bore testimony of the Savior and then asked if he could prepare a family home evening. He began to participate in family prayers and to attend church happily. He experienced a mighty change of heart that came as he felt the redeeming love of the Savior (see *Alma* 5:26). The Lord, with His healing power, had truly saved our son.

When our son was 13 years old, he went into a deep depression and no longer wanted to participate in family prayer or family home evening.

He began to be happy and full of life once again, willing to help others and to show love. He told me he knew the Savior had healed him. Our son’s trials helped him forge a powerful testimony and an increase in love for and trust in the Savior. He served the Lord as a missionary in the Argentina Buenos Aires South Mission. After his return he married in the temple, and he and his wife have a wonderful daughter.

I know that the Savior has the power to heal, to work miracles, and to make us happy in this life and in the life to come. ■

Ana Cremaschi Zañartu, Santiago, Chile



## ARE YOU A MORMON?

I was far from home attending an international conference for my job. Hundreds of people attended, but I was the only one from my state and region.

One evening a dinner was hosted for all the attendees. As we entered the dining hall, each of us received four tickets to use at the bar to order free alcoholic beverages. It occurred to me how easy it would be for someone far from home to be tempted by such an opportunity, thinking that no one would ever know. It was a fleeting thought, and I handed the tickets back to the person at the door.

During dinner I sat with seven strangers. I drank water as we ate, talked, laughed, and exchanged information that would help us in our employment.

The next morning at breakfast I greeted a gentleman who had been seated at my table. I was excited to notice by his name tag that he was from my hometown—a town I had not lived in for 35 years. After high school I had left home for college, married, and moved away.

As we discussed places and community events we both knew, he asked me if I still had family there. I replied that I did not but that I had many good friends there and that we kept in touch. He asked who they were, and I began to name some of them.

After the first few names he stopped me and said, “Wait, are you a Mormon? All the people you have named are Mormons.”

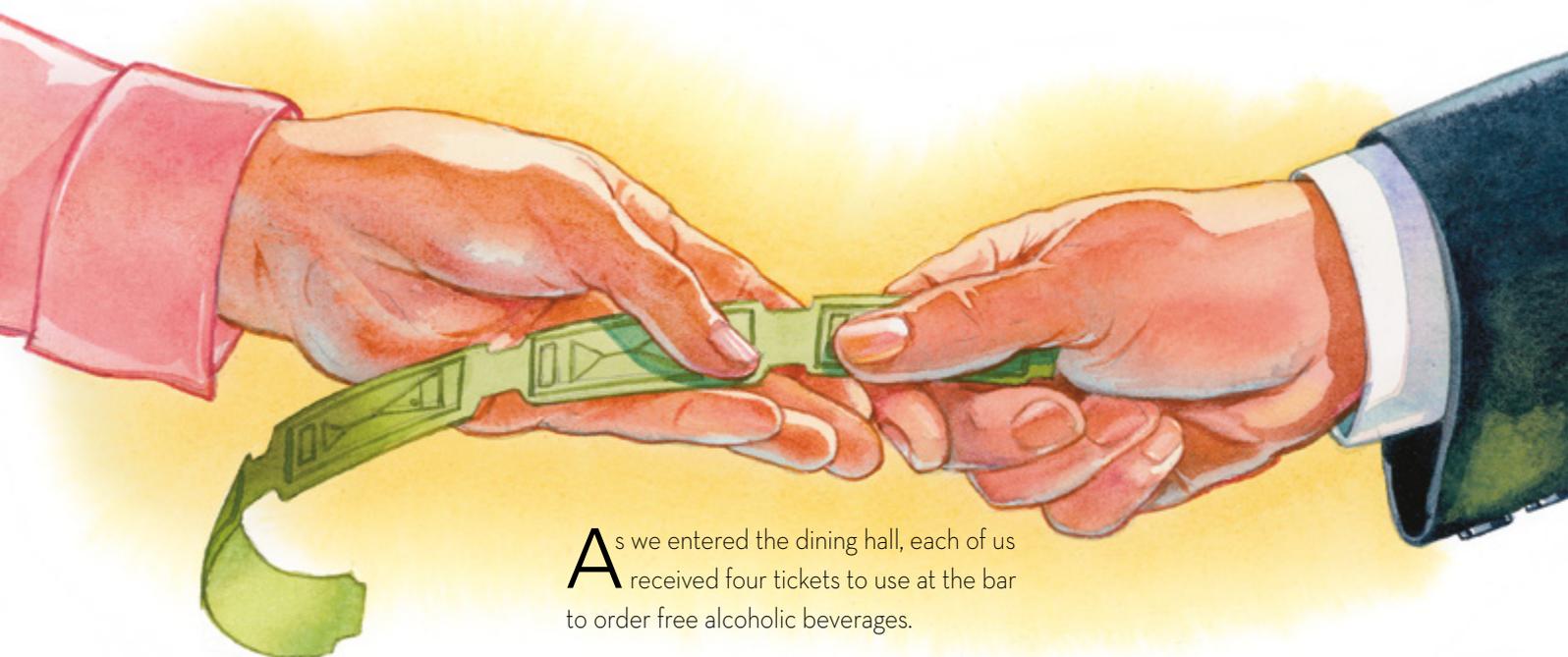
When I acknowledged that I was a

Latter-day Saint, he told me what fine citizens those friends were and how they had served the community and been good examples to all. For several minutes he shared his admiration for the Church and my friends, telling me how they had been advocates for good in the community.

As we parted, I could not help but think what might have happened had I chosen to use those drink tickets. I had been taught to choose the right by those very people we spoke of. I would have been uncomfortable and ashamed to admit that I was a member of the Church had I used the tickets.

How grateful I am for the example of those worthy, active, serving friends—35 years later and 2,000 miles (3,220 km) away from the home of my youth. ■

Carol A. Bowes, North Carolina, USA



As we entered the dining hall, each of us received four tickets to use at the bar to order free alcoholic beverages.

# THE PROPHET ANSWERED MY PRAYER

At the end of my second year I applied to my university's graphic design program. I wasn't accepted, but I was eligible to reapply the following year. I wasn't thrilled about waiting another year to graduate.

The closest thing to my chosen major was photography. So I prayed about changing my major and felt good about it. I just wanted to get my degree!

At the start of the fall semester, I had classes on film and on the social history of photography. I was excited about both. But as I looked over the syllabus of my film class, I noticed that students would be required to watch many R-rated movies. In my photography class the teacher stated that the pictures we would be studying would be violent, disturbing, and sexual. She said that was what photography was mostly about these days.

My heart sank as I contemplated what to do. I knew that the gospel taught against such things, but these classes were required. I thought of the scripture about being in the world but not of the world (see John 15:19). Could I be in these classes but not of them?

I prayed to know what to do and to have the faith to do what was right. I also counseled with my wife, parents, and brother. As I spoke with my brother, he reminded me of the following verse: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange

for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26).

I knew that education is important, but was I in the wrong field? How could I drop out of school temporarily when the light at the end of the tunnel was so close?

Late one night while I was up with our sick baby, the thought came to me to look up President Thomas S. Monson on the Internet. Soon I was watching a general conference talk President Monson had delivered in October 2011. I listened intently as he talked about the deterioration of society's moral compass, saying that inappropriate and immoral behavior had become acceptable by many.

Then he said exactly what I needed to hear: "We must be vigilant in a world which has moved so far from

Late one night while I was up with our sick baby, the thought came to me to look up President Thomas S. Monson on the Internet.

that which is spiritual. It is essential that we reject anything that does not conform to our standards, refusing in the process to surrender that which we desire most: eternal life in the kingdom of God."<sup>1</sup>

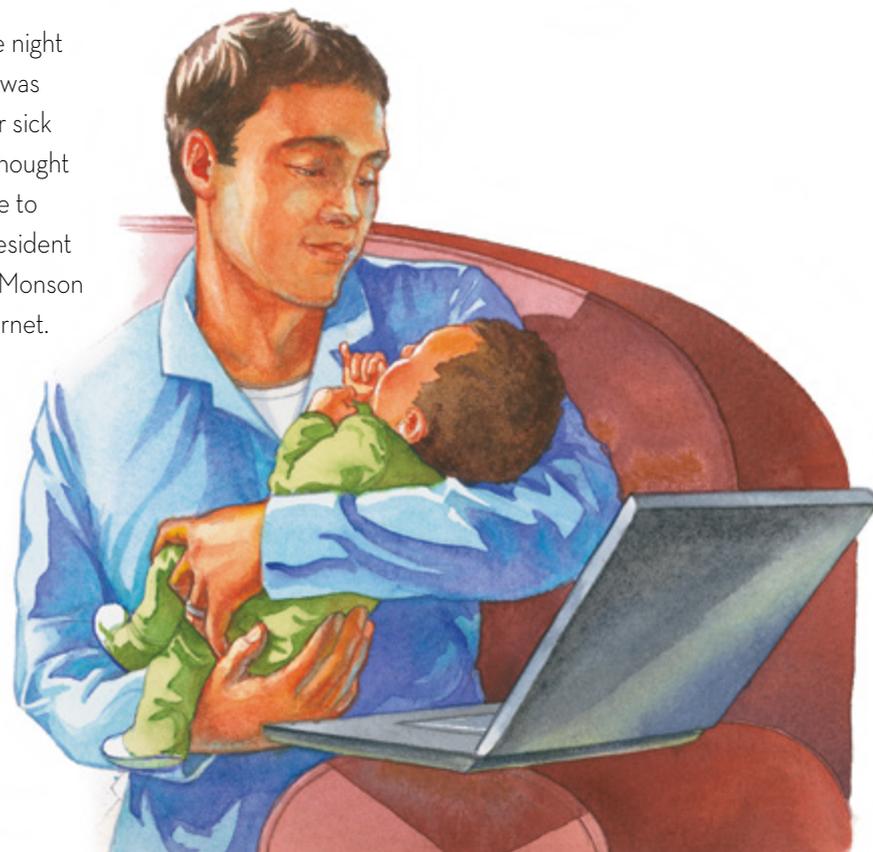
These words pierced me with great power. As tears ran down my face, I knew that a living prophet had answered my prayer.

Although I have postponed my plans for graduation, I know that the Lord will bless my family and me as we follow the prophet, reject the views of the world, obey the commandments, and support gospel standards. ■

Derrick Fields, Missouri, USA

## NOTE

1. Thomas S. Monson, "Stand in Holy Places," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 83.





**By Bishop  
Gérald Caussé**  
First Counselor in the  
Presiding Bishopric

# Follow the Path of **HAPPINESS**

**Y**outh, in general, is the perfect time to make personal plans. As a young adult you should have dreams for your future. Perhaps your dream is the hope of an athletic achievement, the creation of a great work of art, or the acquisition of a diploma or professional position. Perhaps you even have a precious image in your mind of your future husband or wife.

How many of your wishes will come true? Life is full of uncertainty. There will be key moments for you that may change the course of your life in an instant. Such a moment may consist of no more than a look, a conversation, or an unplanned event. There will be new opportunities, such as the recent declaration by President Thomas S. Monson concerning the age of missionary service.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes course changes in our lives come from unexpected challenges or disappointments.

Most people dislike the unknown. The uncertainty of life can create a lack of confidence, a fear of the future.

Some hesitate to make commitments out of fear of failure, even when good opportunities present themselves. For example, they may delay getting married, seeking an education, starting a family, or getting established in a stable profession, preferring to just hang out or remain in the cozy comfort of their parents' home.

Another philosophy that will limit us is illustrated by this maxim: "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die" (2 Nephi 28:7). This philosophy favors indulging in immediate pleasures regardless of their future consequences.

## **The Path of Happiness**

There is a different path than the paths of fear or doubt or self-indulgence—a path that brings peace, confidence, and serenity in life. You can't control all the circumstances of your life, but you have control of your happiness. You are the architect of it.

Your happiness is more the result of your spiritual vision and the principles upon which you base your life

**Your happiness depends more on the principles you choose to follow than on the external circumstances of your life.**

than of anything else. These principles will bring you happiness regardless of unexpected challenges and surprises. Let me review some of these essential principles.

### **1. Recognize Your Personal Worth**

Recently my family and I spent a few relaxing days in southern France. One evening, just after the sun had set and darkness had enveloped the surrounding countryside, I decided to lie down on a lounge chair outside the house. My eyes began to examine



the heavens. At first they were an impenetrable black. Suddenly, a light appeared in the sky like a spark, then two, then three. Progressively, as my eyes adjusted to the darkness, I found myself admiring a myriad of stars. What I had thought was a dark sky transformed into the Milky Way.

As I reflected on the immensity of the universe and on my own physical insignificance, I asked myself, "What am I before such grandeur and magnificence?" A scripture came to my mind:

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Psalm 8:3–4).

Immediately follows this comforting phrase: "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour" (Psalm 8:5).

This is the paradox and the miracle of the Creation. The universe is immense and infinite, yet at the same time, each of us has unique worth that

is glorious and infinite in the eyes of our Creator. My physical presence is infinitesimal, yet my personal worth is of immeasurable importance to my Heavenly Father.

Knowing that God knows us and loves us personally is like a light that illuminates our life and gives it meaning. Whoever I am, whether I have friends or not, whether I'm popular or not, and even if I feel rejected or persecuted by others, I have an absolute assurance that my Heavenly Father loves me. He knows my needs; He understands my concerns; He is eager to bless me.

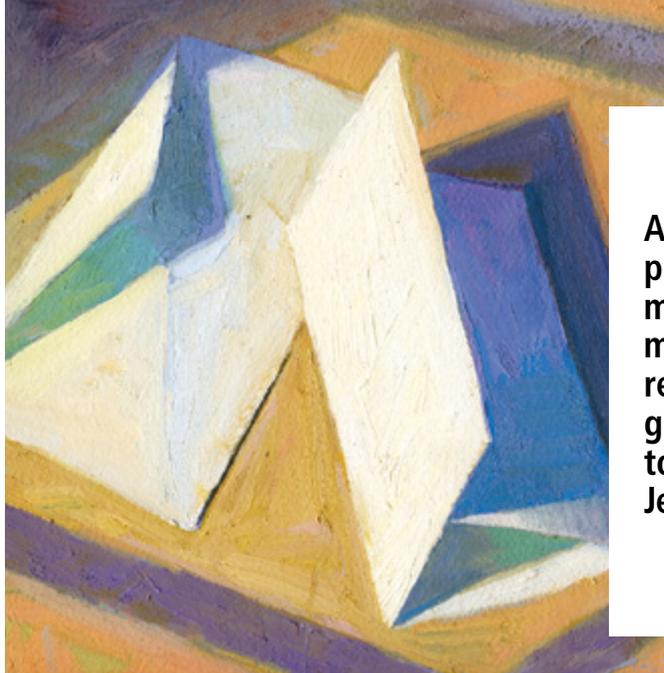
Imagine what it would mean to you if you could see yourself as God sees you. What if you looked at yourself with the same benevolence, love, and confidence that God does? Imagine the impact it would have on your life to understand your eternal potential as God understands it.

I testify that He is there. Seek Him! Search and study. Pray and ask. I promise that God will send you tangible signs of His existence and His love for you.

## 2. Become Who You Are<sup>2</sup>

Becoming who you really are sounds like a paradox. How can I become who I already am? I will illustrate this principle through a story.

The film *The Age of Reason* tells the story of Marguerite, a prosperous banker who leads a hectic life filled



**A letter from your premortal self might say, "Dear me, I hope you will remember that my greatest desire is to be a disciple of Jesus Christ."**

with travels and conferences. Even though she has an adoring suitor, she says she doesn't have time for marriage or children.

The day she turns 40 she receives a mysterious letter that says, "Dear me, today I am seven years old and I'm writing you this letter to help you remember the promises I made when I was seven, and also to remind you of what I want to become." The author of the letter is none other than Marguerite when she was seven years old. What follows are several letters in which the little girl describes in detail her life's goals.

Marguerite realizes that the person she has become is nothing like the person she wanted to become when she was a young girl. As she decides to reclaim the person she envisioned as a child, her life is turned upside down. She reconciles with her family

and determines to consecrate the rest of her life to serving people in need.<sup>3</sup>

If it were possible for you to receive a letter from your premortal life, what would it say? What impact would such a letter from a forgotten but very real world have on you if you were to receive it today?

This letter might say something like: "Dear me, I am writing to you so you will remember who I want to become. I hope you will remember that my greatest desire is to be a disciple of our Savior, Jesus Christ. I support His plan, and when I am on earth, I want to help Him in His work of salvation. Please also remember that I want to be part of a family that will be together for all eternity."

One of the great adventures of life is finding out who we really are and where we came from and then consistently living in harmony with our true

identity as children of God and with the purpose of our existence.

### 3. Trust in God's Promises

A teaching from the prophet Malachi is at the heart of the Restoration of the gospel: "And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers" (Joseph Smith—History 1:39). Thanks to the Restoration, you are the children of the promise. You will receive as an inheritance the promises made to your fathers.

Reread your patriarchal blessing. In this blessing the Lord confirms that you are tied to one of the twelve tribes of Israel, and because of this, through your faithfulness, you become an heir to the immense blessings promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God

promised Abraham: "For as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father" (Abraham 2:10).

These promises are tangible, and if we do our part, God will do His. On the other hand, these promises do not ensure that everything that happens in our lives will be in accordance with our expectations and desires. Rather, God's promises guarantee that what happens to us will be in accordance with His will. The greatest thing we can desire in life is to align our will with God's will—to accept His agenda for our lives. He knows everything from the beginning, has a perspective that we don't have, and loves us with an infinite love.

I illustrate this principle with a

personal experience. When I was young, I decided to prepare for the entrance exam to the best business schools in France. This preparation, which lasted a year, was very challenging. At the beginning of the year I decided that whatever the heaviness of the task, I would never let my studies prevent me from attending my Sunday meetings or from participating in an institute class once a week. I even accepted a call to serve as the clerk in my young adult ward. I was confident that the Lord would recognize my faithfulness and would help me accomplish my objectives.

At the end of the year, when exams approached, I felt that I had done my best. When I arrived for the examination at the most reputable school, I had full confidence that the Lord would answer my desires. Unfortunately, the oral exam in my strongest subject was an unexpected disaster—I received a grade that prevented me from getting into this highly coveted school. I was distraught. How could the Lord have abandoned me when I had persevered in my faithfulness?

When I presented myself at the oral exam for the second school on my list, I was filled with doubt. In this school the exam that was weighted the heaviest was an interview with a jury presided over by the director of the school. The

**I received one of the best grades possible, which allowed me to get into this school with a place of honor.**

beginning of the interview was normal—until I was asked a seemingly insignificant question: “We know that you studied a lot to prepare for this exam. But we would be interested to know what your activities were outside of your studies.”

My heart skipped a beat! For one year I had done only two things: study and go to church! I feared that the jury would negatively interpret a description of my membership in the Church. But in one second I made the decision to remain faithful to my principles.

For 15 minutes or so, I described my activities in the Church: my Sabbath meetings, institute classes, and responsibilities as the ward clerk. When I had finished, the director of the school spoke.

“You know, when I was young, I studied in the United States,” he said. “One of my best friends was a Mormon. He was a remarkable young man, someone who had great human qualities. I consider Mormons to be very good people.”

That day I received one of the best grades possible, which allowed me to get into this school with a place of honor.

I thanked the Lord for His goodness. It took me several years, however, to understand the miraculous blessing of not getting into the first school. In the second school, I met key people. The

benefits of my association with them became evident throughout the entire length of my career and are still important in my life and in the lives of members of my family.

If things don’t turn out the way you had hoped or expected after you have done all in your power, be ready to accept the will of your Heavenly Father. He will not inflict upon us anything that is not ultimately for our good. Listen for that calming voice that whispers in our ears: “All flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God” (D&C 101:16).

### **Your Future Is As Bright As Your Faith**

The more I contemplate the course of my life with my wife, Valérie, the more I believe that what has made the difference is that we shared a common vision of eternal life in our youth. We wanted to start an eternal family. We knew why we were on earth and what our eternal objectives were. We knew that God loved us and that we had great worth in His eyes. We had every confidence that He would answer our prayers in His way and at the time He deemed good.

I don’t know if we were ready to accept His will in all things because that was something we had to learn—and that we continue to learn. But we wanted to do our best to follow Him and consecrate ourselves to Him.

I testify, with President Monson, that your “future is as bright as your faith.”<sup>4</sup> Your happiness depends more on the principles you choose to follow than on the external circumstances of your life. Be faithful to these principles. God knows you and loves you. If you live in harmony with His eternal plan and if you have faith in His promises, then your future will shine!

You have dreams and goals? That’s good! Work with all your heart to accomplish them. Then let the Lord do the rest. He will make you into what you cannot make of yourself.

At all times, accept His will. Be ready to go where He asks you to go and to do what He asks you to do. Become the men and women He is nurturing you to become.

I testify that this life is a wonderful moment of eternity. We are here with a glorious goal—that of preparing to meet God. ■

*From a CES devotional address delivered in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on November 12, 2012. For the full text, go to [lds.org/broadcasts](http://lds.org/broadcasts).*

#### **NOTES**

1. See Thomas S. Monson, “Welcome to Conference,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 4–5.
2. This phrase is attributed to Pindar, one of the most celebrated Greek poets. See Pindar, *Pythian* 2.72, in *Olympian Odes, Pythian Odes*, ed. and trans. William H. Race (1997), 239.
3. See *L’âge de raison (With Love . . . from the Age of Reason)*, directed by Yann Samuël (2010).
4. Thomas S. Monson, “Be of Good Cheer,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 92.

# Sharing the Gospel Online

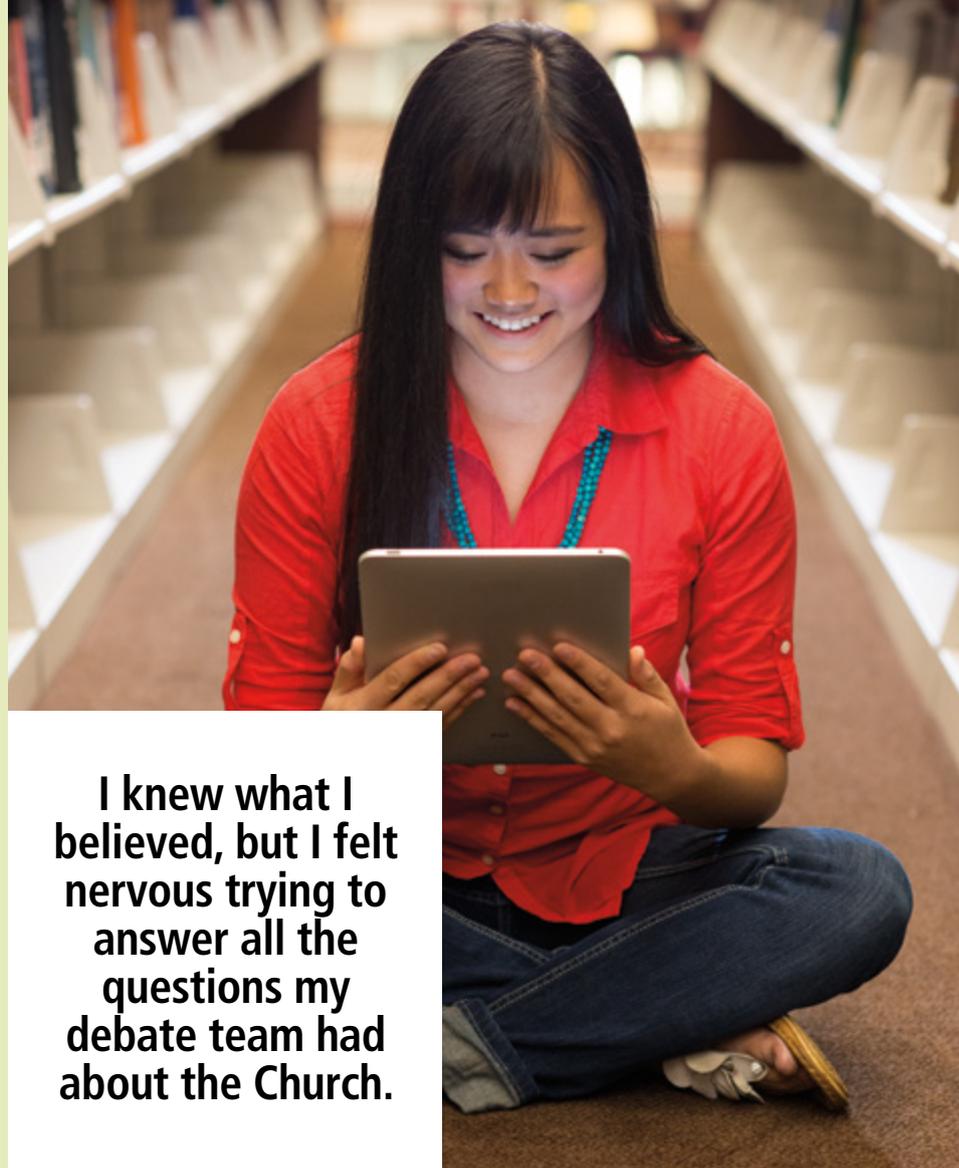
By Maria Mahonri-Yggrazil Arduo Andaca

I have not always been courageous in sharing the gospel with my friends. Many of them knew of my religion, but I never did more to share my testimony. Nevertheless, if someone had the wrong idea about the Church, I tried my best to correct it.

When I started college, I joined the debate society. The other members discovered I was a Latter-day Saint when I corrected them on what was said about “the Mormons” after a debate. I had never talked about my religion before, so I got a lot of questions that day. I felt scared and almost avoided answering. I knew what I believed, but I did not know how to share it. I prayed but didn’t seem to get an answer.

A few days later, while I was on Facebook, I saw an article from LDS.org that my leader from church had posted. It made me realize I could also post things from the Church. I looked up the topics my debate team had asked about, posted links on my wall, and tagged all those who were involved. I felt they would be better satisfied with the answers.

I had never posted about my beliefs



YOUNG ADULTS

**I knew what I believed, but I felt nervous trying to answer all the questions my debate team had about the Church.**

online before, so this has brought a lot more curious people asking about my religion. As they ask questions, I try to give the basic answers as well as links to Church materials. This way people do not have to rely only on my answers but can also rely on what the General Authorities say about their questions. When the conversations become more sensitive, I answer the person privately through messaging.

I am really glad the Church provides online materials. I still feel butterflies in my stomach whenever someone surprises me with a question about the Church. But now I no longer wait for their questions to come; I proactively post Church materials online. I know these materials can help both my member and non-member friends alike. ■

*The author lives in Metro Manila, Philippines.*

# Agency and Answers: RECOGNIZING REVELATION

*What sometimes seems an impenetrable barrier to communication  
is a giant step to be taken in trust.*



**By Elder  
Richard G. Scott**  
Of the Quorum of  
the Twelve Apostles

**A**cross from me a woman sat sobbing. With tear-filled eyes, she told me, “I don’t know what I believe anymore.” She spoke of having struggled and prayed many days to know how to make a vitally important decision in her life, without success. She anguished, “I don’t know what to do. If you’ll tell me what to do, I’ll do it.” With her hand on the scriptures, she said, “God told us He would help us. He answers everybody else’s prayers. Why won’t He answer mine?”

When one is caught in a whirlpool of emotion, it is difficult to find a way out alone. My prayer is to help you who have similar feelings.

When answers to urgent prayer don’t seem to come, it can be that we don’t understand some truths about prayer or because we don’t recognize answers when they come.

## **Principles of Prayer**

Communication with our Father in Heaven is not a trivial matter. It is a sacred privilege. It is based upon unchanging principles.

When we receive help from our Father in Heaven, it is in response to faith, obedience, and the proper use of agency.

It is a mistake to assume that every prayer we offer will be answered immediately. Some prayers require considerable effort on our part. True, sometimes impressions come when we have not specifically sought them. They generally concern something we need to know and are not otherwise able to find out.

***She said, “God told us He would help us.  
He answers everybody else’s prayers.  
Why won’t He answer mine?”***

We are here on earth to gain experience we can obtain in no other way. We are given the opportunity to grow, to develop, and to gain spiritual maturity. To do that, we must learn to apply truth. How we face challenges and resolve difficult problems is crucially important to our happiness.

To better understand prayer, I have listened to the counsel of others, pondered the scriptures, and studied the lives of prophets

and others. Yet what seems most helpful is seeing in my mind a child approaching trustingly a loving, kind, wise, understanding Father, who wants us to succeed.

Don't worry about your clumsily expressed feelings. Just talk to your Father. He hears every prayer and answers it in His way.

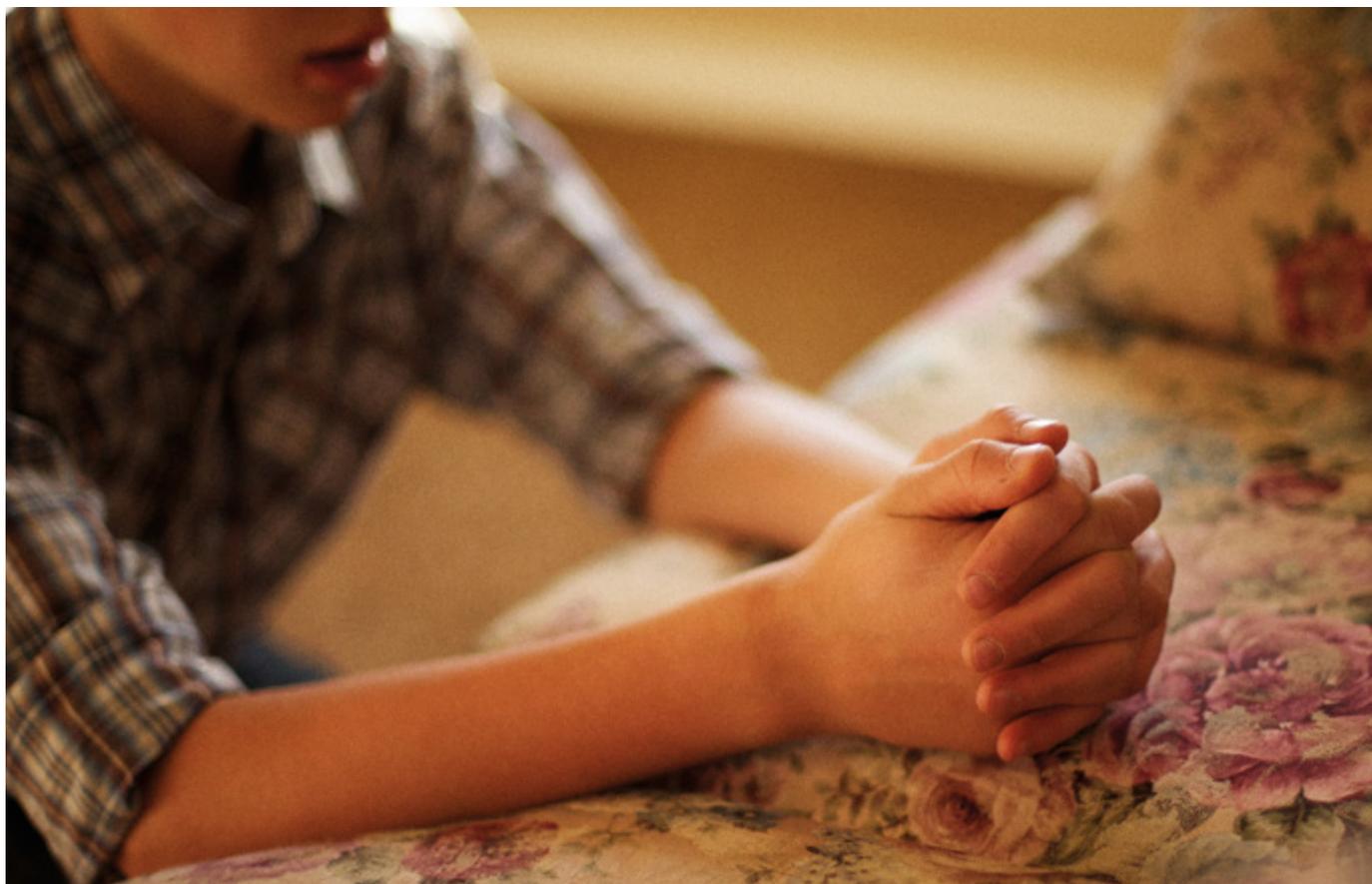
When we explain a problem and a proposed solution, sometimes He answers yes, sometimes no. Often He withholds an answer, not for lack of concern, but because He loves us—perfectly. He wants us to apply truths He has given us. For us to grow, we need to trust our ability to make correct decisions. We need to do what we *feel* is right. In time, He will answer. He will not fail us.

I have described the absolute reality of our relationship with our Father. There is nothing about us He does not know. He is conscious of our every need and could provide all of the answers. Yet, because His purpose is our eternal happiness, He encourages us to make the correct choices.

### Three Ways to Find Answers

#### **1. Look for Evidence That He Has Already Answered You**

Like many of us, Oliver Cowdery did not recognize the evidence of answers to prayers already given by the Lord. To open his—and our—eyes, this revelation was given through Joseph Smith:



“Blessed art thou for what thou hast done; for thou hast inquired of me, and behold, *as often as thou hast inquired thou hast received instruction* of my Spirit. If it had not been so, thou wouldst not have come to the place where thou art at this time.

“Behold, thou knowest that thou hast inquired of me and I did *enlighten thy mind*; and now I tell thee these things that thou mayest know that thou hast been enlightened by the Spirit of truth” (D&C 6:14–15; emphasis added).

If you feel that God has not answered *your* prayers, ponder these scriptures—then carefully look for evidence in your own life of His having already answered you.

## 2. Pay Attention to Feelings

To help each of us recognize answers given, the Lord said:

“If you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things.

*“Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter?”* (D&C 6:22–23; emphasis added).

The Lord provides further insight by counseling us to study a problem out in our mind and then to ask if it be right:

“If it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall *feel* that it is right.

“But if it be not right you shall have no such *feelings*, but you shall have a stupor of thought” (D&C 9:8–9; emphasis added).

## 3. Act When He Withholds an Answer

It is vitally important to recognize that the Lord also responds a third way to prayer by *withholding an answer* when the prayer is offered. Why would He do that?

He is our perfect Father. He loves us beyond our capacity to understand. He knows what is best for us. He sees the end from the beginning. He wants us to act to gain needed experience:

When He answers *yes*, it is to give us confidence.

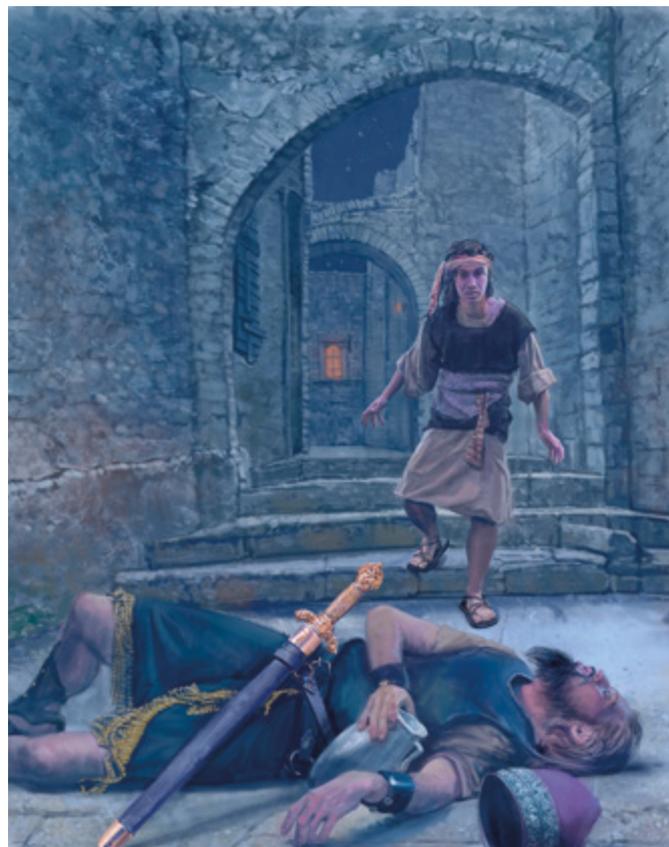
When He answers *no*, it is to prevent error.

When He *withholds an answer*, it is to have us grow through faith in Him, obedience to His commandments, and a willingness to act on truth. We are expected to

assume accountability by acting on a decision that is consistent with His teachings without prior confirmation. We are not to sit passively waiting or to murmur because the Lord has not spoken. We are to act.

Most often what we have chosen to do is right. He will confirm the correctness of our choices His way. That confirmation generally comes through packets of help found along the way. We discover them by being spiritually sensitive. They are like notes from a loving Father as evidence of His approval. If, in trust, we begin something that is not right, He will let us know before we have gone too far. We sense that help by recognizing troubled or uneasy feelings.

Nephi’s efforts to obtain the plates of brass show how the principles work (see 1 Nephi 3:6–7). After two unsuccessful attempts, Nephi remained confident. He crept into the city toward the house of Laban without all the answers.



He observed, “I was led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which I should do,” significantly adding, “*nevertheless I went forth*” (1 Nephi 4:6–7; emphasis added).

Nephi was willing to try time and again, using his best efforts. He expressed faith that he would be helped. He refused to be discouraged. But because he acted, had confidence in the Lord, was obedient, and properly used his agency, he received guidance. He was inspired step after step to success, and in his mother’s words was “given . . . *power* [to] accomplish the thing which the Lord hath commanded” (1 Nephi 5:8; emphasis added).

Nephi knew he was required to confide in God, to exercise faith, and to act so that he could receive help, step by step. He did not murmur nor ask for a full explanation. But, observe particularly, he did not wait passively for help. He acted! By following spiritual law, he was inspired and given power to act.

### Trusting God’s Will and Way

Sometimes answers to prayer are not recognized because we are too intent on wanting confirmation of our own desires. We fail to see that the Lord would have us do something else. Be careful to seek His will.

I confess I don’t know how to make a correct decision except where there is righteousness and trust in a Heavenly Father. The principles simply will not work when agency is intentionally used at variance with the will of God. If there is unrepented sin, we are left to our own devices to flounder and struggle on our own. We *can* be rescued through our own repentance.

When we seek inspiration to help make decisions, the Lord gives gentle promptings. These require us to think, to exercise faith, to work, to struggle at times, and to act. Seldom does the whole answer to a decisively important matter or complex problem come all at once. More often, it comes a piece at a time, without the end in sight.

I have saved the most important part about prayer until the end. It is gratitude! Our sincere efforts to thank our

beloved Father generate wondrous feelings of peace, self-worth, and love.

Why is it that the most impoverished seem to know best how to thank the Lord? In the highlands of Guatemala, members barely subsist. Going to the temple requires great sacrifice. A visit takes a year of preparation. There is hard work, sacrifice to save money and food, the spinning, dyeing, and weaving of new clothing. There is the long, bare-foot walk out of the mountains, the crossing of Lake Isabel,

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***Sometimes answers to prayer are not recognized because we are too intent on wanting confirmation of our own desires.***

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the bus rides with little food. Tired and worn, they arrive at the temple. They scrub until they shine, dress in their new clothing, and enter the house of the Lord.

Reclothed in white, they are taught by the Spirit, receive ordinances, and make covenants. One highland woman was greatly touched by the spirit and meaning of the endowment. Entering the celestial room, she saw others seated, with heads reverently bowed. Innocently, she knelt at the entrance to the room, oblivious to others. She bowed her head, sobbed, and for twenty minutes poured out her heart to her Father in Heaven. Finally, with her dress soaked with tears, she raised her head. The sensitive temple matron asked, “May I help?” She responded, “Oh, would you? This is my problem: I’ve tried to tell Father in Heaven of my gratitude for all of my blessings, but I don’t feel that I’ve communicated. Will you help me tell Him how grateful I am?”

This counsel about prayer is true. I have tested it thoroughly in the laboratory of my own personal life. I have discovered that what sometimes seems an impenetrable barrier to communication is a giant step to be taken in trust.

If you seek His help, be sure your life is clean, your motives are worthy, and you’re willing to do what He asks—for He *will* answer your prayers. He is your loving Father; you are His beloved child. He loves you perfectly and wants to help you. ■



What If I  
Don't Feel a  
**BURNING** in the  
**BOSOM**?

*When you know what to look for, you can more easily recognize the Holy Ghost.*

**By Rachel Nielsen**

“Invite Mr. Wood\* to seminary.” The thought popped into my mind as soon as I heard the announcement, and I immediately thought it was crazy. Why would I invite my music teacher to come to seminary at 5:30 in the morning?

The seminary president had just told our class that we would be having a teacher appreciation day. We were challenged to invite some of our schoolteachers to join us for a morning of seminary where we would thank them for their service.

*\* Name has been changed.*

The entire week after hearing this announcement, I thought about inviting Mr. Wood. Every time I went to seminary or saw him in music class, the thought came back: “Invite Mr. Wood to seminary.” After several days of this, I couldn’t ignore the thought any longer.

One morning as all the students in music class were getting out their instruments, I put my trombone aside and approached Mr. Wood. My heart was pounding and my hands were shaking, but when I opened

my mouth to extend the invitation, I felt comfort.

To my surprise, Mr. Wood said that he would come! He was curious about why I went to seminary every morning before school and wanted to learn more. After giving him all the details, I walked away full of joy.

During this experience, I didn’t feel a burning in the bosom (see D&C 9:8). But I did feel the Holy Ghost. The recurring thought to invite Mr. Wood (see D&C 128:1), the comfort I felt when I invited him (see John

14:26), and the joy I felt after I invited him (see Galatians 5:22) all came from the Spirit. But if I had been looking only for a burning in the bosom, I might have not recognized when the Holy Ghost was prompting me.

The Holy Ghost speaks in many ways, and when you study how He communicates, you will know what to look for as you strive to recognize when He is with you and when He is teaching or directing you.

### Look for the Small and Simple Things

Before looking at the many ways the Holy Ghost speaks to us, we need to remember that most often, revelation is quiet and small. If we are looking for an Alma-the-Younger experience with an angel and an earthquake, we may miss the more frequent and quieter promptings from the Holy Ghost. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles warns that if we “emphasize marvelous and dramatic spiritual manifestations,” we may overlook the “small and incremental spiritual impressions” that are more common.<sup>1</sup> As you try to recognize the Holy Ghost, look for the small and simple promptings.

### Look for Ways the Holy Ghost Communicates

If you’ve never felt a burning in the bosom, don’t worry. There are many

people who recognize the influence of the Holy Ghost in this way, but He also speaks in many other ways too, and you don’t have to feel a burning in the bosom to feel His presence. In fact, as you learn the ways the Holy Ghost inspires you and look for them in your life, you may find that He is communicating with you more than you realized.

This list includes only a small number of ways that the Holy Ghost communicates. Study the scriptures and the words of modern-day prophets as well as pages 96–97 in *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004) to discover more ways that He can speak to you.

“The spirit of revelation typically functions as thoughts and feelings that come into our minds and hearts by the power of the Holy Ghost. (See

D&C 8:1–2; 100:5–8.)”<sup>2</sup> The Holy Ghost can speak to you through:

- Feelings of love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, faith, meekness (see Galatians 5:22–23).
- Thoughts that occupy the mind or press on your feelings (see D&C 128:1).
- A desire to do good and obey the commandments (see Mosiah 5:2).
- A feeling that something is right (see D&C 9:8).
- Feelings of comfort (see John 14:26).
- Feelings that “enlarge [your] soul” (Alma 32:28).
- Thoughts that “enlighten [your] understanding” (Alma 32:28).
- A hunger for more truth (see Alma 32:28).
- Feeling constrained



#### WHAT IS A BURNING IN THE BOSOM?

“What does a ‘burning in the bosom’ mean? Does it need to be a feeling of caloric heat, like the burning produced by combustion? If that is the meaning, I have never had a burning in the bosom. Surely, the word ‘burning’ in this scripture signifies a feeling of comfort and serenity. That is the witness many receive. That is the way revelation works.”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Teaching and Learning by the Spirit,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1997, 13; *Liahona*, May 1999, 22.



## HOW DO I KNOW IF A THOUGHT COMES FROM ME OR THE HOLY GHOST?

“We have to act. Then we find out if it’s coming from me or if it’s the power of God. . . . Everything that invites and entices us to do good and to be good comes from God.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Patterns of Light: Discerning Light” (video), [LDS.org](https://www.lds.org). Watch the whole video at [lds.org/patternL6](https://www.lds.org/patternL6).

(encouraged) to take an action or restrained (held back) from doing something (see 1 Nephi 7:15; 2 Nephi 32:7).

### How These Thoughts and Feelings Can Come

Thoughts and feelings from the Holy Ghost can come:

- “Immediately and intensely.”
- “Subtly and gradually.”
- “So delicately that you may not even consciously recognize it.”<sup>3</sup>

Learn more about this by watching a video at [lds.org/go/revelationL6](https://www.lds.org/go/revelationL6).

Thoughts and feelings from the Holy Ghost may come to:

- Bring things to our remembrance (see John 14:26).

- Protect us from deception (see D&C 45:57).
- Testify of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ (see 2 Nephi 31:18).
- Help us teach (see D&C 84:85).
- Grant gifts of the Spirit (see D&C 46:11).
- Bring a remission of sins (see 2 Nephi 31:17).

### Look for the Good

When you’re trying to recognize the Spirit, think of the impression’s intended outcome: does the thought or feeling lead you to do good? Moroni 7:16 says, “Wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent

forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said, “How do we recognize the promptings of the Spirit? I don’t think that’s too difficult, really. . . . Does it persuade one to do good, to rise, to stand tall, to do the right thing, to be kind, to be generous? Then it is of the Spirit of God. If it is dark, sinister, ugly, not good, then you may know that it is of the adversary.”<sup>4</sup>

If you’re wondering whether or not you’re feeling the Spirit, ask yourself if the thought or the feeling is inviting you to do good. If it is, you can be assured that it is from God.

## Look for a Chance to Use Your Agency

If you're worthy and you're still having a hard time recognizing the Holy Ghost, take action. Heavenly Father has blessed you with agency, and sometimes He will require you to act without His guidance. He will ask you to exercise your faith by taking a step into the dark. President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, "Somewhere in your quest for spiritual knowledge, there is that 'leap of faith.' . . . It is the moment when you have gone to the edge of the light and stepped into the darkness to

discover that the way is lighted ahead for just a footstep or two."<sup>5</sup> If you faithfully act on the knowledge you already have, even without recognizing promptings from the Holy Ghost, Heavenly Father will make sure you don't go astray. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

### NOTES

1. David A. Bednar, "The Spirit of Revelation," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2011, 88.
2. David A. Bednar, "The Spirit of Revelation," 88.
3. David A. Bednar, "The Spirit of Revelation," 90.
4. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 260–61.
5. Boyd K. Packer, "The Quest for Spiritual Knowledge," *New Era*, Jan. 2007, 6; *Liahona*, Jan. 2007, 18.



## WHY IS IT HARD TO RECOGNIZE THE HOLY GHOST?

"Our Father expects you to learn how to obtain that divine help by exercising faith in Him and His Holy Son, Jesus Christ. Were you to receive inspired guidance just for the asking, you would become weak and ever more dependent on Them. They know that essential personal growth will come as you struggle to learn how to be led by the Spirit."

**Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "To Acquire Spiritual Guidance," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 7.**

## WHAT DOES THE SPIRIT FEEL LIKE?

"We do not have the words . . . which perfectly describe the Spirit" (Boyd K. Packer, "The Candle of the Lord," *Ensign*, Jan. 1983, 52; *Tambuli*, Dec. 1988, 34 ). Because it's hard to describe how the Spirit feels, everyone will describe it in a slightly different way. But regardless of these differences, we can learn a lot when others explain how the Holy Ghost speaks to them. Watch several people describe how they feel the Holy Ghost at [lds.org/go/powerL6](https://www.lds.org/go/powerL6).



# FOLLOW the Little PROMPTINGS

*Every whisper from  
the Holy Ghost  
is worth listening to.*

If a tornado were going to hurl an enormous tree trunk onto your bed during the night, you'd probably want to know ahead of time.

Wilford Woodruff (1807–98), who later became the fourth President of the Church, was once sleeping outside in his wagon with his wife and child when the Spirit whispered, “Get up and move [your] carriage.”<sup>1</sup> He could have dismissed it as a strange idea, but instead he obeyed. Half an hour later, a whirlwind snapped off an enormous tree and flung it through the air. The tree landed exactly where the wagon had been.

There are many such examples of miracles that happened as a result of following promptings.

But what about a prompting that inspires you to call a friend just to say hello? Or a prompting to put an extra pair of socks in your backpack for your next hike? Following such promptings likely won't lead to dramatic outcomes, but they're still important.

The friend you call might be having a hard day. A phone call could cheer him up. On the hike, an extra pair of socks could mean the difference between a comfortable outing and painful blisters if your feet got wet unexpectedly.

President Thomas S. Monson has taught: “We watch. We wait. We listen for that still, small voice. When it speaks, wise men and women obey. We do not postpone following promptings of the Spirit.”<sup>2</sup>

Sometimes spiritual promptings are urgent. More often, however, they are gentle. Heavenly Father has promised to instruct us “line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little” (2 Nephi 28:30).

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught: “Most frequently, revelation comes in small increments over time and is granted according to our desire, worthiness, and preparation.”<sup>3</sup>

Most likely, none of us will need to dodge a tree trunk tossed at us by a tornado. Yet we can be certain there will always be some small and simple good we can do as we pay attention to the Spirit. ■

#### NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* (2004), 47.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “The Spirit Giveth Life,” *Ensign*, May 1985, 68.
3. David A. Bednar, “The Spirit of Revelation,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 88.

# A BLESSING FOR MY BROTHER

By Jesse Jones

I learned about the power and blessings of the priesthood at an unfortunate time. A few years ago, when my little brother was 14, he wrecked on his motorcycle and snapped his leg in half. My dad called and told me they were taking him to the hospital. I had a sick feeling in my stomach as I rushed to the hospital. When I got there, I saw one of my uncles. He told me how bad the accident was.

Fearing what I would see, I opened the door where my brother was and stepped into the room. I took one step, closed my eyes, and was instantly at peace. Just as I will never forget the sick feeling I had, I will never forget the feeling of peace and comfort that came over me. I recognized the feeling—it was the Spirit.

I then heard my father speaking. He and my uncle were giving my brother a priesthood blessing. He humbly blessed his son in the name of Jesus Christ to be OK, to heal, to have his leg work properly again.

After the blessing, everyone was quiet for a while. I knew at that moment that I had to live worthy to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and be able to perform blessings for my future children.

When we gathered in the hall outside my brother's room, my parents started to discuss what they should do. They debated whether to leave Mexico to take him to a doctor in the United States or to have the surgery performed here. Whatever option they felt was best for my brother, I knew he had already received the best attention he could receive. He had received a blessing by two men holding the priesthood, so no matter what my parents decided, my brother was going to be fine.

They decided to stay in Mexico for the operation. Doctors put a plate and 10 screws into my brother's leg. It healed well, and a few months later he joined a football team. The blessing was fulfilled just as my dad had said.

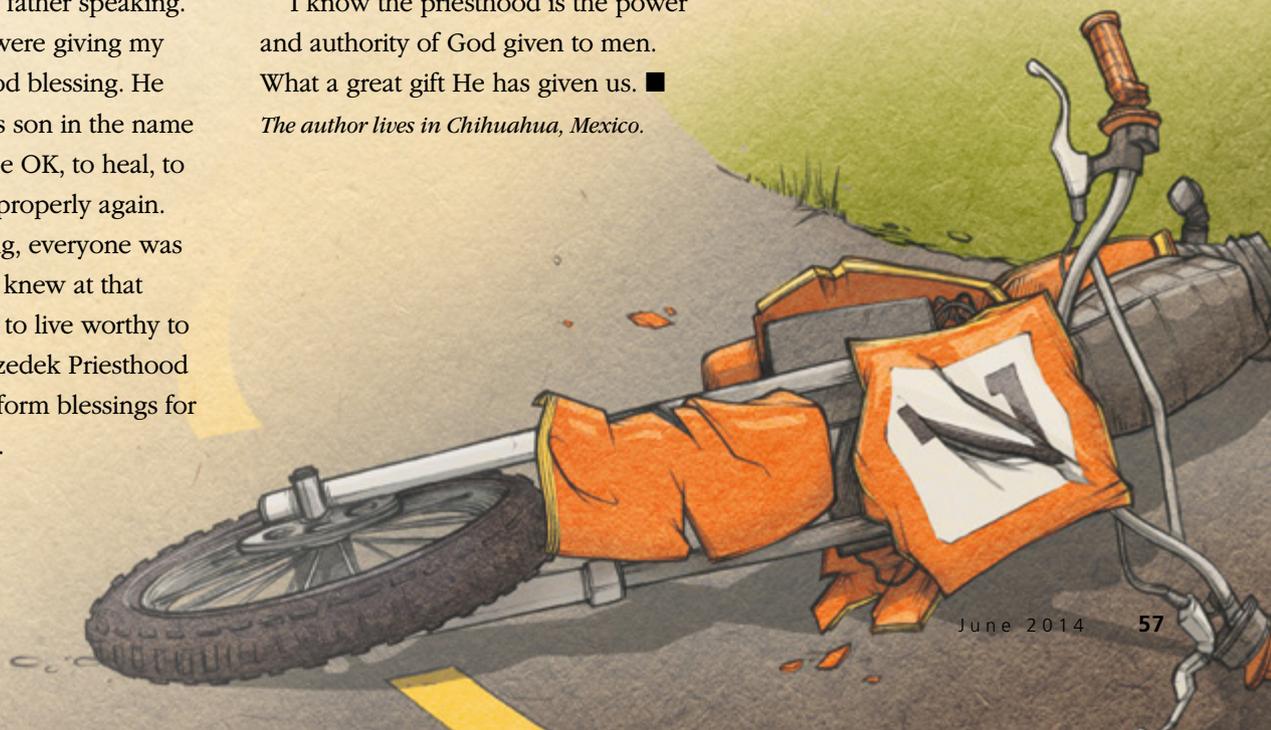
I know the priesthood is the power and authority of God given to men. What a great gift He has given us. ■

*The author lives in Chihuahua, Mexico.*



"When we receive the priesthood, we receive the authority to act in the name of God and lead in ways of truth and righteousness. This authority is a vital source of righteous power and influence for the benefit of God's children on earth and will last beyond the veil."

**Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Doctrines and Principles Contained in the Articles of Faith," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 47.**



# “What am I supposed to think about during the sacrament?”

**A**lthough we stand as witnesses of Jesus Christ at all times, in all things, and in all places (see Mosiah 18:9), sometimes the influences in the world around us compete for our attention. The sacrament gives us a chance to focus our thoughts on the Savior without distractions.

During the sacrament, you can think about the meaning and beauty of the ordinance. Partaking of the tokens of the Savior’s body and blood can help you reflect on His infinite and atoning sacrifice. When you take the sacrament, you are renewing your baptismal covenant. As you do so, you can recommit yourself to always remember Him and keep His commandments.

You can improve your sacrament experience by preparing yourself spiritually. During the week, consider studying general conference talks or passages of scripture that help you focus on the Savior’s sacrifice and your own discipleship. During the sacrament hymn and prayers, focus on the words you sing and hear, and contemplate their meaning.

During the sacrament, take time to think about the changes you are making in your personal life to become more like Jesus Christ. After partaking of the sacrament worthily, you can feel clean and pure, just as you did on your baptism day.

## Turn Your Thoughts to the Atonement

During the sacrament, my thoughts turn to Jesus Christ and His Atonement. It is difficult for me to express how I feel during the sacrament when I think about the Atonement of Jesus Christ. I know that Jesus Christ was chosen to be our Redeemer. I know He lives.

*Nephi B., age 20, Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo*

## Think of Jesus Christ



During the sacrament I think about what the Savior went through so we can repent of the mistakes we have made.

I also think of all the blessings He has given me and of the amazing miracles He has performed and will perform. We are so blessed to be able to partake of the sacrament so that we can repent of our sins and commit to do better.

*Andee B., age 13, Utah, USA*

## Ponder the Words of Sacrament Hymns



The sacrament hymns teach what we should think about during the sacrament. For example, my favorite sacrament

hymn, “In Humility, Our Savior” (*Hymns*, no. 172), says, “Let me not forget, O Savior, Thou didst bleed and die for me when thy heart was stilled and broken on the cross at Calvary.” Remembering the words of sacrament hymns during this sacred ordinance helps me feel peace and increases my gratitude for Jesus Christ’s Atonement.

*Austin B., age 15, Alberta, Canada*

## Remember and Recognize

The purpose of the sacrament is to renew our covenants with our Heavenly Father and to be washed clean of the sins we have repented of. During the sacrament, we remember Christ’s sacrifice for us and ponder



how we are applying it in our lives. I try to think about what I have done during the past week and how well I have kept my covenants with my Father. I recognize the sins I have committed and focus on how I can use the Atonement to overcome them. When I do this, the sacrament is an uplifting and spiritually strengthening experience.

*Abigail P., age 14, Arizona, USA*

### Give Thanks for Blessings



During the sacrament we should think about how great the sacrifice was that our Savior made for us and have our hearts full of gratitude. When I take the sacrament, I like to thank Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, for the blessings I have received.

*Elen S., age 16, Paraíba, Brazil*

### Keep Your Mind from Wandering



I have a little card tucked inside my scriptures that I pull out every Sunday during the sacrament. It's bookmarking Mosiah 18, where Alma sets forth the baptismal covenant. The card has little notes, such as "Be grateful for the Atonement," written on it to help me remember the purpose and holiness of the sacrament. Reviewing the notes helps me keep my mind focused on the purpose and sanctity of the sacrament.

*Alisha M., age 19, Texas, USA*

### Remember the Last Supper



We should think about the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the importance of partaking worthily of the symbols of His body and His blood. We can also think about the time when He blessed the bread and wine with His Twelve Apostles.

*Jonás A., age 18, Morelos, Mexico*

### Reflect on Your Covenants

When I was younger, the only thing I thought about during the sacrament was how I could be quiet. Now that I am a priesthood bearer, I understand that for the sacrament to have meaning and help me grow spiritually, I need to reflect during it. I think about the Savior's Atonement and how He showed love for us. I also think about how taking the sacrament can strengthen my faith and desire to fulfill my baptismal covenant.

*Levi F., age 19, Abia, Nigeria*



### SET ASIDE THE WORLD

"When I was a child, beautiful music was played during the passing of the sacrament.

The Brethren soon asked us to stop that practice because our minds were centered on the music rather than on the atoning sacrifice of our Lord and Savior. During the administration of the sacrament, we set aside the world. It is a period of spiritual renewal as we recognize the deep spiritual significance of the ordinance offered to each of us personally. If we were to become casual in partaking of the sacrament, we would lose the opportunity for spiritual growth."

**Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "As Now We Take the Sacrament," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2006, 41.**

## UPCOMING QUESTION

"One of my friends wants to try something bad just once so she can relate when people talk about it. How can I help her understand that's not a good idea?"

Submit your answer and, if desired, a high-resolution photograph by July 15, 2014, at [liahona.lds.org](http://liahona.lds.org), by email to [liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org), or by mail (see address on page 3).

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

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



By Elder  
Anthony D. Perkins  
Of the Seventy

# TITHING PROVIDES INNER STRENGTH

*Decide now to pay an honest tithe. Doing so will help you learn that the Lord keeps His promises.*

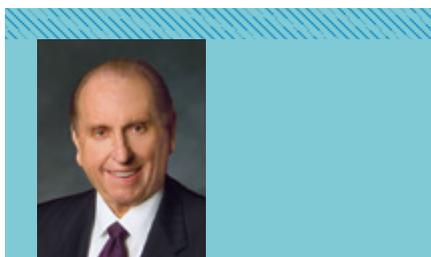
President Thomas S. Monson teaches that “the honest payment of tithing provides a person the inner strength and commitment to comply with the other commandments.”<sup>1</sup> I was fortunate to gain a testimony of this principle while still a young man.

When I was 14 years old, I began my first job, earning 2 U.S. dollars per hour as a construction laborer. The paycheck for my first week totaled 80 dollars. I wanted to buy an eight-track tape stereo, which was the newest music technology at the time. The full-function model I wanted cost 320 dollars. I excitedly shared with Mom and Dad my intent to purchase the stereo after completing four weeks of work.

## More than Four Weeks

My parents wisely taught, “It will take more than four weeks to earn enough money to buy that music player. You should express gratitude

to God for His many blessings by paying 10 percent of your income as tithing. You will need to pay the government about 10 percent in taxes. And you should learn while young to obey the counsel of prophets in preparing financially for the future, including your mission; we suggest you set aside 30 percent of your earnings in a savings account.”



## HE WILL OPEN A WAY

“All of us can afford to pay tithing. In reality, none of us can afford not to pay tithing. The Lord will strengthen our resolve. He will open a way to comply.”

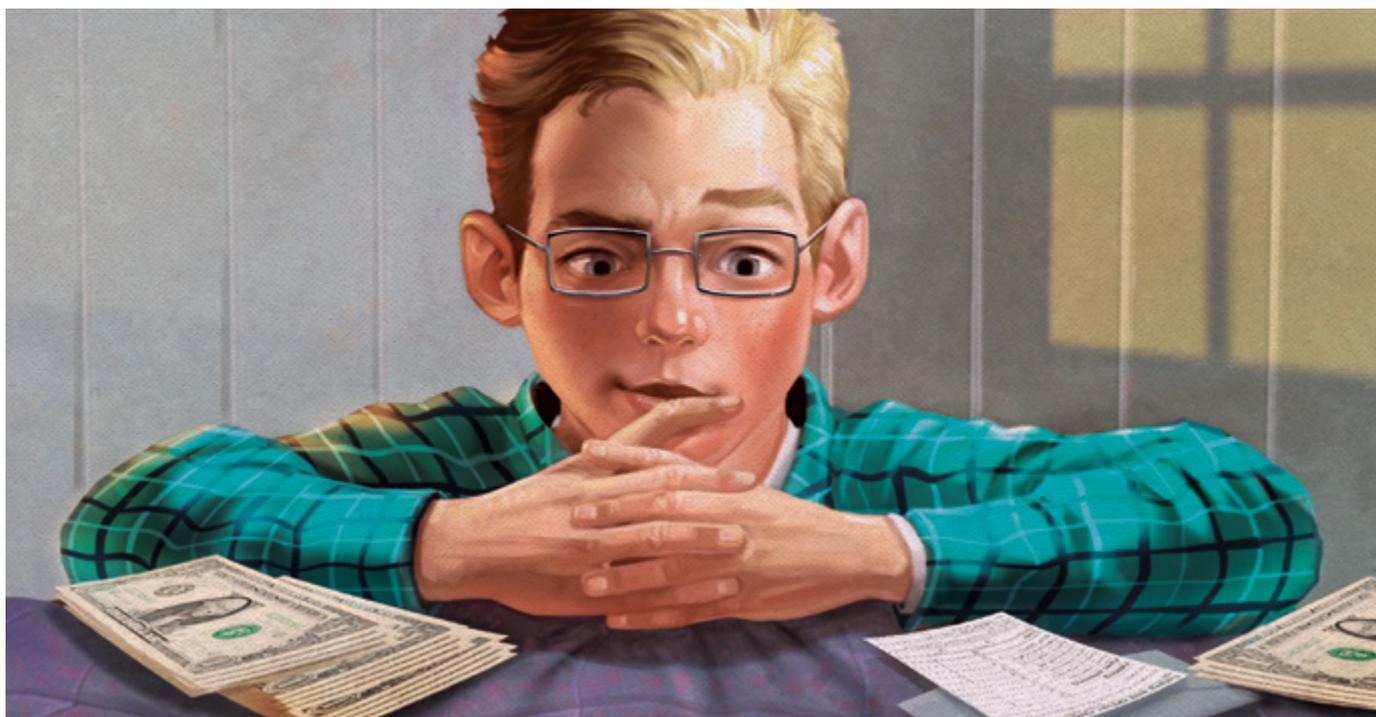
President Thomas S. Monson, “Be Thou an Example,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 44; *Liahona*, Jan. 1997, 42.

My teenage mind quickly calculated that if I did as my parents taught, I would have only 40 dollars each week to spend, which meant I would have to work at least two months to purchase my desired stereo. I found myself at a critical decision point—would obtaining material possessions be my priority, or would I sacrifice to pay tithing and set aside savings?

## Pay Tithing First

*For the Strength of Youth* counsels: “Pay [tithing] first, even when you think you do not have enough money to meet your other needs. Doing so will help you develop greater faith, overcome selfishness, and be more receptive to the Spirit.”<sup>2</sup>

I decided at age 14 to pay an honest tithing for the remainder of my life. I determined to follow the prophet in saving money for my mission and future education. This experience also taught me to distinguish between wants and needs. I wanted the newest



technology, but I did not need it. So I decided to buy a much less expensive model with fewer functions, and it was still performing well when I left on my mission.

### Promises Kept

As I learned through paying tithing that the Lord keeps His promises, my faith grew stronger and so did my desire to keep His other commandments. I learned that if I contributed a generous fast offering, He would answer my prayers and guide me continually (see Isaiah 58:6–11). I learned that if I read the Book of Mormon, He would manifest the truth of it to me by the power of the Holy Ghost (see Moroni 10:4–5). I learned that if I obeyed the Word of Wisdom, He would give me health, wisdom, and knowledge and that I could “run and not be weary” (see D&C 89:18–21). And I learned that if I kept the law of chastity, the Holy Ghost could be my constant

companion and the Savior would give me confidence to one day stand unashamed in His presence (see D&C 121:45–46).

Another way paying tithes and offerings has increased my inner strength is through temple covenants. *For the Strength of Youth* teaches, “In order to enter the temple, you must be a full-tithe payer.”<sup>3</sup> When I enter the holy temple, I feel God’s presence and His love. I testify that in temple ordinances, we receive “power from on high” (D&C 95:8) to cheerfully meet and overcome the challenges of mortality.

### A Blessing in Store

Paying tithes and offerings has increased my faith that the Lord fulfills His promises. Through the prophet Malachi, He declared, “Bring ye all the tithes . . . and prove me now herewith, . . . if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there

shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:10).

Throughout my life, even during financial trials early in my marriage, God always opened the windows of heaven so that our family received the temporal necessities of life. I testify that through obedience to the law of tithing, your faith will grow into a great source of strength in your life.

I invite each youth—and every member—to hearken unto Jesus Christ and His prophets by paying a full tithe and a generous fast offering throughout your life. I promise that the Lord will strengthen you and prosper you in accomplishing your righteous desires according to His holy purposes. ■

### NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Be Thou an Example,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 44; *Liahona*, Jan. 1997, 42.
2. *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), 38.
3. *For the Strength of Youth*, 38.

# FINDING MY WAY BACK TO THE CHURCH



*I tried to find answers outside the gospel, but all I found was emptiness.*

**By Doug Boyack**

I was raised in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but in college I decided that I didn't need the Church anymore. I began a shallow, selfish search for "truth" in other places. Finding no answers that brought me peace or joy, I fell into a deep spiritual darkness. I felt that I would never be happy again.

However, I could still see that I had been happier when I was active in the Church. I began to go through the motions of Church activity, hoping to find some deliverance from the gloom that controlled my life. But my halfhearted efforts did not accomplish much. I focused on my studies, hoping they would distract me from the emptiness I felt. This helped temporarily, but it provided no real answer.

After stumbling around and realizing I was going nowhere, I decided to take a break from school and to travel. I had saved a little money but not enough to last very long. Before leaving, I resolved to exercise some real faith and pay tithing on my modest savings. This wasn't easy. I would be far from home, and soon I would be broke. Still, I hoped there was a God, and I knew that I would need His help.

I wrote a check for my tithing, sent it to my bishop, packed my Book of Mormon, and set off. Almost immediately I felt the warmth of the Spirit. I was amazed to feel my doubt and sorrow replaced with understanding and optimism. From Idaho to Washington, D.C., members of the Church reached out to me and, more

important, helped me to develop faith and righteous desires. It seemed like home was all around me.

After a short time, I knew I would be cutting my travels short—not for lack of money but because a much better journey awaited me. Returning home, I met with my bishop and stake president. With their help, I was soon serving the Lord as a missionary.

Now each time I pay my tithing or meet with Church leaders, I remember the "beginning" of my true conversion. Since then I have experienced ups and downs, but I have worked to remain spiritually strong. I will always be grateful for Heavenly Father's accepting my meager offering of faith and extending His loving arm to me. ■

*The author lives in California, USA.*

# UNBREAKABLE

"We cannot break the Ten Commandments. We can only break ourselves against them."

(Cecil B. DeMille, American film director and producer, "Commencement Address" [Brigham Young University, May 31, 1957], 5; [speeches.byu.edu](https://speeches.byu.edu).)



# A Blessing for Mamá

By Susan Barrett

Based on a true story

*“The priesthood is restored, the truth made known to man, that God has spoken to the earth, His pow’r is here again” (Children’s Songbook, 89).*

Primary was over, and 10-year-old Ruben was looking for the missionaries. They were going to walk home with him. Elder Sánchez and Elder Rojas had taught Ruben and his older brother, Diego, the missionary lessons and had baptized and confirmed them. Now Ruben thought of them as his best friends.

Ruben looked through the window of a closed classroom door. There they were! But what were they doing? Their hands were on the head of a man in the ward, and it looked like they were saying a prayer like they had when Ruben was confirmed.

When they came out of the room, he asked the missionaries, “What were you doing?”

“We were giving Brother Mendoza a priesthood blessing,” said Elder Sánchez. “It’s like a special prayer, and it can give comfort, help someone know how to solve a problem, or even heal someone who is sick.”



ILLUSTRATION BY SIMINI BLOCKER

The next Sunday Ruben looked for the missionaries after church again. “Can you come to my house and give my mamá a blessing?” he asked. “Her back is hurting a lot.”

They all hurried to Ruben’s house. Elder Sánchez and Elder Rojas talked to Ruben’s mamá. She was a member of the Church, but she had not been to church for a long time.



“We understand you are not feeling well, Sister Garcia,” Elder Rojas said.

“My back has been hurting badly for several weeks,” she told them. “I have met with many doctors, but they haven’t been able to help me.”

“Ruben asked us to come and give you a priesthood blessing,” Elder Sánchez said. “Would you like us to do that?”

“Oh, yes, please,” Mamá said.

As the missionaries put their hands on her head and gave her a blessing, tears rolled down Mamá’s cheeks. When they were finished, Ruben hugged her. “I know the blessing will help you,” he told her.

Three days later the missionaries returned to see how Ruben’s mamá was feeling. “I am so happy to see you,” she told them. “The pain in my back started to go away after you gave me the blessing, and now it is completely gone!”

“Heavenly Father healed you, Sister Garcia,” Elder Sánchez said. “And He allowed us to help Him by using our priesthood authority to bless you.”

The next Sunday—and every Sunday after that—Mamá went to church with Ruben and Diego. She knew that the power of the priesthood was real, and so did Ruben. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

## WHAT IS THE PRIESTHOOD?

The priesthood is the authority to act in Heavenly Father’s name.

Boys in the Church can hold the Aaronic Priesthood when they are worthy and 12 years old. They can hold the Melchizedek Priesthood when they are worthy and 18.

The offices in the Aaronic Priesthood include deacon, teacher, and priest. The offices in the Melchizedek Priesthood include elder, high priest, patriarch, Seventy, and Apostle.



### Some things Aaronic Priesthood holders can do:

- Prepare the sacrament (teachers and priests), bless it (priests), and pass it (all)
- Be home teachers (teachers and priests)
- Baptize (priests)
- Gather fast offerings (deacons, teachers, and priests)
- Ordain others in the Aaronic Priesthood (priests)

### Some things Melchizedek Priesthood holders can do:

- Do everything Aaronic Priesthood holders do, plus:
- Confirm members of the Church after baptism
- Give priesthood blessings
- Direct Church meetings and extend callings



By Elder  
Neil L. Andersen

Of the Quorum of  
the Twelve Apostles

*The members of the  
Quorum of the Twelve  
Apostles are special  
witnesses of Jesus Christ.*

# How can I be like a missionary NOW?

Pray for ways to  
share the gospel.

Pray to know who you can  
invite to church.

If you're not a full-time  
missionary with a missionary  
badge pinned on your coat,  
you can still be a missionary  
in your heart.

Pray for the full-time  
missionaries.

Hold up your light and be  
an example of Jesus.

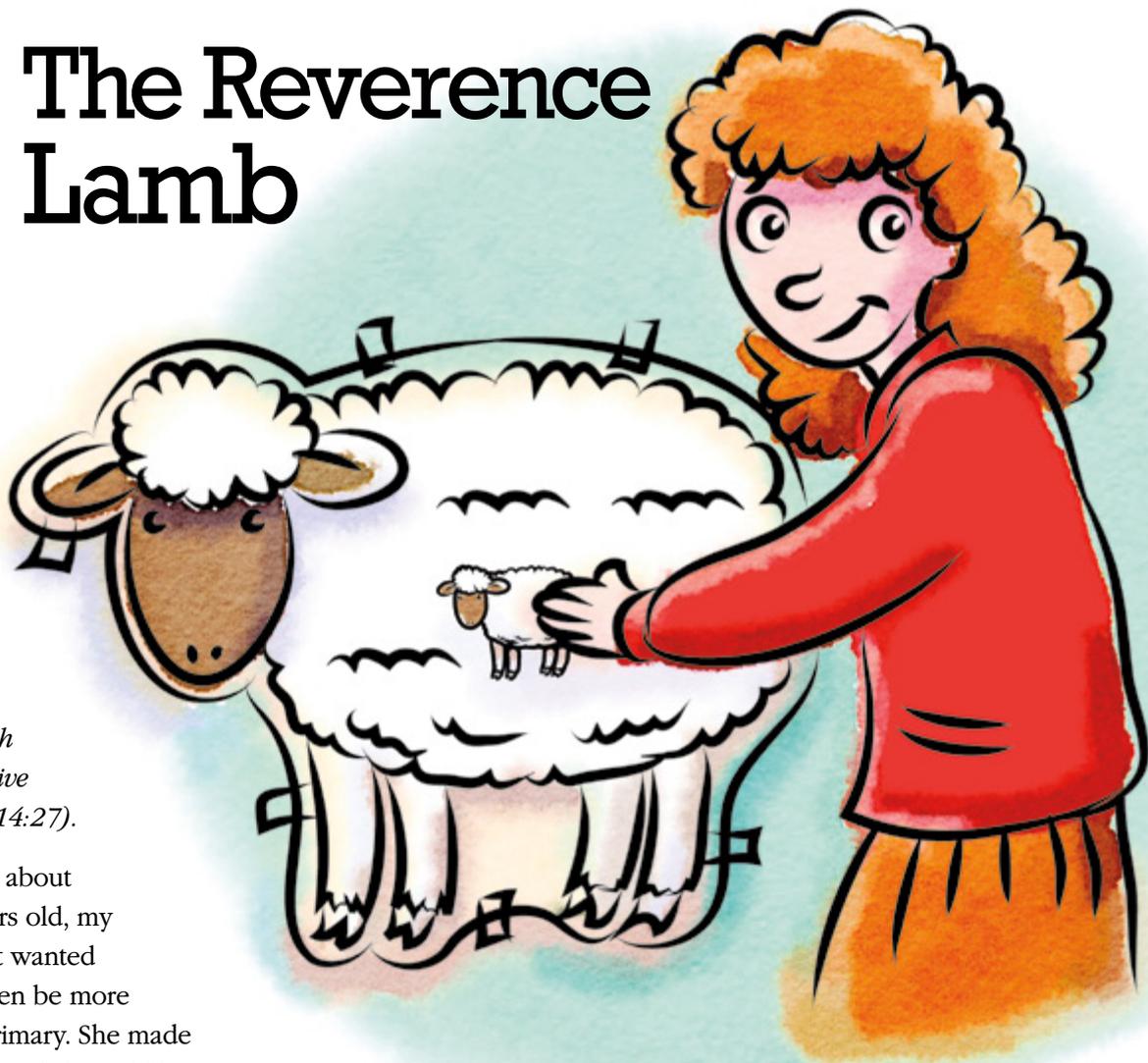
*From "It's a Miracle," Ensign or  
Liahona, May 2013, 77–80.*





By Elder  
Scott D. Whiting  
Of the Seventy

# The Reverence Lamb



*“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you” (John 14:27).*

**W**hen I was about seven years old, my Primary president wanted to help the children be more reverent in our Primary. She made a large bulletin board shaped like a

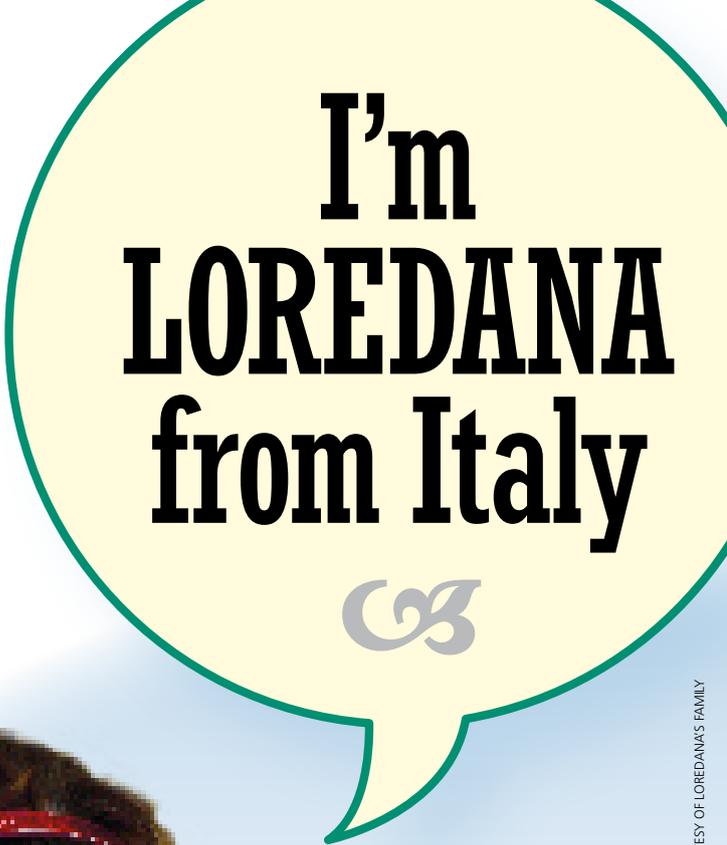
lamb. Whenever a child was reverent, she put a lamb-shaped sticker on the bulletin board next to his or her name. I really wanted one of those lamb stickers. So one day in Primary, I sat quietly with my arms folded and stared at the Primary president so she would notice me being reverent. A taller boy sat in front of me, so I slid down the bench so she could see me.

Then, as I sat there being reverent, the pianist started playing a sweet, quiet Primary song. As I

listened, a peaceful feeling came over me, and tears started to come down my cheeks. I didn't know why I felt so happy and peaceful inside.

After Primary I told my mom about what I had felt, and she told me that it was the Spirit. That day, I learned what the Spirit feels like. Whenever I need to make important decisions and need guidance from the Spirit, I remember how peaceful I felt that day, and I can recognize how the Spirit speaks to me. ■





# I'm LOREDANA from Italy



## *Ciao, amici!*\*

From an interview by  
Amie Jane Leavitt

**D**oes the city where you live have a nickname? The city where Loredana lives is sometimes called the Eternal City. Loredana lives in Rome, Italy. This beautiful, historic city has many interesting places to visit, like the Colosseum and Trevi Fountain.

Every school morning, after reading the scriptures together, Loredana and her family eat breakfast (usually cereal and milk). Then she goes to school. She especially likes art and computer classes. When she gets home, she likes to play with her little brother, Francesco. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

*\* "Hello, friends!" in Italian.*

*My mom read the Book of Mormon to me every night even before she joined the Church. When my mom decided to have the missionaries teach us and I heard them read the Book of Mormon, I recognized it.*



PHOTOGRAPH OF ROME BY SERGEY BORISOVISTOCK/THINKSTOCK; OTHER PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF LOREDANA'S FAMILY

*On Christmas and Easter, I like giving my friends and family handmade gifts. I make my own cards and photo frames to put special pictures in.*



*My mom takes care of an elderly lady named Angelina. Sometimes on Saturdays I tell Angelina stories and sing her Primary songs. I enjoy helping my friend Angelina.*

*My family likes to go to the beach, visit historic sites in Rome, or just play on the playground.*



*I often help my stepdad make pasta Amatriciana for dinner.*

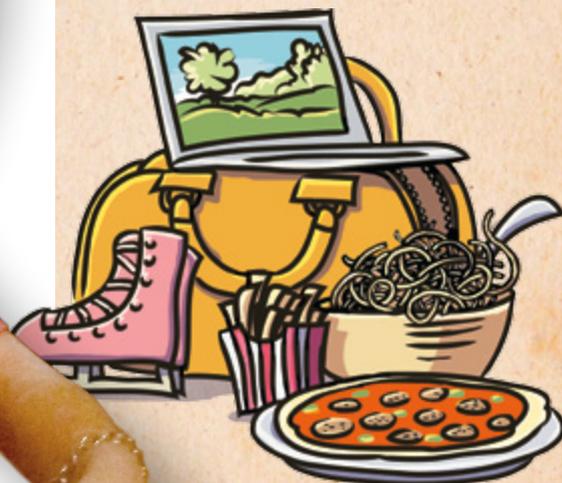


**I LOVE TO SEE THE TEMPLE**

*My mom and stepdad plan to be sealed in the Rome Italy Temple after it is dedicated. I am excited for that day too. It will be a very special day for our whole family!*

**READY TO GO!**

*Loredana's bag is packed with some of her favorite things. Which of these things would you pack in your bag?*



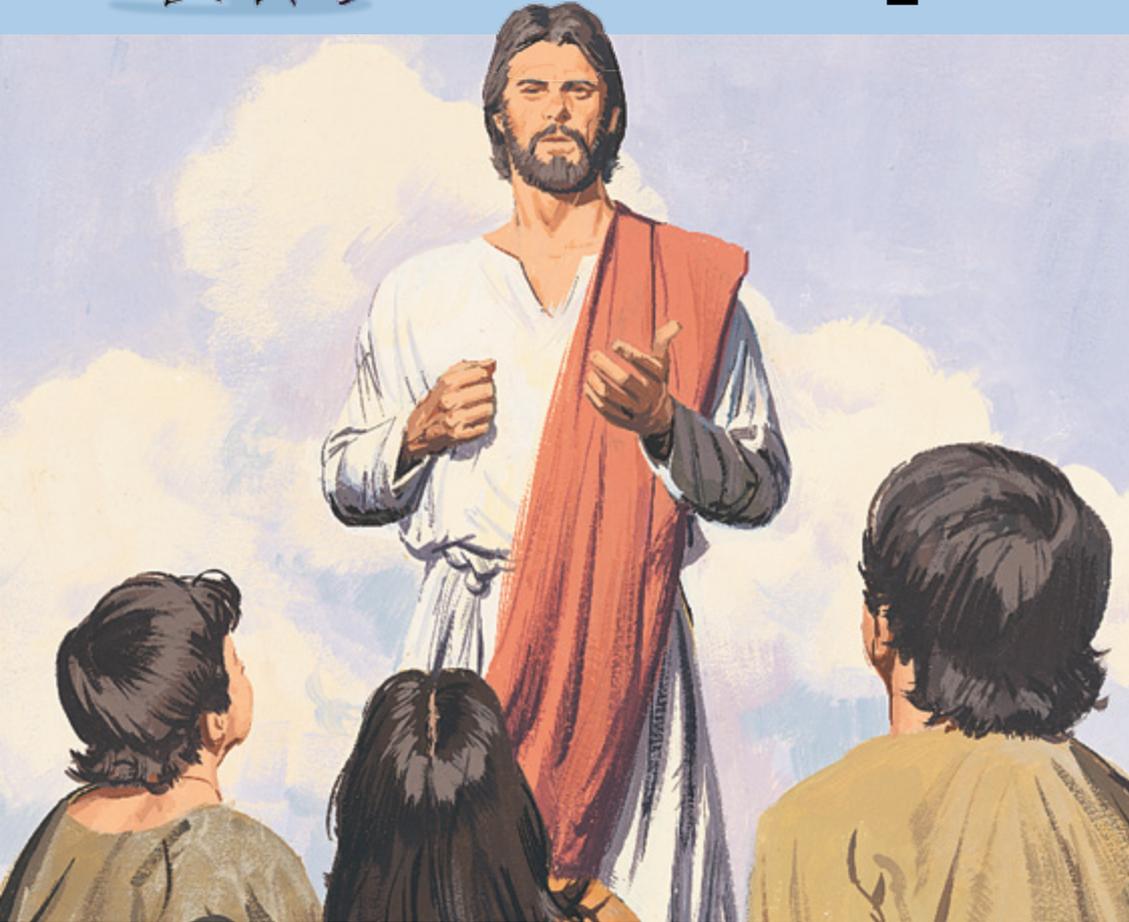
# Massimo from Italy

Massimo is dressed in his football uniform, but you can also dress him in his church clothes or his Italian folk costume. Glue this page onto heavy paper before you color and cut out the pieces. ■





# Be Helpful



## What Jesus Taught

One day Jesus was teaching about what we should do when someone asks for our help. He said we should do or give even more than the person asks for. Find out why this is called “going the second mile” by reading Jesus’s words in Matthew 5:40–42.



## Following Jesus Today

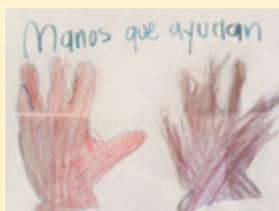


One night my brother and sister and I started cleaning up the whole house. Then my dad came in and said it was time for bed. In the morning I woke up and my mom said, “Thank you for cleaning up the house.”

Elizabeth C., age 8, Alberta, Canada

I like to help people. When my mother participates in a service activity, I like to go with her and help.

“Helping Hands,” Luis N., age 6,



## This Month’s Challenge

- Look for ways to help your Primary teacher during class.
- Help a brother or sister with homework or a chore.
- Surprise a parent by cleaning up a room without being asked.
- I challenge myself to . . .

# Making Music in Uganda

*Conduct the music in front of everybody? George can handle it.*

By David Dickson  
Church Magazines

Not many children serve in a Church calling before they graduate from Primary. But George N. from Uganda was only five years old when he was called to be the chorister in his branch.

The chorister is the person who stands up in front of everybody during sacrament meeting to lead the singing. It's an important job!

"I used to be very nervous when I was younger," George says. But even then he always did his best.

He improved every week. Before long he was leading the music confidently.

George enjoys serving in his calling. "I feel good," he says. "I feel like the Spirit is inside the room."

Music is a big part of George's life. He also plays the piano

and guitar. Of course, it helps that George comes from a musical family. They all love singing together—George, his parents, his six sisters, and his one brother. From oldest to youngest their names are Rosillah, Mirriam, Nancy, Ashley, George, Chayene, Onidah, and Gideon. Their favorite song to sing as a family is "A Child's Prayer" (*Children's Songbook*, 12).

Now that George is 12, he is busy during part of sacrament meeting when he helps pass the sacrament. His younger brother, Gideon, age 5, helps out by conducting the music some of the time. George taught Gideon how.

Both brothers smile happily when they lead the music. They know they are helping bring the Spirit into the meeting. ■



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF KARL AND ROBIN BECKLE; ILLUSTRATIONS BY PHYLLIS LUCH AND BRADLEY CLARK



## ABOUT GEORGE

- Besides music, one of George's hobbies is playing football.
- His favorite foods are rice, sweet potatoes, beans, and peanuts.
- His favorite subjects in school are English and mathematics.
- George enjoys playing board games with his family. His favorite board game is called Scattergories.



Book of Mormon Stories

The image shows a page from a music book. At the top, the title 'Book of Mormon Stories' is written. Below the title is an illustration of a yellow ship on blue waves. To the left of the ship, the time signature '4/4' is circled in red. Below the illustration is a musical score with three staves: a vocal line in treble clef, a bass line in bass clef, and a piano accompaniment line in treble clef. The tempo is marked '♩ = 84-92'.

## HOW TO CONDUCT MUSIC

You can learn to conduct music too! Here's how to conduct "Book of Mormon Stories" (*Children's Songbook*, 118):

Book of Mormon Stories<sup>1</sup>.

Look at the two num-

bers at the beginning of the song. The top number tells you how many beats are in each measure or small section of the song. This song has four beats in each measure.

2. Lift your hand and hold it in a relaxed way with your fingers close together.

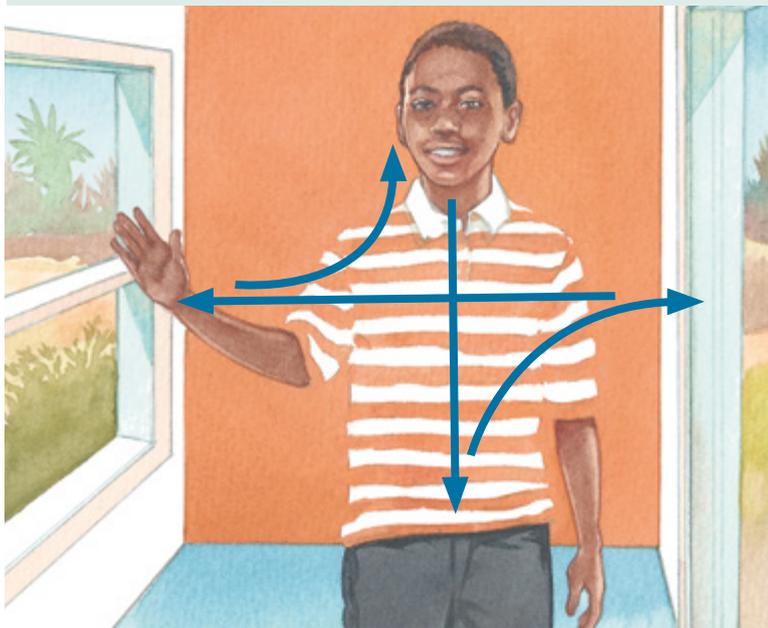
Move your hand downward.

Move your hand left.

Move your hand right.

Move your hand up.

3. Repeat the pattern for each measure of the song.
4. Keep practicing, and soon you'll be ready to conduct a song for family home evening!



# Priesthood Ordinances and Temple Work Bless My Family

By Jennifer Maddy

Karl ran down the boat dock, excited to see his dad. Karl's father was a fisherman, and Karl often ran out to the boat to meet him at the end of the day.

"Hurry, Papa!" Karl called. "I want to show you a picture I drew for you today!"

"Great!" Papa said. "But I need to tie up the boat first."

Karl watched Papa carefully tie the boat to the dock with a thick

rope. "Why do you have to tie it so tight?" Karl asked as Papa pulled on a large knot.

Papa pointed to a boat on the shore that had a large hole in the bottom. "That boat wasn't tied up well. In the last storm, it got loose and crashed onto some rocks."

Karl's eyes widened.

"Can you think of how Heavenly Father helps us stay tied to Him so we can be safe?" Papa asked.

"The scriptures?" Karl guessed.

"That's right," Papa said. "He also gives us priesthood ordinances like baptism and the sacrament. Mama and I got married in the temple so our family could be tied together forever."

Karl grabbed the rope and helped Papa give it a final tug. "We make the tightest knot of all!" ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

## SCRIPTURE AND SONG

- Matthew 18:18
- "I Love to See the Temple"  
(*Children's Songbook*, 95)

## IDEAS FOR FAMILY TALK

Your family could read Matthew 18:18 and talk about what it means to have something "bound in heaven." Using a long piece of string, you could take turns tying a knot in the string and telling how priesthood ordinances have blessed your life.





Baby blessing



Baptism by immersion



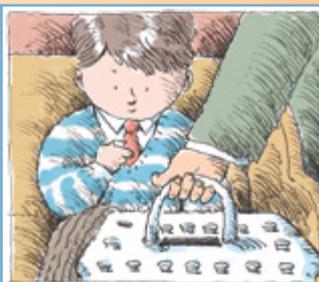
Blessing of the sick



Baby blessing



Baptism by immersion



Sacrament



Temple marriage



Temple marriage



Confirmation



Blessing of the sick



Sacrament



Confirmation

### STAYING CONNECTED WITH HEAVENLY FATHER

Remove this page and glue it to a piece of colored paper. Cut out the cards and place them face down on the table or floor. Take turns turning over two cards to find matches. When someone finds a match, have him or her tell how the ordinance shown on the cards helps us stay close to Heavenly Father.

# OUR PAGE



Merari C., age 11, El Salvador



Missionaries, by Maria Clara A., age 9, Brazil

*Paulo and Carlo D., age 10, from the Philippines, are twin brothers. They are eager to be old enough to receive the priesthood and pass the sacrament. They love to teach others about the gospel, and they are already preparing to serve missions. Carlo tells everyone he knows about the living prophet, and Paulo likes to take his Book of Mormon to school and read it with his classmates. They know that it is important to read the scriptures every day and to go to church on Sunday. Carlo and Paulo speak two languages fluently—Tagalog and Ilokano—and they are learning English in school. They love to play basketball with their friends.*



One day at school my friends dared me to shout a bad word in an empty classroom. When I said no, they teased me and made fun of me. Then I said yes, and I said the word softly and quickly. Then I was very sorry for what I had done. That night I prayed with all of my heart and repented of saying the bad word. I know I can always turn to Heavenly Father to know what is right, and if something is wrong, I will say no, even if my friends tell me to do it. I am grateful for repentance!

Paola L., age 10, Mexico

## TRYING TO BE LIKE JESUS

At my school we had been preparing since the beginning of the year for a great activity called *Festidanza*. Just like every year, it would be held on a Saturday. Then one day our director announced that it would be changed to Sunday. I told my mother that on Sundays we go to church, and I am happy to honor the Sabbath day.

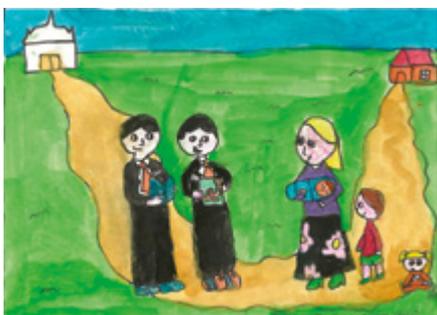


Isaías R., age 6, Peru



The best experience of my life was the day I was baptized. My mom taught me that once I was baptized, I would be responsible for all my actions. The day arrived, and my dad and I were both dressed in white. I was nervous, but when I took my dad's hand to get into the font, I knew everything would be fine. When my dad said the baptism prayer and put me under the water, I felt beautiful things in my heart that are hard to explain. Then I was confirmed and given the gift of the Holy Ghost. I am so happy that I was baptized. Just as Jesus Christ set an example for me, I am setting an example for my little brother. I know Jesus Christ lives and loves us.

**Richard H., age 8, Guatemala**



**Agustina B., age 10, Argentina**



**Marianella B., age 7, Argentina**

I love the children's section in the *Liahona* because the stories help me learn about Heavenly Father. I always ask my mother to read me the stories. I love puzzles, mazes, painting, and telling stories. I like to learn new things in Primary. I know that Heavenly Father loves me, and He loves you too. I try to always remember Him and choose the right.

**Jocelyn C., age 4, Nicaragua**



**Santiago and his younger brother, Jairo**

Ever since I was little, I have wanted to receive the Atonic Priesthood. When I have the priesthood, I will be able to pass the sacrament, and the doors of the temple will be open to me. It is a wonderful privilege to belong to this restored Church, and I know the gospel is true. Soon I will leave Primary, where I have learned so much, and join the battalion of youth in Young Men.

**Santiago P., age 11, Ecuador**

"And a being appeared before me, whose robe was the whitest I ever saw. His name was Moroni." (See Joseph Smith—History 1:30–33.)

**Erick H., age 9, Mexico**



### SHARE WITH THE *LIAHONA*

You can submit your drawing, photo, or experience online at [liahona.lds.org](http://liahona.lds.org), by email to [liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org) with "Our Page" in the subject line, or by mail to the address on page 3.

Each submission must include the child's full name, gender, and age (3 to 11 years old) plus the parent's name, ward or branch, stake or district, and the parent's written permission to use the child's photo and submission (via email is acceptable). Please, no drawings of the Savior. Submissions may be edited for length or clarity.

# Will's Great Idea

By Lynn Greenway

Based on a true story

Will wanted a picture of the temple. He wanted to put it in his room. He had heard the prophet say it would be a fine thing for everyone to have one.

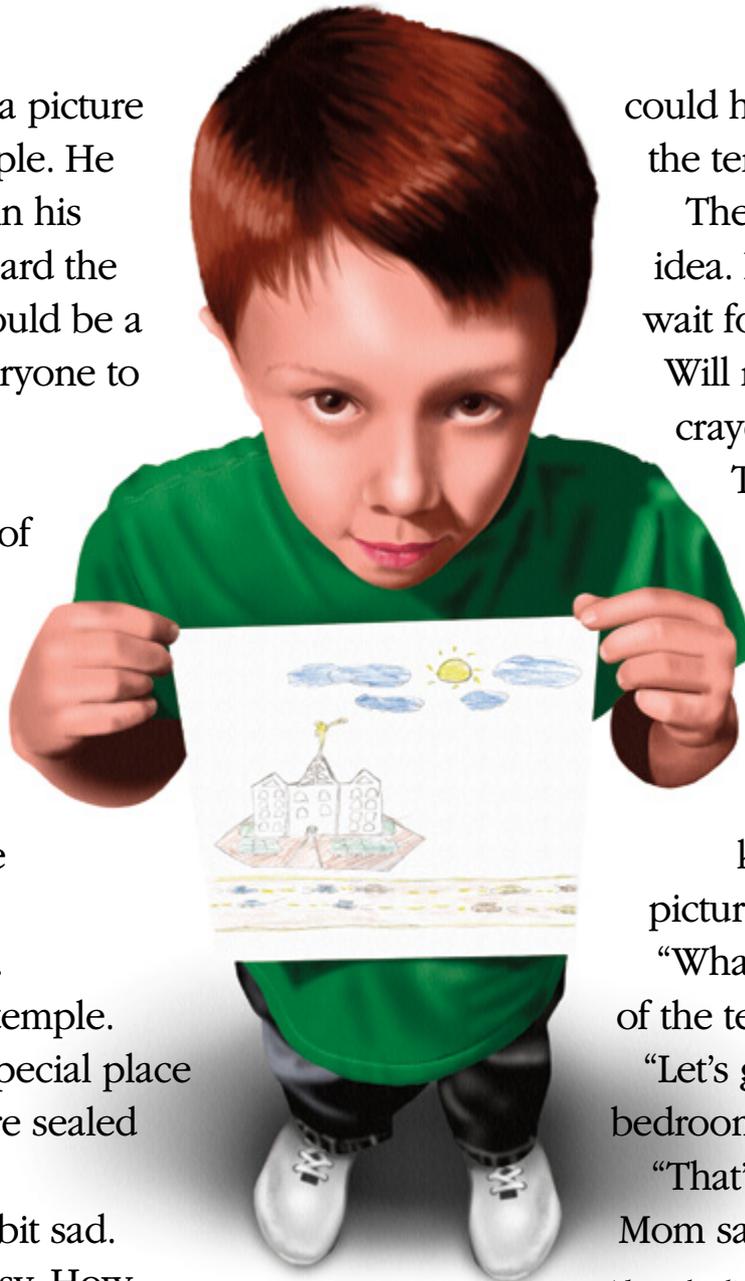
"Mom, did you get me a picture of the temple yet?" Will asked.

"Not yet," Mom said. She was busy taking care of the new baby.

"OK," Will said.

Will loved the temple. He knew it is a special place where families are sealed together.

Will felt a little bit sad. Mom was too busy. How



could he get a picture of the temple?

Then Will had a great idea. He didn't need to wait for Mom!

Will ran to find his crayons and some paper.

Then he sat down at the desk and started to draw.

After a long time, Will put down his crayons.

He ran into the kitchen and held his picture up to show Mom.

"What a beautiful picture of the temple," Mom said.

"Let's go hang it in my bedroom," William said.

"That's a great idea!" Mom said. ■

*The author lives in Pennsylvania, USA.*



# THE POWER OF *WHEN*

By Kelly Louise Urarii

**M**y husband's illness came on suddenly. One morning he was cutting the lawn, and the next thing we knew he was falling ill. By the next day he was on life support. As we moved from the emergency room to the operating room, one of the doctors spoke of *if* they would be able to save him.

Because the illness he contracted was rare, he had a slim chance of survival. I couldn't believe the dramatic turn of events. I felt overcome with despair.

Thankfully, Pierre made it through his first surgery and was admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU). There would be a long road ahead, but his chances improved with each passing hour. The first of many nurses spoke to me the morning after the initial surgery. She talked about *when* Pierre made it to the next step of the treatment. I paused with the impact of that word. There was so much more hope in *when* than *if*—it communicated confidence, expectancy. I thanked her for the choice of word, and she smiled knowingly.

Pierre received many priesthood blessings, which provided great encouragement. We knew to watch for the hand of the Lord in our lives, since His influence was not a matter of *if* but of *when*. Every time Pierre's health became dangerously fragile, I reminded him of the blessings and that we needed to demonstrate



*We knew to watch for the hand of the Lord in our lives, since His influence was not a matter of if but of when.*

our faith in the Lord. This was a sacred journey, and each day was a gift.

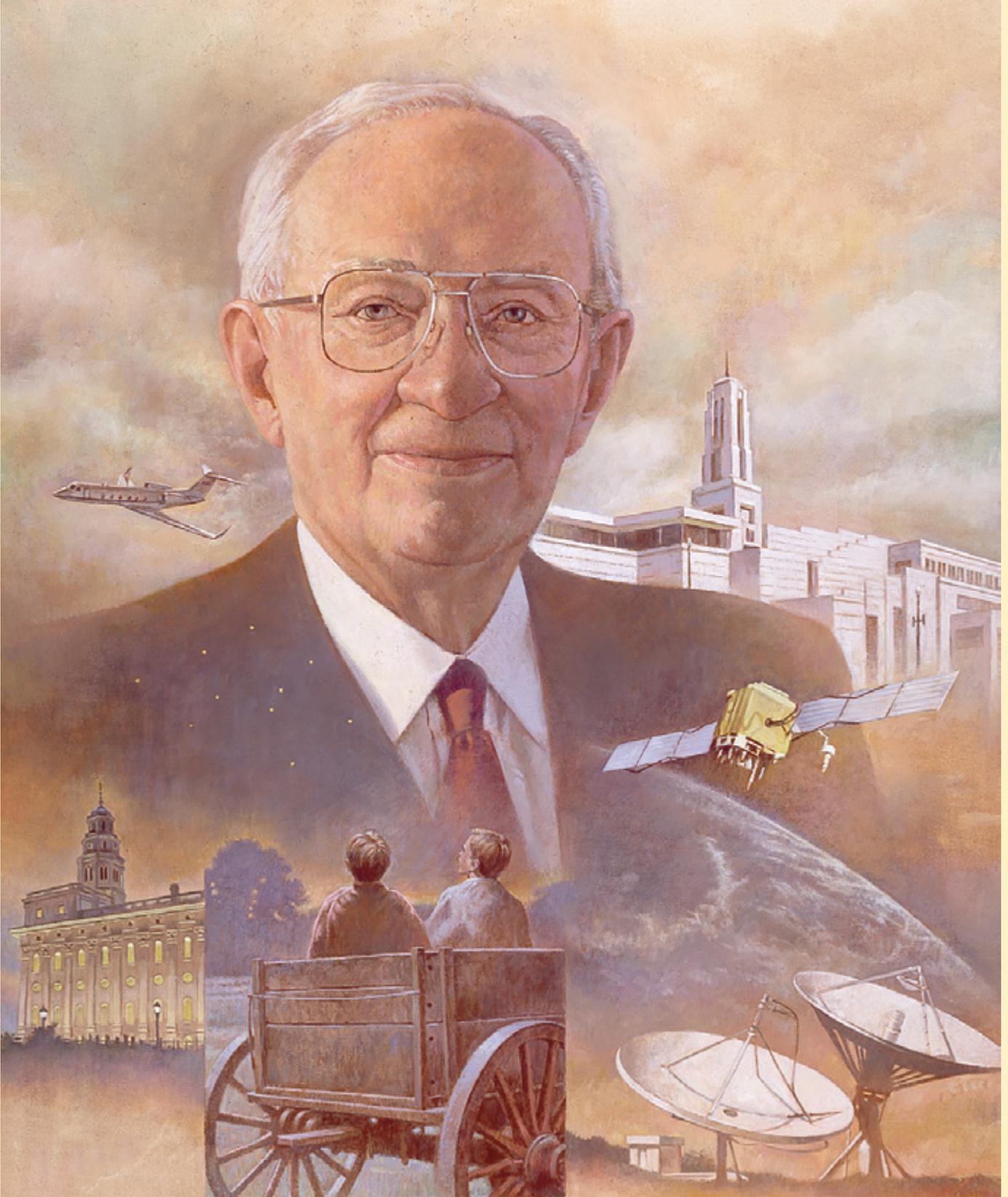
The hope of *when* kept us positive. However, 18 days into the journey, things went terribly wrong. During the seventh surgery, his doctors determined that the disease was too widespread. The medical team tearfully expressed their sorrow as they told me that Pierre would not survive the night.

I was able to be with my eternal companion as he passed through the veil. We were blessed to have his only living child from a previous marriage on the phone to relay the love that he had for his father. Pierre passed peacefully.

Weeks later, at his graveside, words of comfort came from Mosiah 2:41: "Ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, . . . *if* they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven, that thereby they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness" (emphasis added).

Pierre and I had always determined that the *if* in that scripture would be a *when* for us. We knew that by staying committed to our covenants, we would be reunited—it was a question only of *when*. We trust in the Lord's plan of eternal families and eternal life. It's the power of *when* that keeps us moving forward. ■

*The author lives in British Columbia, Canada.*



## **GORDON B. HINCKLEY**

**Gordon B. Hinckley** grew up loving nature. A walnut tree he planted as a boy was used to build the pulpit for the **Conference Center**. Gordon often compared the Savior's love to the guiding **Polar Star**, a star he learned to recognize as a young boy. He **traveled** more than two million miles (3.2 million km) while serving in the Church. **Satellites** transmitted his testimony around the globe. More than 70 temples were dedicated while he was President, including the rebuilt **Nauvoo Illinois Temple**.

# Also in This Issue

## FOR YOUNG ADULTS

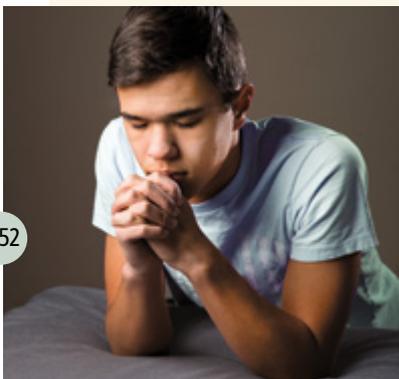


### Follow the Path of **HAPPINESS**

Bishop Gérald Caussé teaches three principles that will help you be in control of your happiness, regardless of your circumstances.

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## FOR YOUTH



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### *What If I Don't Feel a **BURNING** in the **BOSOM**?*

Don't worry. There's more than one way to feel the Holy Ghost.

## FOR CHILDREN

### Will's Great Idea

Need a picture of a temple to hang in your home?



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