

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • JUNE 2016

# Liahona

A man with a short haircut, wearing a white short-sleeved button-down shirt, is smiling broadly and being embraced from both sides by two young boys. The boys, also in white short-sleeved shirts and tan shorts, are laughing and hugging him. They are outdoors on a sandy beach with a blue sky and some blurred figures in the background.

## How Fathers Bless the Lives of Their Children, pp. 4, 10

Missionary in Japan, Presiding  
Bishop, New Apostle: Elder  
Gary E. Stevenson, p. 14

How the Book of Mormon  
Restores Spiritual Eyesight, p. 20

14 Questions Answered about  
the Afterlife, p. 32





*"They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them; for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them."*

**1 Nephi 21:10**



## MESSAGES

- 4 First Presidency Message: Our Father, Our Mentor**  
By President Dieter F. Uchtdorf
- 7 Visiting Teaching Message: Temple Ordinances and Covenants**

## FEATURE ARTICLES

- 14 Elder Gary E. Stevenson: An Understanding Heart**  
By Elder Robert D. Hales  
*Elder Stevenson serves with a heart that understands the promptings of the Spirit, the blessings of the Savior's Atonement, and the ability of the Church to bless those in need.*
- 20 The Eyes of the Blind Shall See**  
By Elder Lynn G. Robbins  
*The Book of Mormon is a second eyewitness of Jesus Christ and His glorious gospel.*

- 26 Seven Tender Miracles along the Way**  
By Ephrem Smith  
*My journey from humble beginnings as an orphan to serving the Lord as a missionary was nothing short of miraculous.*

- 28 Come, Follow Me: Teaching the Basics at Home**  
By Alicia Stanton and Natalie Campbell  
*Ideas for learning about the monthly youth topics as a family.*

- 32 What Do We Know about Life after Death?**  
By David A. Edwards  
*We can help answer others' questions about life after death because of the plain and precious truths of the restored gospel.*

- 36 Experiencing a Change of Heart**  
By Elder Edward Dube  
*When our daughter fell ill, I realized that my heart needed to change as much as Alma's had.*

## DEPARTMENTS

- 8 What We Believe: We Believe in Following the Prophet**
- 10 Our Homes, Our Families: My Father's Loving Example**  
Name withheld
- 12 Music: Come unto Him**  
By Theodore E. Curtis and Hugh W. Dougall
- 40 Reflections: Hooray!**  
By G. Craig Kiser
- 41 Serving in the Church: Not on My Watch!**  
By Brett J. Porter
- 42 Latter-day Saint Voices**
- 80 Until We Meet Again: The What and Why and How of Bearing a Testimony**  
By President Spencer W. Kimball

### ON THE COVER

Front: Photograph by Cody Bell. Inside front cover: Photograph from iStock/Thinkstock. Inside back cover: Photograph by Leslie Nilsson.





46

## 46 Tenacity and Discipleship

By Elder David F. Evans

*We need tenacity in order to become true disciples of the Savior and to achieve the truly good goals our Heavenly Father knows we need to achieve to prepare for eternity.*

## 50 Champions for the Sabbath

By Samantha McFadyen

*The choice was ours: either we could play on Sunday and try to become national champions, or we could forfeit the game and keep the Sabbath day holy.*

## 52 The Hardest Part of Being a Missionary

By Wendy Ulrich

*You've read the Book of Mormon and Preach My Gospel. But do you know how to talk to strangers and face rejection? Brush up on some other skills you will definitely need as a missionary.*

## 57 Our Space

## 58 From the Mission Field: A Soul Crying Out

By Stephen Dugdale

*He seemed unfriendly, unapproachable, and kind of scary. But he was really just a soul in need of some eternal answers.*

## 61 Answers from Church Leaders: How to Help Missionaries

By Elder David A. Bednar

## 62 Questions & Answers

*My parents swear, listen to loud music, and watch inappropriate TV shows. What can I do to feel the Spirit at home, especially on Sundays?*

## 64 How to Be a Good Friend

By David Morales

*We all want friends. Here are a few ways to make good friends and be one too.*



76

## 66 Children Who Stand Tall: Standing for the Right

By Aysia Tan

## 68 Jordan's Study Buddy

By Kirstin Ide

*Jordan didn't know what to do without his Book of Mormon study buddy. But then he got an idea!*

## 70 The Whole Armor of God

*What things can you do to keep your spirit safe and happy?*

## 72 Answers from an Apostle: What promises do we make at baptism?

By Elder Neil L. Andersen

## 73 Our Page

## 74 Book of Mormon Heroes: Abish Was a Missionary

## 75 I Can Read the Book of Mormon

## 76 Book of Mormon Stories: Alma Teaches How to Pray

## 79 Coloring Page: I Can Be Reverent

RESUME



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

52





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

**The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:**

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

**Editor:** Joseph W. Sitati

**Assistant Editors:** James B. Marino, Carol F. McConkie

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

**Managing Director:** Peter F. Evans

**Director of Operations:** Vincent A. Vaughn

**Director of Church Magazines:** Allan R. Loyborg

**Business Manager:** Garff Cannon

**Managing Editor:** R. Val Johnson

**Assistant Managing Editor:** Ryan Carr

**Publication Assistant:** Megan VerHoef Seitz

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

**Managing Art Director:** J. Scott Knudsen

**Art Director:** Tadd R. Peterson

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

**Intellectual Property Coordinator:** Collette Nebeker Aune

**Production Manager:** Jane Ann Peters

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

**Prepress:** Jeff L. Martin

**Printing Director:** Craig K. Sedgwick

**Distribution Director:** Stephen R. Christiansen

For subscriptions and prices outside the United States and Canada, go to [store.lds.org](http://store.lds.org) or contact your local Church distribution center or ward or branch leader.

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

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

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

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

**For Readers in the United States and Canada:**

June 2016 Vol. 40 No. 6. LIAHONA (USPS 311-480) English (ISSN 1080-9554) is published monthly by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 50 E. North Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150. USA subscription price is \$10.00 per year; Canada, \$12.00 plus applicable taxes. Periodicals Postage Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah. Sixty days' notice required for change of address. Include address label from a recent issue; old and new address must be included. Send USA and Canadian subscriptions to Salt Lake Distribution Center at address below. Subscription help line: 1-800-537-5971. Credit card orders (American Express, Discover, MasterCard, Visa) may be taken by phone or at [store.lds.org](http://store.lds.org). (Canada Post Information: Publication Agreement #40017431)

POSTMASTER: Send all UAA to CFS (see DMM 507.1.5.2).

NONPOSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES: Send address changes to Distribution Services, Church Magazines, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.

# Family Home Evening Ideas

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



**"What We Believe,"** page 8: This article teaches, "As we sustain the prophet and apostles, we gain a testimony of them as servants of God." You can increase your testimony of prophets by reading or listening to general conference talks. As a family, consider reading one of President Monson's recent talks and choosing a specific piece of his counsel to live by. As you live what the prophet has asked, try to recognize how you are blessed.

**"Come, Follow Me: Teaching the Basics at Home,"** page 28: President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught,

"Our success, individually and as a Church, will largely be determined by how faithfully we focus on living the gospel at home." Consider studying a *Come, Follow Me* topic as a family for a month. You could study aspects of your chosen topic each week, using the scriptures or other study aids like *Preach My Gospel*, LDS.org, the Guide to the Scriptures, and *The Life of Christ Bible Videos*. At family home evening each week, you could share what you've learned and felt. Consider recording your thoughts and impressions in a study journal and sharing what you've learned with your friends via social media.

## MORE ONLINE

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

## TOPICS IN THIS ISSUE

*Numbers represent the first page of the article.*

**Aaronic Priesthood,** 41

**Atonement,** 36

**Attitude,** 52

**Baptism,** 72, 73

**Bible,** 20

**Book of Mormon,** 20, 57, 68, 74, 75

**Conversion,** 36

**Covenants,** 7, 28, 72

**Discipleship,** 46

**Faith,** 36, 46, 75

**Family,** 10, 28, 36, 43, 44, 62

**Fatherhood,** 4, 10

**Friendship,** 64

**Goals,** 46

**God the Father,** 4

**Humility,** 52

**Jesus Christ,** 12, 28, 40

**Marriage,** 28

**Miracles,** 26

**Missionary work,** 52, 58, 61, 74

**Obedience,** 8, 28, 70

**Ordinances,** 7, 28

**Plan of salvation,** 32, 58

**Prayer,** 12, 58, 61, 66, 76

**Prophets,** 8, 42, 44

**Reverence,** 79

**Sabbath day,** 45, 50, 62

**Sacrament,** 40

**Self-reliance,** 28

**Service,** 41

**Teaching,** 28, 43

**Temples,** 44, 73

**Temple work,** 7

**Tenacity,** 46

**Testimony,** 80

**Youth,** 41





**By President  
Dieter F.  
Uchtdorf**

Second Counselor  
in the First  
Presidency

# Our Father, OUR MENTOR

**H**ave you ever opened a box of parts, pulled out the assembly instructions, and thought, “This doesn’t make any sense at all”?

Sometimes, despite our best intentions and inner confidence, we pull out a part and ask, “What is that for?” or “How does that fit?”

Our frustration grows as we look at the box and notice a disclaimer that says, “Assembly required—ages 8 and up.” Because we still don’t have a clue, this does not boost our confidence or our self-esteem.

Sometimes we have a similar experience with the gospel. As we look at some part of it, we may scratch our heads and wonder what that part is for. Or as we examine another part, we may realize that even after trying hard to fully understand, we just can’t figure out why that part was included.

## **Our Heavenly Father Is Our Mentor**

Fortunately, our Heavenly Father has given us wonderful instructions for structuring our lives and putting together our best selves. Those instructions work regardless of our age or circumstance. He has given us the gospel and the Church of Jesus Christ. He has given us the plan of redemption, the plan of salvation, even the plan of happiness. He has not left us alone with all the uncertainties or challenges of life, saying, “Here you go. Good luck. Figure it out.”

If we will only be patient and look with a humble heart and an open mind, we will find that God has given us many tools to better understand His comprehensive instructions for our happiness in life:

- He has given us the priceless gift of the Holy Ghost, which has the potential to be our personal, heavenly tutor as we study the word of God and attempt to bring our thoughts and actions into alignment with His word.
- He has given us 24/7 access to Him through prayers of faith and supplications of real intent.
- He has given us modern-day apostles and prophets, who reveal the word of God in our day and have the authority to bind or seal on earth and in heaven.
- He has restored His Church—an organization of believers who work together to help one another as they work out their salvation with fear, trembling, and unparalleled joy.<sup>1</sup>
- He has given us the holy scriptures—His written word to us.
- He has given myriad tools of modern technology to help us in our walk of discipleship. Many of these marvelous instruments can be found at [LDS.org](http://LDS.org).

Why has our Heavenly Father given us so much help? Because He loves us. And because, as He said of Himself,





“This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”<sup>2</sup>

In other words, Heavenly Father is our God, and God is a mentor to us.

Our Father in Heaven knows His children’s needs better than anyone else. It is His work and glory to help us at every turn, giving us marvelous temporal and spiritual resources to help us on our path to return to Him.

### Every Father Is a Mentor

In some parts of the world, fathers are honored by families and society in the month of June. It is always good to honor and respect our parents. Fathers do many good things for their families and have many admirable attributes. Two of the most

important roles fathers have in the lives of their children are those of being a good example and a mentor. Fathers do more than tell their children what is right or wrong; they do much more than toss a manual at them and expect them to figure out life for themselves.

Fathers mentor their precious children and show by their good example the way an honest life is lived. Fathers do not leave their children alone but rush to their aid, helping them to their feet whenever they stumble. And sometimes when wisdom suggests, fathers allow their

### TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

**Y**ou may want to begin by asking those you teach to think of a moment when Heavenly Father mentored them. You could then ask them to think of the similarities between that moment and a moment when they felt mentored by their earthly father. Invite them to write down the similarities in how they were mentored. You could challenge them to try to emulate the thing they wrote down in an effort to be a better example to others.



children to struggle, realizing that this may be the best way for them to learn.

### We Are All Mentors

While earthly fathers do this for their own children, the spirit of mentoring is something we need to offer all of God's children, regardless of age, location, or circumstance. Remember, God's children are our brothers and sisters; we are all of the same eternal family.

In this sense, let us all be mentors—eager to reach out and help one another to become our best selves. Because we are God's offspring, we do have the potential to become

like Him. Loving God and our fellowmen, keeping God's commandments, and following Christ's example are the straight, narrow, and joyful path back into the presence of our heavenly parents.

If the God of the universe cares so much about us that He is a mentor to us, perhaps we too can reach out to our fellowmen, regardless of their color, race, socioeconomic circumstances, language, or religion. Let us become inspired mentors and bless the lives of others—not only our own children but also all of God's children throughout the world. ■

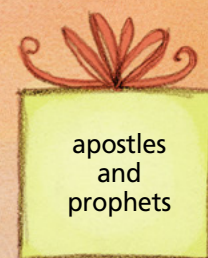
#### NOTES

1. See Acts 13:52; Philippians 2:12.
2. Moses 1:39.

## CHILDREN

### Heavenly Father's Help

**B**ecause Heavenly Father loves us, He has given us many tools, or gifts, to help us. Match each gift with its picture below. How can you use these gifts to bless your life and to bless others?



Prayerfully study this material and seek to know what to share. How will understanding “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” increase your faith in God and bless those you watch over through visiting teaching? For more information, go to [reliefsociety.lds.org](http://reliefsociety.lds.org).

# Temple Ordinances and Covenants

All the ordinances necessary for salvation and exaltation are accompanied by covenants with God. “Making and keeping covenants means choosing to bind ourselves to our Father in Heaven and Jesus Christ,” said Linda K. Burton, Relief Society general president.<sup>1</sup>

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “The Lord said, ‘In the ordinances . . . the power of godliness is manifest.’

“There are special blessings from God for every worthy person who is baptized, receives the Holy Ghost, and regularly partakes of the sacrament.”<sup>2</sup>

“When men and women go to the temple,” said Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “they are both endowed with the same power, which is priesthood power . . .

“ . . . All men and all women have access to this power for help in their lives. All who have made sacred



covenants with the Lord and who honor those covenants are eligible to receive personal revelation, to be blessed by the ministering of angels, to commune with God, to receive the fulness of the gospel, and, ultimately, to become heirs alongside Jesus Christ of all our Father has.”<sup>3</sup>

## Additional Scriptures

1 Nephi 14:14; Doctrine and Covenants 25:13; 97:8; 109:22

## NOTES

1. Linda K. Burton, “The Power, Joy, and Love of Covenant Keeping,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 111.
2. Neil L. Andersen, “Power in the Priesthood,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 92.
3. M. Russell Ballard, “Men and Women in the Work of the Lord,” *Liahona*, Apr. 2014, 48–49.
4. See D. Todd Christofferson, “The Power of Covenants,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2009, 19, 20–21.

## Consider This

How do temple ordinances and covenants strengthen and empower us?

Faith, Family, Relief



## Living Stories

In 2007, four days after a massive earthquake in Peru, Elder Marcus B. Nash of the Seventy met branch president Wenceslao Conde and his wife, Pamela.

“Elder Nash asked Sister Conde how her little children were. With a smile, she replied that through the goodness of God they were all safe and well. He asked about the Condes’ home.

“‘It’s gone,’ she said simply.

“ . . . ‘And yet,’ Elder Nash noted, ‘you are smiling as we talk.’

“‘Yes,’ she said, ‘I have prayed and I am at peace. We have all we need. We have each other, we have our children, we are sealed in the temple, we have this marvelous Church, and we have the Lord. We can build again with the Lord’s help.’ . . .

“What is it about making and keeping covenants with God that gives us the power to smile through hardships, to convert tribulation into triumph . . . ?”

“The source is God. Our access to that power is through our covenants with Him.”<sup>4</sup>



# WE BELIEVE IN FOLLOWING THE PROPHET

Like the original Church that Jesus Christ established during His mortal ministry, the Church today is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20). We have twelve Apostles, as well as the President of the Church and his counselors, who are prophets, seers, and revelators. They are called to testify of Jesus Christ and preach His gospel throughout the world.

The Savior chooses His prophets and prepares them through many experiences to direct the Church. When Church members speak of the prophet, they are referring to the

President of the Church, the only person on earth who receives revelation for the whole Church.

Because the President of the Church speaks for the Lord (see D&C 1:38), it is not wise to pick and choose just the parts of his counsel that we want to follow. Rather, we treat his counsel and invitations as if we had received them directly from Jesus Christ, “in all patience and faith” (D&C 21:5).

As we choose to listen to and follow the prophet and the other apostles, we are blessed in our efforts to become like Jesus Christ, and we are protected from the insecurity and deceptions of the world (see Ephesians 4:11–14).

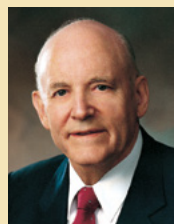
For example, we find spiritual safety in a world of shifting morals and values by living the unchanging standards that the prophet and apostles teach. We also find temporal security in following prophetic counsel to avoid debt, set aside savings, and store food.

As the President of the Church and the Apostles give their lives to the Lord’s work—traveling the world testifying of Christ, teaching the Saints, and overseeing the administration of the worldwide Church—He sustains and blesses them and their families. We also sustain them as we pray for them, obey their counsel, and seek to have the Holy Ghost confirm to us the truths they teach.

As we sustain the prophet and apostles, we gain a testimony of them as servants of God. Even though they are not perfect, Heavenly Father will not allow them to lead us astray (see Deuteronomy 18:18–20). ■

You can learn more about following the prophet by reading “Sustaining the Prophets” (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 74–76) by President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

## GUIDANCE THROUGH A LIVING PROPHET



“God has spoken anew and continues to provide guidance for all his children through a living prophet today. We

declare that [God], as promised, is with his servants always and directs the affairs of his Church throughout the world.”

*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Howard W. Hunter (2015), 115.*

These are some of the blessings that have come to us through living prophets:



*The Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44) translated the Book of Mormon “by the gift and power of God” (see introduction to the Book of Mormon). Since its publication in 1830, it has blessed the lives of millions of people.*



*In 1936, during the Great Depression, President Heber J. Grant (1856–1945) announced what would become the Church’s welfare program. Today this program assists people of all faiths around the world.*



*In April 1998, when the Church had 51 temples in operation, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) announced a program to build many small temples. These temples now bless more and more members of the Church throughout the world.*



*In 1915, President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) and his counselors invited Church members to begin holding family home evening. Families still reap the great blessings they promised would result.*



*In 2012, President Thomas S. Monson announced that the missionary service ages for men and women were lowered to 18 and 19, respectively. Thousands of families and missionaries have been blessed by the resulting expansion of the missionary force.*



## MY FATHER'S LOVING EXAMPLE

Name withheld

*My father showed me how to love my wandering children.*

I joined the Church after accepting an invitation from two friends to attend seminary. My parents were always supportive of my decisions to be baptized, serve a mission, and marry in the temple. I recall, however, the pain I felt (and I assumed that my parents also experienced) at knowing that they were kindly waiting in the Provo Utah Temple waiting room while my bride and I were sealed.

We later had four children, and I remember the joy in knowing that each of them was sealed to us because they were born in the covenant. Our children were the first grandchildren, and although my parents and siblings never joined the Church, they grew very close to each of my children. For many years we lived near each other, and my parents were able to see our children participate in school and youth sports events. They attended each of our children's baptisms.

By the time our children reached their teens, however, my work

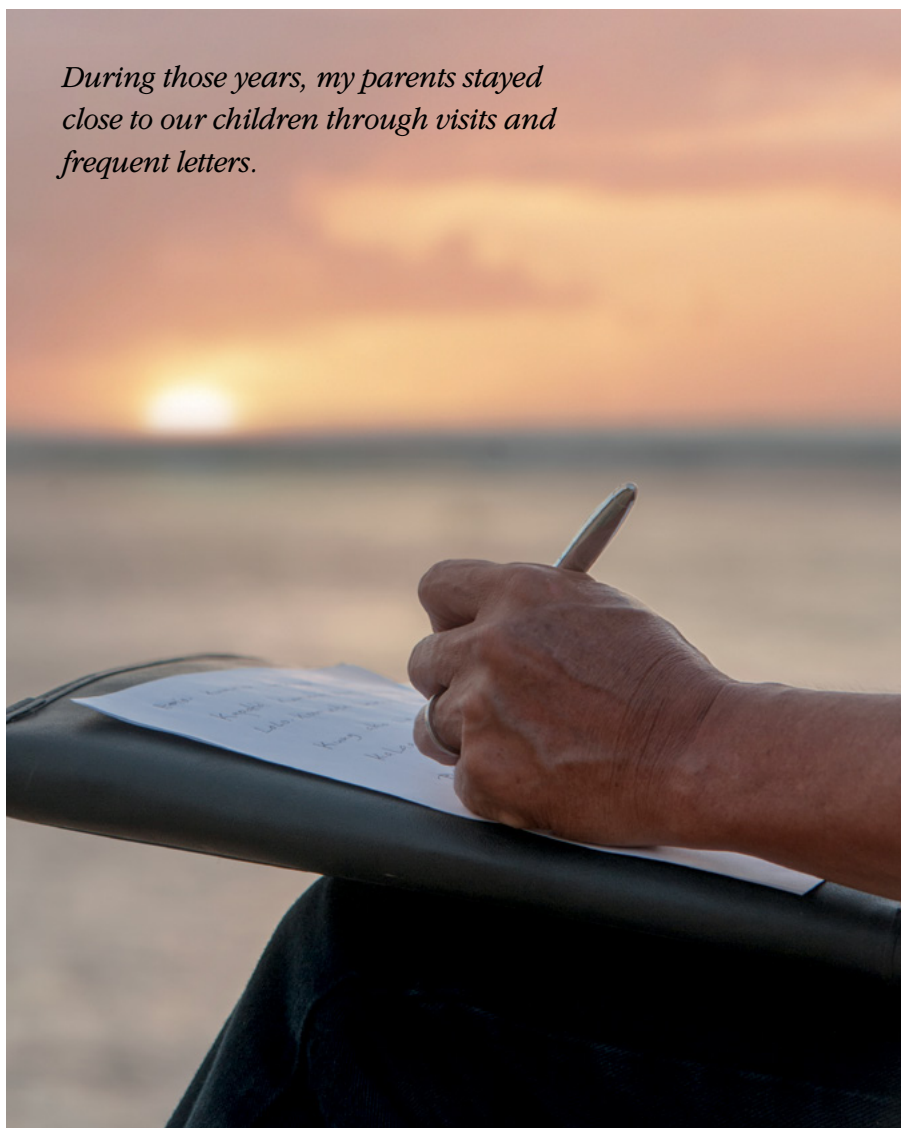
assignments had moved our family to another state. But even during those years, my parents stayed close to our children through visits and frequent letters.

As my parents reached middle age, my mother encountered early-onset

Alzheimer's. My father was determined to faithfully serve as her caretaker, even when her condition required full-time care. Even through these latter years, my father reached out to me through weekly, and, in some periods, daily, phone calls and



*During those years, my parents stayed close to our children through visits and frequent letters.*



letters. I had always had a close relationship with both my parents, but during the last 10 years of my father's life, we became particularly close. I realized then too that he was equally successful in drawing near to my three siblings in the same way—even given the differences in interests and faiths we chose as we all grew older.

My parents and my family lived on opposite coasts of the United States during those last years, and they made two cross-country visits, even though my mother's Alzheimer's had advanced to the point where assisting her on a long-distance flight was very difficult for Dad.

At this same time, one by one my children all decided to stop attending church. Two eventually had their names removed from Church records. This has certainly been the trial of both my wife's and my life. And even though he wasn't a Latter-day Saint, my father was pained and confused by our children's choices as well. He was a privately religious man, and

he joined us through those years in praying for them.

In 2005 my father passed away after being diagnosed with cancer, and my mother passed away three years later. My wife and I rejoiced in acting as their proxies in providing temple ordinances after their deaths.

I've long prayed to understand how best to relate to our children now that they're adults, some with their own spouses and children, none of whom are LDS. We are emotionally close to all four of our children, and we are grateful that they often reach out in love to us.

I eventually received a very clear answer of how I must conduct myself, possibly for the rest of my life, regarding these adult children. I needed to do what my father had done with me. In spite of the different lives we lived and the different religious perspectives we had, my father was determined to draw closer to me as a father and a friend while I experienced the pain of seeing my children choose different lifestyles and beliefs from mine. I realized I must follow the example of my father, who taught me how to treat children of a different faith: love them completely, just as the Savior would. ■



# Come unto Him

*Thoughtfully* ♩ = 80-92

Words by Theodore E. Curtis

Music by Hugh W. Dougall

1. I wan - der through the still of night,  
 2. When I am filled with strong de - sire  
 3. It mat - ters not what may be - fall,

When sol - i - tude is ev - 'ry - where—  
 And ask a boon of Him, I see  
 What threat - 'ning hand hangs o - ver me;

A - lone, be - neath the star - ry light,  
 No mir - a - cle of liv - ing fire,  
 He is my ram - part through it all,

And yet I know that God is there.  
 But what I ask flows in - to me.  
 My ref - uge from mine en - e - my.





I kneel up - on the grass and pray;  
 And when the tem - pest rag - es high  
 Come un - to Him all ye de - pressed,



An an - swer comes with - out a voice.  
 I feel no arm a - round me thrust,  
 Ye err - ing souls whose eyes are dim,



It takes my bur - den all a - way  
 But ev - 'ry storm goes roll - ing by  
 Ye wea - ry ones who long for rest.



And makes my ach - ing heart re - joice.  
 When I re - pose in Him my trust.  
 Come un - to Him! Come un - to Him!

IMAGES © ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK

© 2016 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.  
 This song may be copied for incidental, noncommercial church or home use.  
 This notice must be included on each copy made.



# Elder Gary E. Stevenson

## AN UNDERSTANDING HEART

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



Growing up in Cache County, Utah, USA, with the Logan Utah Temple nearby (see opposite page), Gary Stevenson gleaned many lessons from the teachings of his father and mother. His father taught him to follow the Holy Ghost, and his mother motivated him to choose the right. As a teen he learned to appreciate the fellowship and service of his priesthood quorums, part of his preparation to serve today in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

When Gary Stevenson was about 11 years old, his father took him hiking. “I was jumping from rock to rock in front of my father,” he remembers. “I intended to climb a large rock and look down. As I clambered toward the top of the boulder, he grabbed me by my belt and pulled me down.

“‘What’s the matter?’ I said, and he replied, ‘Don’t climb on that rock. Let’s just keep on the trail.’ A moment later as we looked down from higher up the trail, we could see a rattle-snake on top of the rock, basking in the sun.

“‘That’s why I pulled you back,’ my father explained.

“Later as we were driving home, I knew he was waiting for me to ask the question: ‘How did you know the snake was there?’ He said, ‘Let me teach you about the Holy Ghost.’ We had an impromptu lesson about the roles the Holy Ghost can have in our lives: protector, comforter, and one who testifies. ‘In this case,’ my father shared, ‘the Holy Ghost was protecting you through me. He warned me to pull you away.’”

This experience, though simple, helped Elder Stevenson to understand that when promptings of the Spirit are received, they



should be accepted and acted upon. It was one of many lessons gleaned from his father.

### Marvelous Mother, Marvelous Mentors

According to Elder Stevenson, his mother was an example of pure goodness: “Her expectations motivated me. Almost every action I made was measured against the thought, ‘I do not want to disappoint my mom.’”

Together, his parents reinforced gospel principles during family home evening and other family activities or gatherings. “They anchored our home in the teachings of the gospel. It was the foundation of our lives,” he says.

Other significant mentors also guided him. “I remember in some of my early training as

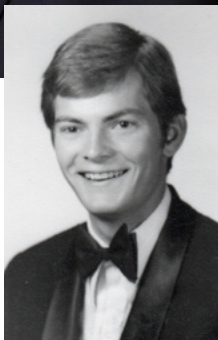


a General Authority that President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, suggested we make a list of 20 people who had a positive impact on our lives. I think everyone could benefit from such an exercise. It was inspiring to think of all the good men and women who were there to help me, especially in my youth.”

### Fortified by Family and Friends

Gary Evan Stevenson was born on August 6, 1955, and raised in Logan, Utah, USA. His parents, Evan and Jean Hall Stevenson, had four children. Gary was the second child and oldest son.

“I had a close association with my brother and sisters. My older sister, Debbie, expected me to do what was right. My younger siblings, Merilee and Doug, expected that I would be an example. We all felt a responsibility to live righteously and participate in Church activities.” His extended family



also held high expectations: “For example, when my oldest cousin left on a mission, he signed a \$2 bill and passed it to the next cousin preparing to serve. That \$2 bill passed through 16 cousins who served missions throughout the world, reminding each one that we were united in serving the Lord.”

Priesthood friends also influenced him for good. “I learned early in life what it means to be associated with a quorum, not only on Sunday but also in the neighborhood and in school,” he says. “It gave me a sense of identity, belonging, brotherhood, and service.” He specifically remembers accompanying a quorum member to collect





Elder Stevenson served a full-time mission in Japan (below right) and developed a love for Asia and its people. When he returned home, he met his future wife when they attended an institute class together. They married in the Idaho Falls Idaho Temple and became the parents of four sons: Craig, Bryan, Brett, and Kyle. Elder Stevenson's eyes light up when he speaks of his wife, "the sunshine in and of my life."

fast offerings from a sister in the ward who was homebound, blind, and without much income. "Despite her circumstances, she always had a nickel or a dime as a fast offering," he recalls.

### A Gift That Requires Work

After graduating from high school and a short time attending Utah State University, Elder Stevenson was called to serve in the Japan Fukuoka Mission. "I felt anxious about learning Japanese. My concern continued to mount in the missionary training center. Yet after about six weeks, fervent prayer and diligent study led me to a sense of peace that the Lord would bless me to learn Japanese, but not without hard work. This taught me that the gift of tongues is like faith and works and other gospel principles.

After you have done all you can do, then you are endowed with the blessing."

Following his mission,

Elder Stevenson developed a passion for Church history, studying the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants, and delving into historical journals and family histories. He took particular interest in Joseph Smith and his family, the Whitmer family, Oliver Cowdery, and Martin Harris. He researched the translation and publication of the various editions of the Book of Mormon.

Once again he learned that faith and hard work go hand in hand. "Every answer to every gospel question does not come immediately," he counsels. "The Lord expects us to read, study, ponder, and pray. And when we do this with faith and a righteous desire, over time a sweet witness will come."

Through the years, he has felt especially blessed when called to teach youth Sunday School, Gospel Doctrine, and Young Men classes. These callings have allowed him to testify of his deep feelings for the truthfulness of the scriptures, a conviction developed from years of study.

Back at Utah State University, Elder Stevenson returned to his studies in business administration and marketing. He spent long hours in the library. "Each time I entered, I was greeted by a sign . . . that read, 'And with all thy getting get understanding' [Proverbs

4:7]." This scripture became engraved on his heart and years later became the theme of a devotional address he gave at Brigham Young University.

"This understanding comes through *an interdependence of study and prayer*," he explained in that address. "As we trust and rely on the Lord, a greater measure of understanding comes from Him into our heart."<sup>1</sup>



## Institute Romance

During an Old Testament class at the institute of religion, he met Lesa Jean Higley, who had moved from California to Idaho and was now a student at Utah State. “The teacher asked Lesa to role-play as Eve and for me to play the role of Satan to tempt her. As a result, it took a while for me to convince her to go out with me,” he recalls with a smile. They dated for just over a year and then married in the Idaho Falls Idaho Temple in 1979.

Elder Stevenson’s eyes light up when he speaks of Lesa. He refers to her as “the sunshine in and of my life.”<sup>2</sup> Sister Stevenson graduated with a degree in home economics education, taught school early in their marriage, and was constantly contributing her time and talents to schools, civic and community boards, organizations, and other endeavors. However, Elder Stevenson considers her gifts as a homemaker to be among her most God-given traits: “She has an ability to create a gospel-centered home, a safe and welcoming environment where the Spirit dwells.” This ability, coupled with a deep understanding that true joy comes through serving others, has blessed the lives of her husband, her family, and many around her.

Elder and Sister Stevenson became the parents of four sons. “We have enjoyed everything together through the years,” he says. “The boys played basketball, football, baseball, and tennis. We all share a love for outdoor activities such as four-wheeling, snowmobiling, skiing, snowboarding, and various water sports. Nevertheless, Lesa influenced our sons with a measure of culture as well, developing in them an enjoyment of music and art. And in order to extend the gift of service to others through our family, it was necessary that she engage the ‘horsepower’ of the boys.”

## Building a Business

Elder Stevenson’s business career grew out of his love for the people of Asia. When he returned home from his mission, he and two lifelong friends started importing gift accessories from Asia. This evolved into selling fitness products. Over the next three decades, their small business grew



into a successful firm that employed over 2,500 people.

One employee remembers what was in Elder Stevenson’s heart as a businessman: “We were discussing a difficult business decision. I told him we had to make sure to do what was legal. He told me we had to not only do what was legal but that we had to do what was right.”

“Letting good principles absorb you in business is good for business,” Elder Stevenson states. “Integrity, hard work, compassion, treating people with respect—and at the same time requiring accountability—are not precepts you talk about and practice only on Sundays. They are to be practiced every day of the week.”

As the business grew, so did demands on his time: “I was a young bishop with young children and also making multiple trips to Asia each year. My father approached me and said, ‘I observe that when you are with your family, you are not really *with* them. I am afraid that might mean that when you are at work, you are not completely focused there, and when you are acting in your role as bishop, you might be worried about your work or family. You need greater balance in your life.’”

This counsel had a profound impact. Elder Stevenson says, “I learned that it is important to maintain a balance of family, profession, and Church calling, and to make certain that you take care of yourself as well.”





As a Seventy and as Presiding Bishop, Elder Stevenson was known for compassion as gentle as the blossoms on a cherry tree (cherry blossoms are a celebrated symbol of Japan). He reached out to people close to home and far away to share “the healing balm of our Savior’s love.” As an Apostle he will continue to reach out to the poor and needy, to “succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees” (D&C 81:5).

### Called to Serve—Again and Again

A respected business leader once encouraged Elder Stevenson to “learn, earn, and serve.” In 2004 the “serve” part of that equation was tested when Elder Stevenson and longtime business partner Scott Watterson were both called to serve as mission presidents. They felt they needed to explain to various stakeholders and customers why they were temporarily leaving their company. One by one they visited them.

“When we described our call and that we would serve for three years without compensation from the Church, they respected the goodness of that,” he says. They left the business in the hands of a trusted executive team, and it prospered.

As president of the Japan Nagoya Mission, Elder Stevenson found that his love for Asia deepened. “I consider it my second home,” he says. His depth of love for his wife also increased as he watched her embrace the local culture, reach out to others

including missionaries and members, and continue to raise their two sons who accompanied them. Several convert baptisms came in part as a result of her efforts to befriend those around her.

They had been home from their mission for only seven months when Elder Stevenson was called to serve in the First Quorum of the Seventy in 2008.

“I was stunned and humbled. I thought, ‘There are many others who could serve much better than I can.’ Yet I thought of previous times—as elders quorum president, high councilor, bishop, and counselor in a stake presidency—when I felt I was not seasoned enough to do the things I was asked to do. I have learned that before we are called, we may *not* be qualified, but the call *begins* a heavenly qualification.

“One of my favorite scriptures tells us two things we should do when we are called: First, ‘be faithful.’ Second, stand in the office in which you are appointed (see D&C 81:5).

To me this means to exhibit faith, learn what is needful, and then do all you can to magnify the call. If we do this, the Lord will magnify and qualify us to bless others.”

### To Asia Again

As a Seventy, Elder Stevenson was assigned as a counselor in the Area Presidency and then as president of the Asia North Area.





In March 2011, an earthquake and tsunami devastated Japan. The 9.0-magnitude temblor generated a seismic sea wave that left 20,000 dead, displaced thousands, and destroyed 550,000 homes.

He visited the disaster zone many times. “As we met with people, our emotions ran from one end of the spectrum to the other,” he recalls. “We simultaneously observed tragedy and loss mixed with hope and restoration. Over and over again our hearts were touched as we witnessed the healing balm of our Savior’s love.”

In addition, he witnessed firsthand how the Church helps those in need: “To be able to react to a calamity and to help shape a response—that was a manifestation of the Church of Jesus Christ filling one of its divinely appointed responsibilities of caring for the poor and needy.” He described it as a sacred privilege to minister to those in need and see others do the same: “We learned about the goodness of humanity.”

### The Legacy of Bishops

His understanding of compassion entered even more profoundly into his heart when in 2012 he was called as Presiding Bishop. In that capacity he managed a broad Church network that delivers welfare assistance and emergency response to Latter-day Saints and others, as well as humanitarian aid to Heavenly Father’s children in “some of the most difficult places, some of the most impoverished places, some of the most oppressed places around the world.”<sup>3</sup>

The role of bishop holds special significance for Elder Stevenson. “When I was 12, my father was called as bishop,” he recalls. “The ward had many widows, and Dad would often take me along when he ministered to them. He would have me take care of the garbage cans, clean

up something in the house, or get my friends to join me in raking leaves or shoveling snow. When we left, I always felt good inside. Visiting the widows helped me realize that part of what bishops do is minister to people one on one. The bishops of the Church are my heroes.”

### A Promise from a Prophet

On the Tuesday prior to the October 2015 general conference, then-Bishop Stevenson received a call requesting that he meet with President Thomas S. Monson and his counselors.

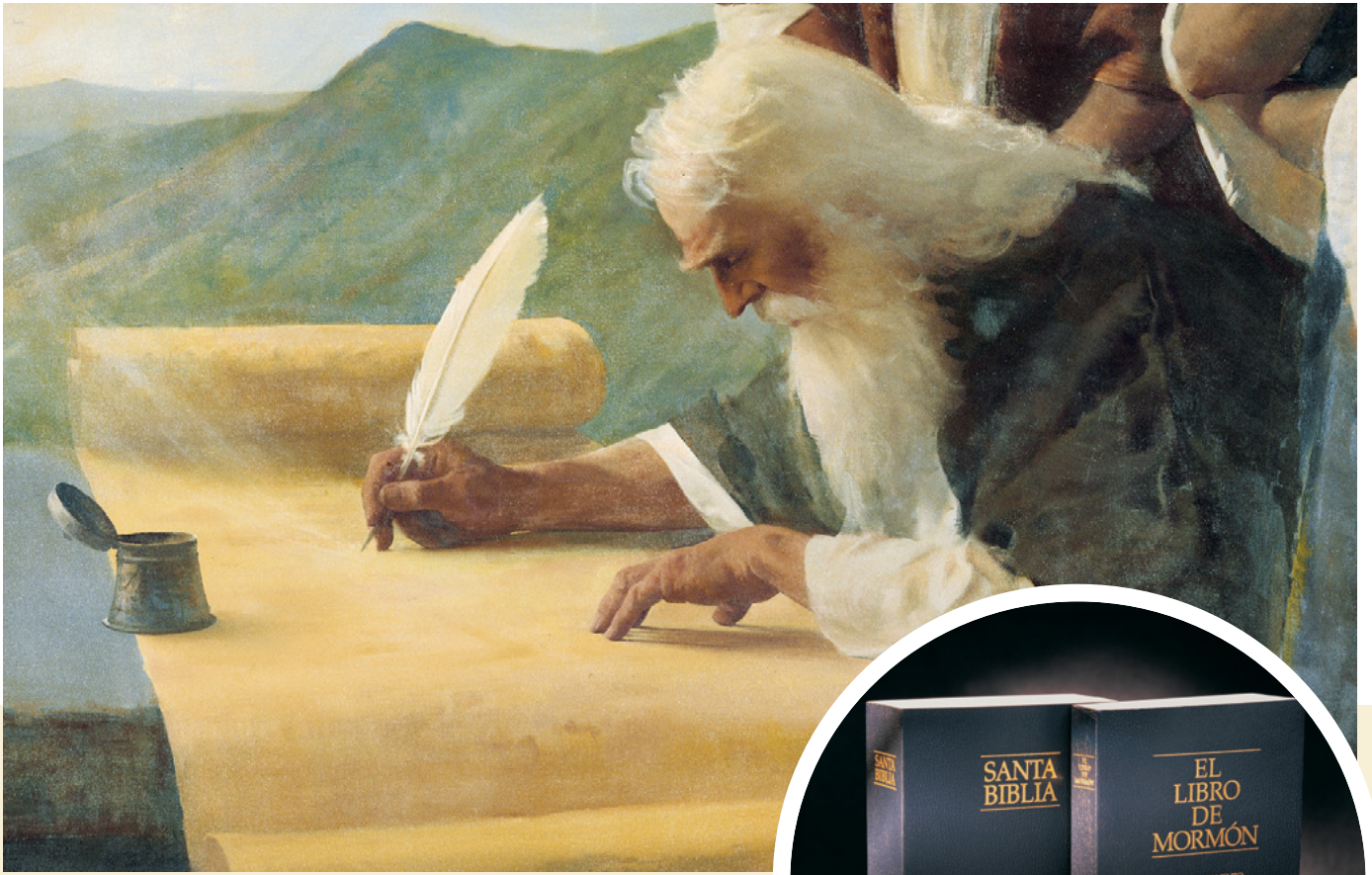
“President Monson [extended] a call to the Quorum of the Twelve to me. He asked me if I would accept. . . . I responded affirmatively. And then . . . President Monson kindly reached out to me, describing how [when] he was called many years ago as an Apostle, . . . he too felt inadequate. He calmly instructed me, ‘Bishop Stevenson, the Lord will qualify those whom He calls.’ These soothing words of a prophet have been a source of peace [ever since].”<sup>4</sup>

Elder Gary E. Stevenson is truly a man without guile. As an Apostle, as he did as Presiding Bishop and as a Seventy and as he has done throughout his life, he will continue to reach out to the poor and needy. He will follow the scriptural charge to “succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees” (D&C 81:5). It is a challenging calling, but one to which he is well suited because of his understanding heart. ■

#### NOTES

1. Gary E. Stevenson, “Lean Not unto Thine Own Understanding” (Brigham Young University devotional, Jan. 14, 2014), 2, 3, [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).
2. Gary E. Stevenson, “Plain and Precious Truths,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 92.
3. Gary E. Stevenson, press conference, Oct. 3, 2015.
4. Gary E. Stevenson, “Plain and Precious Truths,” 91.





# THE EYES OF THE BLIND Shall See

*We may consider the coming forth of  
the Book of Mormon as a miraculous restoration  
of spiritual eyesight.*



**By Elder  
Lynn G. Robbins**  
Of the Presidency  
of the Seventy

**I**saiah prophesied that in the latter days the Lord would proceed to do “a marvellous work and a wonder,” and he foretold the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, stating that “the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness” (Isaiah 29:14, 18).

## **An “Awful State of Blindness”**

In the days prior to the glorious First Vision, the religious fervor of Manchester, New York, USA, was extremely confusing. In Joseph Smith’s words, “So great were the confusion and strife among the different denominations, that it was impossible for a person . . . to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong” (Joseph—Smith History 1:8).

The Book of Mormon refers to this pre-Restoration confusion as an “*awful state of blindness* . . . because of the plain and most precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb which have been kept back by that abominable church” (1 Nephi 13:32; emphasis added).

Over the centuries, the clear spiritual eyesight provided by the Bible *blurred* as many plain and precious parts were lost, sometimes unintentionally through flawed translation and sometimes intentionally by corrupt editing, “that they might pervert the right ways of the Lord, that they might *blind the eyes* and harden the hearts of the children of men” (1 Nephi 13:27; emphasis added).



## “Whereas I Was Blind, Now I See” (John 9:25)

One of the most common of the Savior’s miracles was restoring eyesight to the blind.<sup>1</sup> The Savior’s more important mission and miracle, however, was healing the spiritually blind. “I am come into this world,” He said, “that they which see not might see” (John 9:39).

Using Isaiah’s metaphor and Nephi’s vision of spiritual blindness in the latter days, we may consider the coming forth of the Book of Mormon as a miraculous restoration of spiritual eyesight.

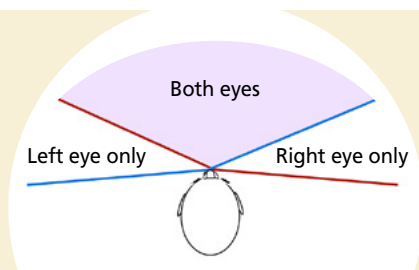
“Neither will the Lord God suffer that the Gentiles shall

Both “established in one” is the way two eyes see or function. Because I have glaucoma, I have to apply sight-saving miracle drops in both eyes twice a day to prevent blindness. Before doctors discovered that I had glaucoma, I had already lost partial vision in one eye. I am profoundly grateful for modern-day medicine and that I am not blind. I am also thankful for my second good eye, which compensates for the partial loss of vision in the other. The two-eye metaphor has profound and personal relevance for me.

Multiple scientific analyses illustrate the advantages of two eyes over one. I will explore six of those advantages



2A. A child's toy demonstrates the power of superior depth perception.



1. Humans have a maximum horizontal field view of around 190 degrees with two eyes, approximately 120 degrees of which is seen by both eyes.



2B. In the animal kingdom, two eyes give potential prey precise depth perception, helping it break the camouflage of predators.

forever remain in that awful state of *blindness*. . . .

“ . . . I will be merciful unto the Gentiles in that day, inso-much that I will bring forth unto them, in mine own power, much of my gospel. . . .

“For, behold, saith the Lamb: I will manifest myself unto thy seed, that they shall write many things which I shall minister unto them, . . . [and] these things shall be hid up, to come forth unto the Gentiles, by the gift and power of the Lamb.

“And in them shall be written my gospel, saith the Lamb, and my rock and my salvation.

“ . . . These last records . . . shall establish the truth of the first. . . . They both shall be established in one” (1 Nephi 13:32, 34–36, 40–41; emphasis added)—coming together to help us see the truth.

and their spiritual parallels with the Book of Mormon as a second *eyewitness* of Jesus Christ in *restoring* spiritual eyesight to the world.

## 1. Two Eyes Increase the Field of Vision and Enhance Clarity

Humans have a maximum horizontal field of view of around 190 degrees with two eyes, approximately 120 degrees of which overlaps or is seen by both eyes. Beyond the converging field of view, each eye also has a peripheral field unique to that eye.<sup>2</sup>

After centuries of plain and precious things being lost, the Bible enjoyed something less than perfect eyesight. The coming forth of the Book of Mormon with its perfect eyesight not only increased the field of spiritual vision but also

gave much-needed clarity to the overlapping portion of the two spiritual eyes, or the binocular field of vision (see image 1)—scripturally we call this the law of two witnesses (see Matthew 18:16; Ether 5:4; D&C 6:28).

The overlapping field of vision, or *binocular summation*, enhances the ability to detect faint objects.<sup>3</sup> We see things more clearly as the separate views received in each eye are combined into a single image, giving us a convergence of the *visual axis*<sup>4</sup> and thus eliminating the “confusion and strife” that so bewildered young Joseph (see Joseph Smith—History 1:8).

The fact that *two eyes are better than one* is such a universal and self-evident fact that Isaiah couldn’t have chosen a better metaphor for worldwide identification: “the eyes of the blind shall see” (Isaiah 29:18). We hope that those who currently see with just one spiritual eye, the Bible, will recognize the wisdom of not rejecting the Book of Mormon as a second eyewitness of Jesus Christ before they even give it a try. They will discover that “the stick of Judah” and the “stick of Joseph” (Ezekiel 37:19) converge as two eyes synched in perfect and clear unison—an *eye-opening* experience!

## 2. Stereopsis—Avoiding Deception

“Binocular vision . . . allows humans to walk over and around obstacles at greater speed and with more assurance” because of more precise depth perception.<sup>5</sup> An example of this superior depth perception is demonstrated in the 3-D clarity of a stereoscope image over a simple photograph (see image 2A).

In the animal kingdom, two eyes give potential prey *stereopsis*, or precise depth perception, and the ability to discern 3-D disparities, thus helping it “to break the camouflage of [a potential predator]”<sup>6</sup> (see image 2B).

The Book of Mormon provides the world with similar protection by restoring clarity and divine depth perception to the spiritual binocular field, allowing us to avoid Satan’s camouflage and deceptions. He cleverly introduced confusion by blurring the meaning of many biblical passages. The

Book of Mormon broke his camouflage with crystal-clear corroboration, “unto the confounding of false doctrines” (2 Nephi 3:12) and the “divid[ing] asunder all the cunning and the snares and the wiles of the devil” (Helaman 3:29).

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) shared this reassuring promise of the Book of Mormon: “There is a power in the book which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book. You will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to *avoid deception*. You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path.”<sup>7</sup>



3. Binocular visions helps a person see more of, or all of, an object behind an obstruction. Can you tell the difference?

## 3. Seeing around Obstructions

Binocular vision helps a person to see more of, or all of, an object behind an obstruction. This advantage was pointed out by Leonardo da Vinci, who noted that a vertical column obscuring an object might block some or all of the object from the left eye but that the object might yet be visible to the right eye<sup>8</sup> (see image 3).

A spiritual example of this is found in the Savior’s words to the Judeans: “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” (John 10:16).

Because Jesus did not identify those other sheep, the Jews could not decipher His statement. However, with the *additional perspective* from the Book of Mormon, that which was hidden became visible: “And verily I say unto



you, that ye are they of whom I said: Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” (3 Nephi 15:21). The result was a clear field of vision with no misunderstanding of what the Savior meant—no more *obstacle* illusions.

#### 4. The Peripheral Advantages of Each Eye

“Peripheral vision is a part of vision that occurs outside the very center of gaze.”<sup>9</sup> In other words, we are aware of things in the field of vision on which we aren’t actually focused. Part of that field of vision—that which is outside the range of the binocular field, or *stereoscopic* vision—is unique to each eye (see image 1).

We are profoundly grateful for the Bible and what it uniquely and magnificently gives us—most important, the history of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

We are also deeply grateful for the Book of Mormon and the 20/20 untainted vision it provides for us, which clarifies the doctrine of Christ and reveals His teachings through the prophets of ancient America and His personal visitation and ministry to the Nephites.

Like two eyes divinely paired, the Bible and the Book of Mormon complement each other, resulting in a spectacular binocular panorama, as well as vistas unique to each.

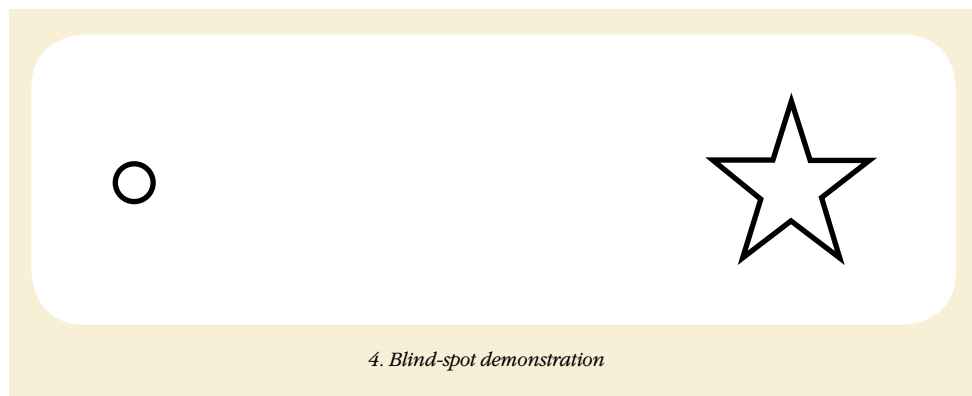
#### 5. Eliminating Our Blind Spot

We all have a blind spot in our field of vision that is relatively easy to identify. Hold the illustration of the circle and star (image 4) straight in front of you at arm’s length. Close your left eye and focus your right eye directly on the small circle. With your right eye staring at the circle, slowly begin moving the image toward you. Somewhere around halfway, the star will disappear from the *peripheral* view.

Surprised? You didn’t know you have a blind spot? Just as your second eye compensates for this blind spot, the Book of Mormon provides a similar benefit to the Bible.

And just as the star vanished before your very eye, Herod had not seen the Bethlehem star and had to ask the Wise Men “what time the star appeared” (Matthew 2:7). It was in his spiritual peripheral *blind spot*. Only those *looking* for the star had noticed it.

Today there are many, like Herod, who refuse to look for and see the things of the Spirit. “Wo unto the blind that will not see” (2 Nephi 9:32). Pride also caused the Jews to



“[despise] the words of plainness, and . . . blindness came [to them] by looking beyond the mark” (Jacob 4:14).

One of the sobering *in-sights* of the Book of Mormon is a forewarning about the universal blind spot of *pride*, “a sin that can readily be *seen* in others but is rarely admitted in ourselves.”<sup>10</sup> It is like bad breath—obvious to everyone but the offender.

“In the premortal council, it was pride that felled Lucifer.”<sup>11</sup> It was “the pride of . . . the Nephites, [that] hath proven their destruction” (Moroni 8:27). It is the proud who will burn as stubble when God cleanses the earth by fire (see Malachi 4:1; 3 Nephi 25:1).

The trailhead of the strait and narrow path is posted with a looming “warning” sign: “BEWARE of pride, lest ye become as the Nephites of old” (D&C 38:39; emphasis

added). The tragic irony is that the “BEWARE” sign *itself* is usually in the blind spot of the proud. Therefore, “Let him that is [proud] learn wisdom by humbling himself and calling upon the Lord his God, that his eyes may be opened that he may see” (D&C 136:32).

## 6. The Eye-Brain Connection

This clever anagram (see image 5) appears to be an accurate equation, but it isn’t entirely correct. It is actually the brain’s imaging system that tells us what our eyes are seeing. The brain creates our dreams by night and interprets what we see by day. Seeing isn’t necessarily believing or seeing correctly. For example, “But though [Jesus] had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him” (John 12:37). The eyes alone are insufficient to foster belief or *true seeing*.

Just as the brain works in tandem with the eyes, the Spirit works in tandem with the scriptures, which help us see spiritually. Merely reading the scriptures isn’t enough to produce spiritual sight because “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

For the Book of Mormon to function as a spiritual eye, we must accept and sincerely follow Moroni’s invitation in Moroni 10:3–5. It is an invitation with a promise that God “*will* manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost” (verse 4; emphasis added).

## Witness and Gratitude

To avoid spiritual blindness, Lehi’s sons risked their lives to obtain the brass plates (see 1 Nephi 3–4). Without the plates, they “would have dwindled in unbelief” (Mosiah 1:5). Today, thanks to the printing press and digital tools, we have easier and quicker access to the scriptures. It makes little difference to Satan, however, whether he keeps people from obtaining them—his strategy in the Dark Ages—or tempts people not to read them—his strategy in the latter days. Either way, his “mists of darkness [successfully] . . .

*blindeth* the eyes . . . of the children of men . . . that they perish and are lost” (1 Nephi 12:17; emphasis added).

Like my *daily* eye drops, it is only by “*continually* holding fast to the rod of iron” (1 Nephi 8:30; emphasis added) that we can avoid being blinded by the latter-day mists that are so subtle and prevalent. Whenever a person becomes less active or leaves the Church, it’s almost a certainty that person has stopped reading the Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ is indeed a marvelous work and a wonder. It is a second

*the eyes = they see*

5.

*eyewitness* of Jesus Christ and His glorious gospel, offering all the advantages of a second eye.

May we continually hold fast to the iron rod that we too may be worthy of the Savior’s praise to His disciples: “Blessed are your eyes, for they see” (Matthew 13:16). ■

## NOTES

1. See Matthew 9:27–31; 12:22–23; 15:30–31; 21:14; Mark 8:22–26; 10:46–52; Luke 7:21–22; John 9; 3 Nephi 17:7–9; 26:15.
2. See “Binocular Vision,” Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org.
3. See Randolph Blake and Robert Fox, “The Psychophysical Inquiry into Binocular Summation,” *Perception & Psychophysics*, vol. 14, no. 1 (1973), 161–68; see also “Binocular Vision.”
4. See “Vergence,” Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org.
5. “Binocular Vision.”
6. “Binocular Vision.”
7. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* (2014), 141.
8. See “Binocular Vision.”
9. “Peripheral Vision,” Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org.
10. *Teachings: Ezra Taft Benson*, 18; emphasis added.
11. *Teachings: Ezra Taft Benson*, 231.



# SEVEN TENDER Miracles ALONG THE WAY

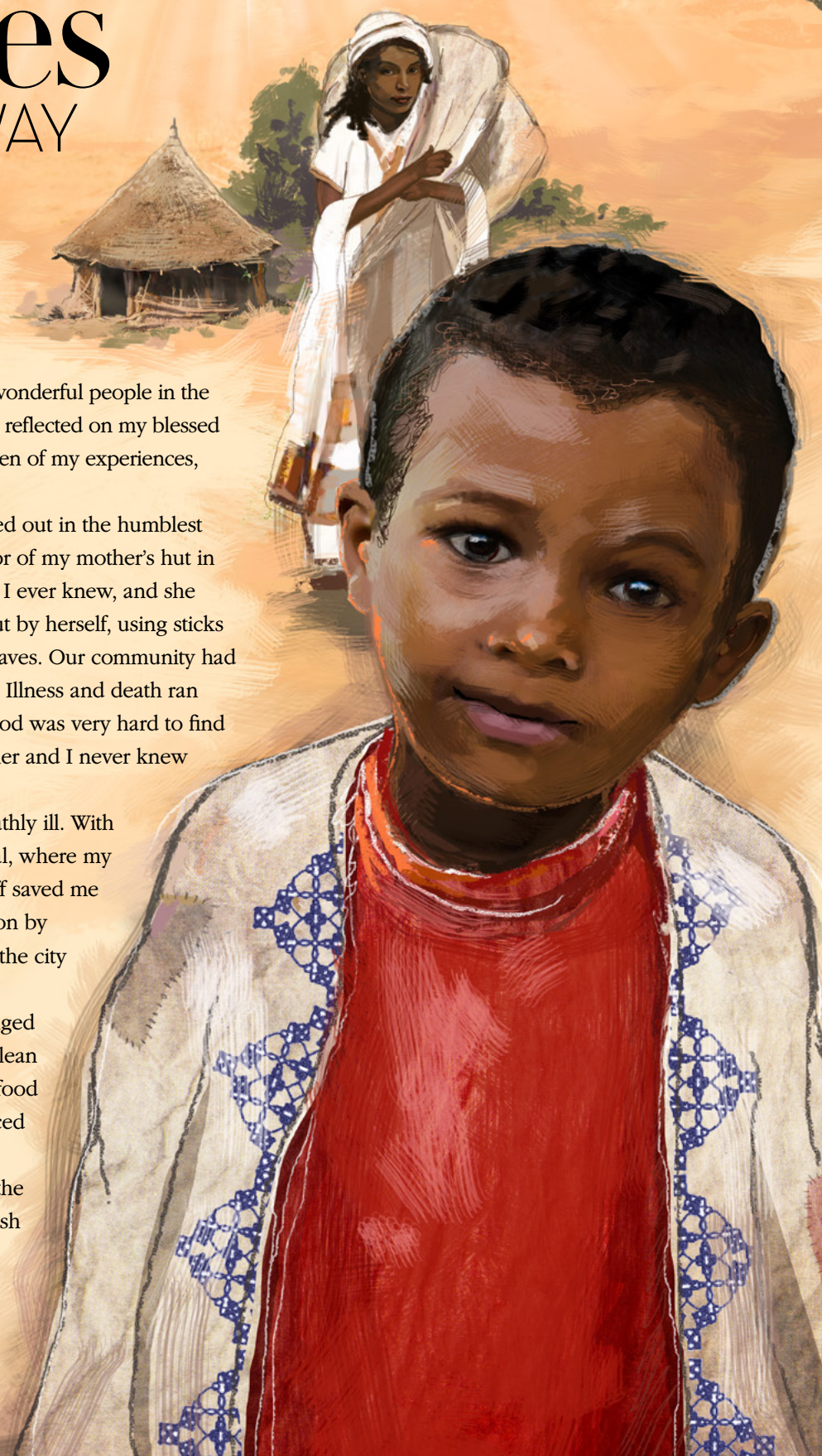
By Ephrem Smith

While teaching and serving many wonderful people in the Texas Fort Worth Mission, I often reflected on my blessed life. I marveled particularly at seven of my experiences, which I consider to be miracles.

First, I survived my early life, which started out in the humblest of circumstances. I was born on the dirt floor of my mother's hut in Dessie, Ethiopia. Mom was the only relative I ever knew, and she built our eight-foot (2.4 m) dome-shaped hut by herself, using sticks and mud that she covered with grass and leaves. Our community had no running water and no restroom facilities. Illness and death ran rampant in our *kebele*, or neighborhood. Food was very hard to find and impossible for us to purchase. My mother and I never knew a day without hunger.

When I was four, my mother became deathly ill. With her last bit of effort, we trudged to a hospital, where my beloved, weary mom died. The hospital staff saved me from life in the streets and death by starvation by arranging for me to live in an orphanage in the city of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital.

The second miracle came as my life changed dramatically. In this orphanage I lived in a clean building, slept in a real bed, and ate all the food I wanted. Other orphans had also experienced the loss of a loved one, and they taught me how to deal with the loss of my mother. In the evenings we gathered to sing songs in English and pray in Amharic, our mother tongue. We prayed for each other and asked God to bless us to be adopted into "nice, kind,







*The Lord has blessed my life with miracles that have helped me follow the path He has for me.*

loving homes.” Both the music and the prayers impacted my life in a huge way. I never quit praying.

Third, I was introduced to the missionaries and the Church when I was eight. I was invited to see the dedication of the first LDS Church building in Ethiopia on Sunday, November 30, 2003. At the dedication I felt the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, and the missionaries in attendance radiated joy, happiness, and that same powerful spirit. I remember thinking that I wanted to be just like them. But I had no idea how I could ever reach this goal.

The fourth miracle came soon after. A family in the United States adopted me. My new father picked me up from the orphanage and took me home. We started the process of becoming acquainted, and I began to settle into my new environment.

Numerous challenges surfaced immediately upon my arrival. Everywhere I went people laughed at my English. My limited education caused problems in school. I prayed for help, and then I worked harder and smarter to close the knowledge gap, especially with English. Once again Heavenly Father answered my prayers. Two years later I proudly skipped a grade.

Then my home life fell apart. Prayers to the Lord, high personal goals, and a deep desire to succeed carried me through that extremely tough time. Finally, with a social worker’s help, my father and I agreed to terminate the adoption. This was a time for prayer, patience, faith, and help from Heavenly Father.

Now 15 years old, I went to live with a foster family for about a year. That was when the fifth miracle came.

While sleigh riding with two friends, I met an LDS family with two nice daughters. During the ride home, one of the daughters spoke up, saying, “I think the Lord wants us to adopt Ephrem Smith.” Remarkably, the other three members of the family had also received the same inspiration. The father worked with the Department of Social Services, and soon I moved to my new home. From the very beginning my amazing new father gave me agency. For example, he explained that their family goes to church on Sundays. He allowed me to choose to join them or stay home; he said that they still would love me if I chose not to attend church. I chose to attend church, and I have since made many other righteous decisions.

Miracle six came as I received a testimony of the gospel. One Sunday I sat in sacrament meeting singing “I Stand All Amazed” (*Hymns*, no. 193). Huge tears began running down my cheeks as I received a personal testimony that Jesus is the Christ and that the Church is His Church.

Finally, nine years later, I knew how to become like those missionaries! The missionary age was now 18, but my adoption had not yet been finalized. I waited seven long months until my adoption was completed. Finally, my missionary papers could be submitted. Four days later I received my mission call. In just one week the Lord blessed me with final adoption papers and a mission call. I treasure both papers exceedingly! They are my seventh miracle. Yes, indeed, it took many miracles along the way from that mud hut in Ethiopia to my treasured mission. ■

*The author lives in Nevada, USA.*



# COME, FOLLOW ME: Teaching the Basics at Home

By Alicia Stanton and  
Natalie Campbell

As prophets have repeatedly taught, “Our success, individually and as a Church, will largely be determined by how faithfully we focus on living the gospel in the home.”<sup>1</sup>

Living the gospel is the best way to learn and teach the gospel. As we live these doctrinal principles, we will bring our families and ourselves closer to the Spirit. With the Spirit’s help, we can best learn and teach these principles. We will be guided to the most effective learning methods for our needs and circumstances and, with our families, grow closer to the Savior.

Following the examples of these members, you too can bring the principles from the youth curriculum into your home.





## JULY:

### Ordinances and Covenants

Priesthood ordinances and sacred covenants—promises we make with Heavenly Father—bring powerful blessings into our lives. One way to envision the purpose of ordinances is to think of them as milestones on a path leading back to Heavenly Father's presence—eternal life. We stay on that path by keeping the covenants we have made.

For example, a young woman describes how she stays on the covenant path: "I once had a classmate ask me for help. I didn't think much of it, just gave her the help she needed. But afterward, the Spirit reminded me that by helping bear her burdens, I was keeping the covenants I made when I was baptized (see Mosiah 18:8–10). I am grateful for the opportunities Heavenly Father gives me every day to choose to walk the covenant path."

As a family, you might identify the ordinances each member still needs to receive and then evaluate how well you are keeping the covenants you have made. For example, what does your preparation to receive the weekly ordinance of the sacrament reflect about your commitment to your covenants? The Holy Ghost can teach you how to make improvements.



TOP: PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID STOKER

## AUGUST:

### Marriage and Family

Marriage and family are central to our happiness and to Heavenly Father's plan for our salvation. The family is the fundamental unit in time and eternity.

Teaching your children about marriage and family can be as easy as sharing a personal experience. A young adult shared how she gained an appreciation for her temple sealing:

"I remember sitting alone in an empty celestial room in the temple. I was anxious, not knowing if I would be sealed in the temple that day because of a miscommunication about the recommends my fiancé needed.

"I began to pray earnestly that the Lord would allow us to be sealed in His temple that day. As I did, a thought occurred to me: Although you are alone in the celestial room, the celestial kingdom is celestial because you won't be alone. You will be with your eternal family and your heavenly family. That's why you are being sealed.

"Forty minutes and a few phone calls later, my husband and I were able to be sealed. I was overwhelmed with gratitude and relief. The ordinance became more meaningful to me because we could build a celestial life with God where we would never have to be alone."

What experiences have taught you about the role of marriage and family in Heavenly Father's plan? The Holy Ghost can help you remember and share appropriate experiences. Regardless of your family situation, the Holy Ghost can teach you how to apply the principles of marriage and family in your life.







## SEPTEMBER:

### Commandments

Commandments are the laws and requirements given by a loving Heavenly Father to bless our lives.

One powerful way to study them is by searching the scriptures to learn about the blessings that come from obedience, as this young adult did:

“When I study about a commandment, I like to read all the scriptures I can find about it and make a list of the blessings Heavenly Father promises for my obedience. Learning more about promised blessings has strengthened my testimony that Heavenly Father loves me and wants to bless me.”

To learn or teach about the commandments, you could read with your children lesson 4 in chapter 3 of *Preach My Gospel*, study the associated scriptures, and make your own lists of promised blessings. You could use this approach to learn about the blessings related to any of the principles of the gospel.

## OCTOBER:

### Becoming More Christlike

During Christ’s ministry, He commanded us, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). We strive toward perfection when we simply work on developing one of Christ’s many attributes at a time and try to improve in that area with His help. One young man started by working on diligence.

“I wanted to develop more Christlike attributes, so I studied my scriptures and *Preach My Gospel*. In chapter 6 of *Preach My Gospel*, I found a suggested pattern for developing Christlike attributes and decided to try it with the quality of diligence. First I wrote down my own definition of diligence and the questions I had about it. Then I went through the suggested scriptures on diligence and recorded my impressions and answers I found as I read. Afterwards I set a goal to be more diligent with my schoolwork and have found myself feeling more motivated and consistent as I pray each night for diligence.”

As you strive to develop and teach your children how to develop Christlike attributes, Church resources can help you know where to start. The scriptures always supply Christ’s example, and resources like *Preach My Gospel* offer patterns that help us establish habits of studying and setting goals. When used together, the scriptures and other resources help us apply what we

learn so that we can become more like Christ.



## NOVEMBER:

### Spiritual and Temporal Self-Reliance



Developing self-reliance means exercising our agency to care for ourselves and our families and doing our best to find solutions to our own problems. Becoming more self-reliant gives us increased capacity to serve in our homes, the Church, and our communities. One of the best ways to teach these concepts is by example, as this member describes:

“For as long as I can remember, my mom has risen early each day to study the scriptures. I have seen how she has developed a spiritual strength that carries her through difficult times. She depends on her own relationship with Heavenly Father to be her support. Along with her spiritual strength, I’ve been impressed by her ability to care for our family. I’ve watched her budget, sacrifice her own wants, seek education, and show a lot of humility in ways that have allowed her to meet our family’s financial needs and still be at home with her children after school. I want the kind of strength that she has, and I’m so grateful for her example that teaches me how to get it.”

How could you be a better example of provident living to your children? If you don’t know a lot about certain aspects of self-reliance yet, you can invite your children to learn along with you, and that will be a great example in itself.



## DECEMBER:

### Building the Kingdom of God in the Latter Days

“Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14). This is the type of question you can ask yourself and your children as you discover what your roles are in building the kingdom of God.

This member learned to trust the Lord to help her build the kingdom: “I remember my parents teaching me from a young age that we always accept our callings because they are given by the Lord. While in college I was extended the call of Relief Society president. I was overwhelmed, but it never crossed my mind to say no. So I began the year with over 100 women to care for, little experience, and faith that the Lord would make up the difference. A year later I was released. As I thought back on the moments of revelation when I knew exactly what lesson to give or comment to share, or the many times when someone would make me a meal because I was too busy to cook, or the pile of encouraging notes I’d received, I knew with a surety that the Lord had magnified my efforts in building the kingdom.”

As you and your children think of ways to build the kingdom of God, remember to offer them encouragement and opportunities to serve. You might consider discussing ways to minister to others in the callings you hold. What other ways can you help the work roll forward? No matter where you serve, your efforts are valuable. As President

Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said, “Stand close together and lift where [you] stand.”<sup>2</sup> ■


*The authors live in Utah, USA.*

#### NOTES

1. Spencer W. Kimball, “Living the Gospel in the Home,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 101; see also L. Tom Perry, “Discipleship,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 60; *Liahona*, Jan. 2001, 72.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Lift Where You Stand,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 56.

*Part 1 of this article was published in the January 2016 Liahona.*






By David A. Edwards  
Church Magazines

Throughout the ages, countless people have asked the question posed by Job: “If a man die, shall he live again?” (Job 14:14). To shout “Yes!” in answer to such a question is the great privilege of those with a testimony of Jesus Christ and His Resurrection.

Yet many around us are passing through this life “without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12) and must navigate between various facts and beliefs regarding death. For one, there’s the evidence of their eyes, or the “harsh reality” that death is universal and absolute—they’ve never seen anyone come back. Then there are the widespread reports of near-death experiences, with remarkable consistencies between them. And then there is the fact that human cultures all over the world have always had a concept of some sort of after-life, another consistency that begs an explanation.

But the assurance that our lives don’t end at death comes from God, who has revealed it from the beginning through numerous witnesses, including prophets, apostles, and, most important, the Holy Ghost.

# WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT Life after Death?



*“If a man die,  
shall he live  
again?” Yes!  
But then what?*

### **From the Beginning**

The plan of salvation was first taught on this earth to Adam and Eve, our first parents. They learned about the gospel of Jesus Christ and how to return to Heavenly Father’s presence—and they understood that *returning* meant that we had been with Him before. So, from the beginning, Adam and Eve knew very clearly that this life isn’t all there is. They knew—and taught their children—that because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, they would be resurrected after this life and, if they were obedient, receive eternal life (see Moses 5:10–12).


Secular theories posit that the belief in an afterlife is an independent outgrowth of some universal psychological need. But the widespread idea of life after death instead constitutes a sort of ancestral or collective memory (if not a premortal memory) of what was revealed in the beginning and then passed from generation to generation. What President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) once said about some common religious practices also applies to common beliefs such as life after death: “Undoubtedly the knowledge of [it] . . . was carried by the posterity of Adam into all lands, and continued . . . through Noah . . . to those who succeeded him, spreading out into all nations and countries” (“Discourse,” *Deseret News*, Feb. 19, 1873, 36).

Thus, the idea of a life beyond this one is so universal because its origin coincides with the origin of the human race itself.

### **Plain and Precious Truths**

As Latter-day Saints, we can help bring hope into the lives of those living without God in the world by confidently bearing our witness of the truth about our existence: death is not the end. In addition, we can answer many questions about life after death because of the plain and precious truths of the restored gospel that have been revealed. Here are brief answers to a few such questions.



A photograph of a smiling couple in wedding attire. The man is wearing a dark suit with a yellow tie, and the woman is wearing a white wedding dress with a veil. They are standing in front of a building with large arched windows, likely a temple.

### **What happens to us right after we die?**

At the time of death, our spirits separate from our bodies and then enter the spirit world (see James 2:26; Alma 40:11).

### **What are our spirits like?**

Our spirit bodies look like they did in premortal life: human bodies in a perfect adult form (see Ether 3:16; *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 131–32). After death, our spirits will have the same attitudes, appetites, and desires we had at the time of our physical death on earth (see Alma 34:34).

### **What is spirit?**

Spirit is a kind of matter, only “more fine or pure” (D&C 131:7).

### **What is the spirit world like?**

There are two major states or divisions among the spirits in the spirit world: paradise and spirit prison. Righteous spirits go to paradise, which is “a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow” (Alma 40:12). The spirits of people who haven’t yet received the gospel of Jesus Christ are said to be in spirit prison (see 1 Peter 3:18–20). They can still choose good or evil and accept or reject the gospel. The spirits in paradise can preach the gospel to them (see D&C 138). Those whose spirits and bodies are separated for a long time view this separation as “a bondage” (D&C 45:17; 138:50).

### **What is heaven?**

Heaven is generally understood to be the place where God dwells and where righteous people may eventually dwell. In this sense, it is different from the paradise of the spirit world.

### **What is hell?**

In the scriptures, *hell* can refer to one of two things: (1) “the temporary abode in the spirit world for those who were disobedient in mortality” or (2) “the permanent location of those who are not redeemed by the Atonement of Jesus Christ” (Guide to the Scriptures, “Hell,” scriptures.lds.org). In a general sense, it is the spiritual condition suffered by those who have rejected

the gospel. Joseph Smith taught: “The great misery of departed spirits . . . is to know that they come short of the glory that others enjoy and that they might have enjoyed themselves, and they are their own accusers” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 224).

### **What is resurrection?**

Resurrection is the reuniting of spirit and body in a perfected, immortal state (see Alma 11:43).

### **Who will be resurrected?**

All people who have lived on earth will be resurrected (see 1 Corinthians 15:22; Alma 11:44).

### **When will we be resurrected?**

People will be resurrected at different times. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ ushered in the First Resurrection, or resurrection of the just. Some righteous people have already been resurrected since that time. After the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, many



more righteous people will be resurrected. During the Millennium, other good people will be resurrected. After the Millennium, the wicked will be resurrected. (See D&C 76:32–112; 88:97–101.)

#### ***What are resurrected bodies like?***

Resurrected bodies are flesh and bone (see Luke 24:39), immortal (see Alma 11:45), perfect (see Alma 11:43), glorious, and beautiful. “There is nothing more beautiful to look upon than a resurrected man or woman” (President Lorenzo Snow [1814–1901], *The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow*, ed. Clyde J. Williams [1996], 99).

#### ***What happens after we’re resurrected?***

After all people have been resurrected and the Millennium has ended, we will be brought into the presence of God to be judged according to our words, deeds, thoughts, and desires (see Revelation 20:12; Alma 12:14; D&C 137:9). Jesus Christ will be our Judge (see John 5:22, 27–29; Romans 14:10).

#### ***What happens after the Final Judgment?***

After the Final Judgment, we will receive one of the following eternal rewards:

***Celestial kingdom:*** the home of Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and all those who have qualified for eternal life by making and keeping all the gospel covenants (see D&C 76:50–70). This includes those who accept the gospel in the spirit world who would have received it in this life but did not have the opportunity (see D&C 137:7).

***Terrestrial kingdom:*** the home of those good people who did not accept the gospel of Jesus Christ but received it in the spirit world or who were not valiant in the testimony of Jesus Christ in life (see D&C 76:71–80).

***Telestial kingdom:*** the home of those who were wicked and did not accept the gospel of Jesus Christ, who were not resurrected until after the Millennium (see D&C 76:81–89).

***Endless punishment:*** the final state of the sons of perdition, as well as the devil and his angels (see D&C 76:31–49).

#### ***What will people do in the celestial kingdom?***

Those who inherit the highest degree of the celestial kingdom will be exalted, which means they will have eternal life, become like our Heavenly Father, and receive all that the Father has. To become like Heavenly Father means to acquire His attributes of perfection, including love and service.<sup>1</sup> It also means to share in His work and glory, which is “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). Exaltation includes being sealed in marriage for eternity, living in eternal families, and having eternal spirit offspring. (See D&C 76:59, 62; 130:2; 132:19–23.)

#### ***What will people do in the other kingdoms?***

Those in other kingdoms will be angels, which “are ministering servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory” (D&C 132:16). They will not be married or have spirit offspring (see D&C 131:1–4; 132:16–17). ■

#### **NOTE**

1. “Service is not something we endure on this earth so we can earn the right to live in the celestial kingdom. Service is the very fiber of which an exalted life in the celestial kingdom is made” (President Marion G. Romney [1897–1988], Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “The Celestial Nature of Self-Reliance,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 93).





*We find joy  
in the consis-  
tent effort of  
experiencing a  
change of heart  
as we embrace  
the Atonement  
of Jesus Christ  
in our lives.*



# EXPERIENCING a Change of Heart



By Elder  
Edward Dube  
Of the Seventy

Rosemary, our firstborn child, was a new pretty baby when my mother visited us from her village in central Zimbabwe. As brand-new parents, my wife, Naume, and I were so excited for my mother's visit. We were eager to learn everything we needed to know about raising a child.

Upon arriving, my mother brought out a round cloth necklace. Wrapped in the cloth, she explained, was a magical object. She held out the necklace to Naume to put on Rosemary's neck. Sensing Naume's hesitation, my mother immediately said: "From an early age my mother and maternal grandmother gave me this magical object, which has protected me and all my children, including your husband. This amulet will protect your daughter from diseases and from all sorts of spells that might befall her, and she will overcome any difficult situation in life. She will need to wear this until she is five years old."

At that time I was serving as branch president, and I immediately thought, "What will the members of my branch think when they see this 'magical' necklace on our baby's neck?" Then I thought, "Maybe we could cover it so that it will not be so visible." I looked at Naume; her expression told me that we should not accept this gift. I asked my mother if she could make a small, thin necklace, one that might not be so visible. She responded that it was not possible, and that the magical object worked best in the format she had prepared it.

Again, Naume gave me a look that clearly expressed her disapproval. I turned to my mother and explained

that as a branch president in our local congregation, I would not be comfortable placing the necklace on our child. My mother replied with a warning: she told us that without the necklace our baby would die.

## A Moment of Panicked Crisis

A few weeks after this incident, our little Rosemary fell very ill. We did not have money to take her to the doctor. It was at night, and at that moment I started thinking about what my mother had said in her warning. I began wishing I had accepted the necklace. I would have taken it and put it on Rosemary's neck. At this moment of panic, I heard a still, small voice urging me to exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I immediately got dressed in my Sunday best. I took our baby in my arms and pronounced a priesthood blessing. I felt peace and comfort, and I sensed that my wife felt the same way. Almost immediately both Naume and little Rosemary fell into a peaceful sleep. Our daughter Rosemary was healed. In the proceeding days she slowly recovered and regained her full health. What a miracle we witnessed! The Lord in His tender mercies reached out to me and strengthened my faith in Him.

I was grateful but also a little ashamed. Here I was, a returned missionary serving as a branch president, but I was more concerned about what people would say rather than believing in God (see Mosiah 4:9). Yes, even my mother, whom I love and admire so much, could not comprehend all things. I needed to be something more than just a returned missionary;



something more than a branch president; I needed to change—to experience what Alma experienced.

### A Moment of Mighty Change

Alma, priest of wicked King Noah, likely examined himself closely when the prophet Abinadi asked this searching question: “Ye have not applied your hearts to understanding; therefore, ye have not been wise. Therefore, what teach ye this people?” (Mosiah 12:27). Just like Alma, I needed to have a “mighty change wrought in [my] heart” (Alma 5:12).

As a priest in King Noah’s court, Alma was accustomed to a life of privilege. He received support for his living through the people’s taxes. He enjoyed a position of power and prominence. He was one of those who “were lifted up in the pride of their hearts” (Mosiah 11:5). Yet when Alma learned about the Savior’s coming into the world—of His teachings, suffering, death, and Resurrection and that Jesus Christ is “the light and the life of the world; yea, a light that is endless, that can never be darkened; yea, and also a life which is endless, that there can be no more death” (Mosiah 16:9)—he was ready to change. He was even ready to die if necessary.

Surrounded by opposition and life-threatening dangers, Alma courageously pleaded with King Noah to let Abinadi depart in peace. Alma’s actions came from his heart; he had felt the love of the Savior extended to him through the Lord’s prophet Abinadi.

When my mother offered me a necklace of protection to put on my baby’s neck, I based my concern on outward appearance.

I was worried about what the members of our branch would think of me. Apparently, I had not yet fully experienced that “mighty change of heart.” I have since come to realize that our success and happiness is based on how fully we are willing to take the gospel into our hearts. In order for us to find true happiness, joy, and peace, “the pure gospel of Jesus Christ must go down into [our] hearts . . . by the power of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>1</sup>

### An Opportunity to Testify

With this kind of change, looking up to the Savior in all things and in all places enables us to reach out to others. Alma became a mighty missionary, reaching out to so many and organizing the Church of Christ among his people who fled from King Noah.

Can you see how I missed an opportunity to share the gospel with my mother when she offered us that magical object, which she believed had always protected her and her children? I could have been an instrument in the hands of the Lord—just like Alma—who preached the gospel of Jesus Christ and “changed their

*I took our baby  
in my arms and  
pronounced  
a priesthood  
blessing.*



### CONTINUING CONVERSION

“We need to experience a continuing conversion by increasing our faith in Jesus Christ and our faithfulness to His gospel throughout our lives—not just once but regularly.”

Elder M. Russell Ballard  
of the Quorum of the  
Twelve Apostles, “Stay  
in the Boat and Hold  
On!” *Ensign or Liahona*,  
Nov. 2014, 90.





***Alma courageously pleaded with King Noah to let Abinadi depart in peace.***

hearts; yea, he awakened them out of a deep sleep, and they awoke unto God” (Alma 5:7).

As I reflect on that occasion with my mother, I wonder what would have happened had I responded more like Alma. My mother may have been awakened unto God, and her change could have had a positive impact upon my siblings. This change could then have had a great impact in the lives of my siblings’ children and on to their posterity.

Alma’s mighty change was felt not only by those whom he taught and to whom he testified but also by his children and his posterity. His son, Alma, when preaching to the people in and around the land of Zarahemla, reminded them of his father’s testimony of the Savior Jesus Christ:

“Behold, I can tell you—did not my father Alma believe in the words which were delivered by the mouth of Abinadi? . . .

“And according to his faith there was a mighty change wrought in his heart” (Alma 5:11–12).

For a young person like Alma, this mighty change of heart, which began through the invitation by Abinadi to apply one’s heart to understanding the word of God, was the key to his happiness and success in reaching out to others: “And behold, he preached the word unto your fathers, and a mighty change was also wrought in their hearts, and they humbled themselves and put their trust in the true and living God. And behold, they were faithful until the end; therefore they were saved” (Alma 5:13).

## **Make an Ongoing Change**

Some young people today are caught between choosing what is right in the sight of God or pleasing their parents or guardians, who may not share the same feelings they have about the truthfulness of the gospel. When faced with such a choice, ask yourself, “Does this decision help me to feel that my ‘works have

been the works of righteousness’ (Alma 5:16), and does it still make me feel ‘to sing the song of redeeming love?’” (Alma 5:26).

While we should all love and admire our parents, we need to know that the choices we make will have a direct impact upon our children and our posterity. To some of us it may be necessary to move away from our comfort zones, as did Alma, who fled from the servants of King Noah and taught the gospel in very difficult circumstances. He brought about change not only in his family but also in others. To experience a change of heart, it is important that we think of others and “join in fasting and mighty prayer in behalf of the welfare of the souls of those who [know] not God” (Alma 6:6).

What if our baby Rosemary had not survived her illness—even after the priesthood blessing I pronounced upon her? The Lord’s admonition is a great strength to me: “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it” (Matthew 10:39).

We find joy in the consistent effort of experiencing a change of heart as we embrace the Atonement of Jesus Christ in our lives. I am grateful for this knowledge, and I know in my heart that our Savior went forth, “suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people” (Alma 7:11). I know that there is real safety and protection in looking to the Lord and following His counsel. ■

### **NOTE**

1. Henry B. Eyring, “We Must Raise Our Sights,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2004, 16.



# HOORAY!

By G. Craig Kiser

*A four-year-old helped me appreciate the sacrament in a new way.*

My mind was focused on the Savior as the congregation finished singing the sacrament hymn, but as I started to close the hymnbook, the music continued. A large congregation that day made it necessary for the organist to play two more verses while the priests finished breaking the bread. I was grateful for the extra time. It allowed me an additional moment of reverent meditation before the sacramental prayers.

During the prayers, I followed carefully the words the priests spoke as they blessed the emblems of Christ's sacrifice for us. Just as the final prayer concluded and at the moment when the congregation voiced their assent, a four-year-old boy's voice from two rows behind me sprang from the midst of the "amens."

"Hooray!" he exclaimed.

His spontaneous expression was loud enough to cause several children

nearby to giggle. I confess that it brought a quizzical smile to my lips.

"Hooray?" I thought. That's an odd response to the sacrament prayers. It was certainly a response I'd never heard before and likely will never hear again. After all, we end our prayers with "amen."

Perhaps that young child had sensed more of the truth than I had.

*Hooray* communicates excitement. It is an exclamation of joy, usually for a victory. Sometimes it's shouted to

show approval for someone who has finished a difficult task well.<sup>1</sup>

Instantly, my mind caught hold of the idea. Yes, I thought, hooray that Jesus Christ overcame death so we can all be resurrected! Hooray that because of His Atonement, He can forgive our sins! More to the point, He can forgive me of *my* sins! Hooray that through His grace I may return to my Heavenly Father and enjoy the hope of eternal life! Yes! Hooray!

As I silently shouted these praises of thanks to my Heavenly Father, the Holy Ghost flooded my heart with a joy that nearly brought me to tears. I had been led that day by a little child (see Isaiah 11:6), and I rejoiced with fresh vision for the blessings of the Savior's Atonement in my life. ■

*The author lives in Oregon, USA.*

## NOTE

1. See *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th edition (2003), "hooray"; see also [en.wiktionary.org/wiki/hooray](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/hooray).



# NOT ON MY WATCH!

By Brett J. Porter

*The key to our success was to love the young men while we served them.*

I was close to a family who had a son in Young Men. During an activity while he was a deacon, a leader got after him and embarrassed him in front of his peers. He subsequently felt further discredited, quit attending activities, and sought friends outside his ward.

That experience had a tremendous impact on me. I determined that something like that would not happen on my watch if I were called to work with young men. Two years later I was called to work with the deacons.

Within a few months I found myself dealing with a young man who was constantly pushing the boundaries in his behavior.

“This is the line,” I finally said regarding his actions. “Do not cross it.”

He crossed it, we had a bit of a verbal altercation, and he left.

Later, I had a chat with him to resolve our differences. I said, “David, I love you and you’re a good young man, but I don’t love some of the things you do. The other young men look to you as a leader, and if they see you getting away with something improper, they may try it as well.”

We patched things up, he felt accepted, and we leaders helped temper some of his personal challenges. When he turned 14, he asked me to ordain him a teacher. Today, years later, he gives me a big bear hug whenever he sees me, and he talks with admiration about his time in Young Men.

When we love the young men and enjoy being with them, they know it. That’s why my counselors

and I took a genuine interest in our young men. We never did an activity just because it was in the book; we did it because we knew the young men would learn a skill, grow, and have fun.

On one occasion, we had a young man whose parents were not interested in our program.

“That’s OK,” I told them, “but do you mind if your son still comes, learns, and has some fun?”

We included him in our program, and before long his parents said OK to his full involvement. They saw that their boy was learning and having fun. Later he served a full-time mission. His younger brother blossomed as well and also served a mission.

We saw a correlation between leaders taking an interest in a young man and that young man learning, growing, and eventually serving a mission. It’s satisfying to watch young men grow, and it’s enjoyable to learn with them. The key to our success was to love them while we served them. ■

*The author lives in California, USA.*





## ALL CAN LEARN FROM A PROPHET

When I was 17, I worked at an inn in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, USA. Working as a bellhop, I saw many famous people as guests of the hotel, including John Wayne, Dorothy L'Amour, and Esther Williams.

One evening, after most of the guests had arrived, I was taking a break at the front of the hotel when a black limousine stopped at the curb and seven men got out, dressed in black pants, white shirts, and ties. Another man in a black suit accompanied them. After the driver parked their car, all of them went into the dining room for dinner. I thought they looked like FBI agents as I went back inside to continue my duties answering room-service calls.

About an hour later, I was outside the hotel smoking a cigarette while the group I had seen earlier came back out to return to their limo, which was waiting at the curb. They went down the walkway to the car and opened the rear door to allow the black-suited man to get in. But instead of entering the car, the black-suited man stopped, turned around to look at me leaning against the building, and walked up to me.

He was tall and thin, with wire-rimmed glasses and a small white goatee. He extended his hand to shake mine and put his other hand on my shoulder. I was struck that such a distinguished-looking man would come and talk to me, a young man he didn't even know.

I cannot recall all the words he spoke to me other than to say that "those things are bad for you," referring to my cigarette. His kindness and demeanor made quite an impression on me.

Over a year later I took discussions from the missionaries and was baptized.

While looking through pictures of leaders of the Church, I noticed a picture of President George Albert Smith (1870–1951) and recognized him immediately as the kind and distinguished man I'd met in front of the inn. I was even more impressed that the

President of the Church would do such a thing to someone like me, a boy who wasn't even a member of the Church and of no particular importance.

What a great man he was to show such love and concern for a young boy working in an unnoticed position and having no understanding of the gospel or our Heavenly Father's love for us.

Sixty-five years later, I have a great understanding of that care and love, and I strive to see those around me as President Smith saw me. ■

Henry Serion Sr., Hawaii, USA

Instead of entering the car, the black-suited man stopped and walked up to me.



ILLUSTRATION BY ALLEN GARRIS

## IS IT REALLY WORTH IT?

Our four-year-old son, Coleton, proudly presented a slip of paper given to him from his Primary teacher detailing his part in the upcoming Primary program. Our job was to teach him his seven-word line before the program was presented in two weeks.

On Monday evening we converted family home evening into a full-on rehearsal. With a smile on his face, Coleton made dozens of practice attempts, with my wife and me giving feedback like, “Don’t be silly as you say it” and “Be sure to speak clearly.”

Despite all of our efforts, even I wasn’t sure we were any better off than we had started.

Preparing for church the next Sunday morning included two lost socks, a teething eight-month-old, and a crying four-year-old.

Once the meeting began, we scarcely made it past the opening hymn before I made two trips to the hall with a crying child. By the time the choir stood to sing, I had nearly

abandoned hope of any of the family having an edifying experience and hoped instead that we would simply make it to the end of the meeting.

As the final amen was said, I let out an exhausted sigh of relief. Yet as I celebrated the victory, I couldn’t help but wonder, “Is it really worth it? Are we really making any progress with our kids by bringing them to church every week?”

The words of Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles came to mind. He said: “At times Sister Bednar and I were exasperated because the righteous habits we worked so hard to foster did not seem to yield immediately the spiritual results we wanted and expected. . . .

“Sister Bednar and I thought helping our sons understand the content of a particular lesson or a specific scripture was the ultimate outcome. But such a result does not occur each time we study or pray or learn together. The consistency of our intent

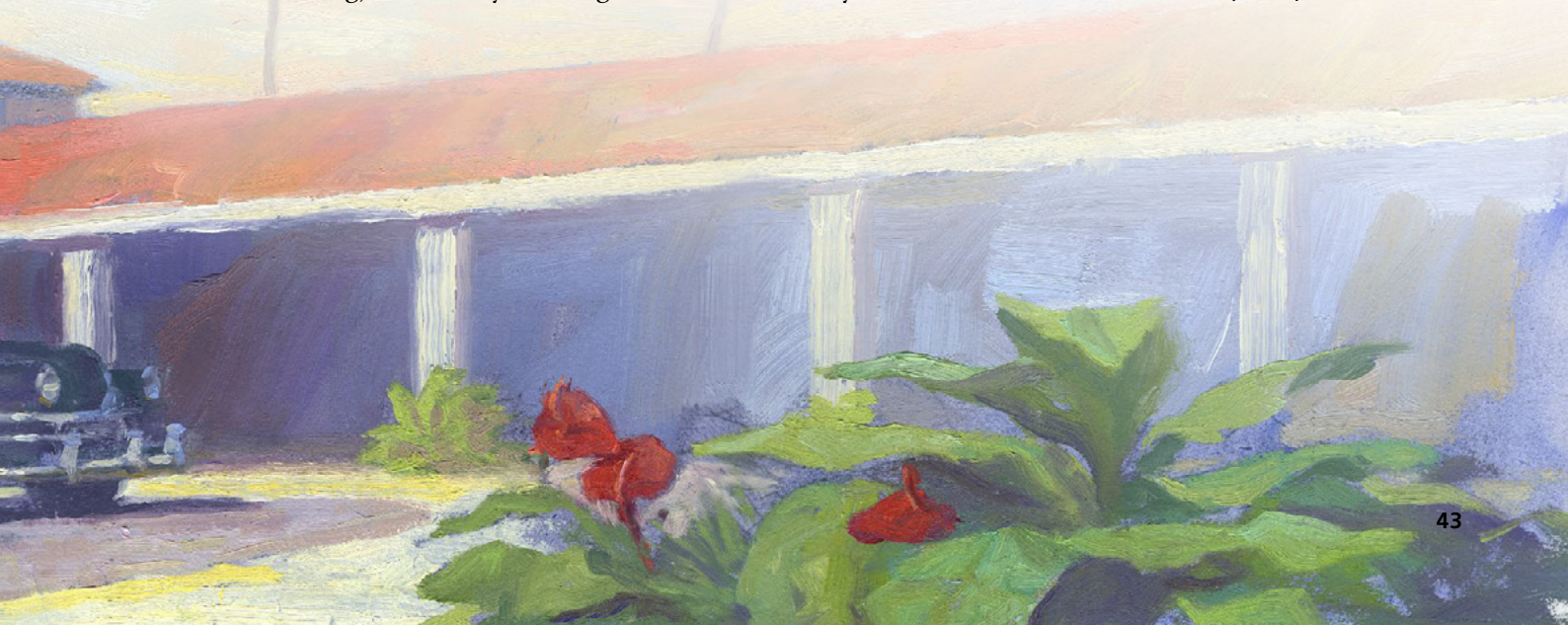
and work was perhaps the greatest lesson—a lesson we did not fully appreciate at the time” (“More Diligent and Concerned at Home,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 19).

With renewed confidence, I returned home and continued to practice over and over with my son. When his moment to speak came, we were thrilled to hear him clearly and confidently proclaim, “Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

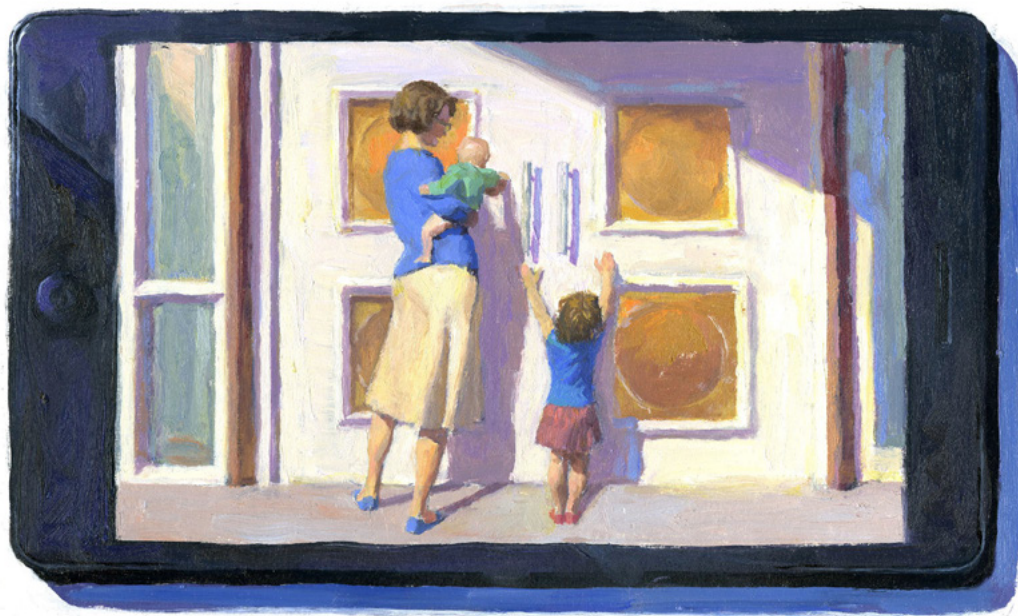
We had heard him say the line dozens of times before the performance, but something about hearing him say it away from home, on his own, was different and far more satisfying.

We have a lot of teaching to do before our little boy becomes a man, but we’ll keep doing our best to attend our meetings, hold our family home evening, and say our daily prayers in hopes that one day when he’s away from home and on his own, he’ll again remember that ever so important line: “Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” ■

Brandon Comstock, Utah, USA







Callie was eager to take her children to the temple so they could touch it.

## FEELING THE SPIRIT OF THE TEMPLE

I had the opportunity to visit my daughter Callie in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, where she had recently moved with her husband and two children. Callie's ward met at noon, so we had a nice leisurely morning to get ready and discuss some options for after church. Since Callie hadn't had a chance to visit the temple yet, we decided to go and take some pictures of the children on the temple grounds.

As with all temples, the grounds of the Las Vegas Nevada Temple were beautiful and well kept with beautiful fountains and flowers.

After reading a story President Thomas S. Monson told, Callie was eager to take her children to the temple so they could touch it (see "Finding Peace," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Mar. 2004, 5–6). The first thing she did was explain the sacredness and importance of the temple to her daughter, Stella.

Stella understood as well as any three-year-old would, and we urged her to touch the temple. We took several pictures of Stella and her three-month-old brother touching the temple.

When it was time to leave, Stella was especially reluctant to go. We thought we understood why; she was having a great time in a beautiful setting and was undoubtedly feeling the same spirit we were.

After getting her in the car and buckled up, we began to leave. I turned around, waved, and said to Stella, "Say bye-bye, temple." She looked at the temple, waved, and said, "Bye-bye, temple. Bye-bye, Grandpa." I wasn't sure I had heard her correctly, but when I turned to Callie and saw her eyes fill with tears, I knew we had both heard the same thing.

Stella's grandfather—my husband, Tim—had passed away four years

before Stella was born. She certainly had seen pictures of him and heard the family talk about him, but he hadn't come up in our conversations that day.

When Tim passed away, we had only one grandchild. Now we have 12, and whenever I hold one of those precious new babies who so recently left our Heavenly Father's presence, I want to ask, "Did you get to meet your grandpa? What words of advice did he send you off with?"

My testimony of the sacredness of temples was strengthened that day. We may not be able to take our young children inside with us, but we can take them right up to the doors and allow them to put their hands on the doors that countless worthy members have used to enter the house of the Lord. ■

Kathy Rossier, California, USA

# WHAT WAS MOST IMPORTANT TO ME?

About halfway through my third year at college, I realized that the money I had saved to pay for rent and utilities would not be sufficient to get me through the summer. It was that time of year when I could work to pay for the next semester. I found a part-time job as a shop assistant.

All went well until my work schedule changed to include Sundays. During the job interview, I hadn't said anything about not working on Sundays because at the time the store was closed that day. Nevertheless, the job was important to me, and I liked what I was doing. I worked with a friend, and between us we could be free on two Sundays and work the other two. This let me attend some Church meetings and attend to my calling.

However, soon I found that I could not keep up with this schedule. I actually had a feeling that I wasn't able to fulfill my Sunday responsibilities even if I didn't work every Sunday. I started asking myself what I could do to change this situation. After I had prayed to ask for a way to soften the heart of my supervisors, I read 1 Nephi 7. I remembered reading verse 19, where, after Nephi had prayed, the hearts of his brethren were softened. Finally, I was able to speak to my employers about not working on Sundays.

I told my superiors that I was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ

of Latter-day Saints, and they asked me about what Latter-day Saints believed. When I asked them if I could have Sundays off, the response was no. They pointed out that during my first interview, I had said I was available to work any day of the week and had never mentioned any religious needs.

The months passed without any change until one Sunday I rushed out of Church meetings to hurry to work. I asked myself, "What is most important to you?" The response was immediate and impossible to miss: the Church, the gospel, service in my calling, participation with all my heart in Sunday meetings, and discipleship in word and deed.

I decided that I would ask again

not to work on Sundays, but this time I would do it with a letter of resignation in my hands, in case they told me no a second time.

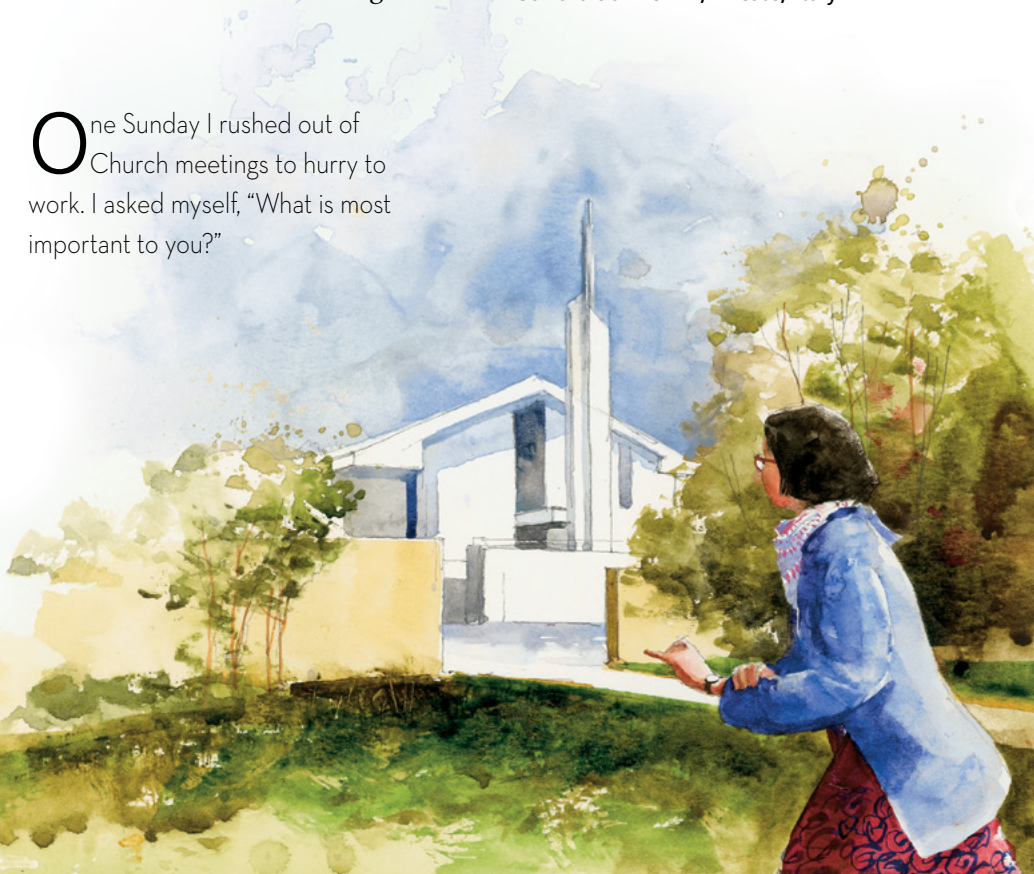
I had prayed, fasted, and received supportive text messages from friends.

At the moment of my interview, even though my heart was fluttering, I was calm because I knew I was doing the right thing. This time my supervisor said yes. My prayer had been answered. I tore up my resignation letter as soon as I got home.

I received many blessings from this experience, but the most immediate and tangible blessing was that I was able to keep my job and still keep the Sabbath day holy. For that I am truly grateful to the Lord. ■

Eleonora Sonnellini, Trieste, Italy

One Sunday I rushed out of Church meetings to hurry to work. I asked myself, "What is most important to you?"







By Elder  
David F. Evans  
Of the Seventy

# Tenacity and Discipleship

One online dictionary defines *tenacity* as “persistence, perseverance, and stubborn determination.” It also states, “Tenacity is the quality displayed by someone who just won’t quit—who keeps trying until they reach their goal.”<sup>1</sup>

We need tenacity in order to become true disciples of the Savior and to achieve the truly good goals—becoming a great missionary, completing our education, finding an eternal companion, and starting a family—that our Heavenly Father knows we need to achieve to prepare for eternity. Our ability to be tenacious in all good things will determine whether we become the sons and daughters of God that He knows we can and must become.

Today’s generation of full-time missionaries has been called “the greatest generation of missionaries in the history of the Church” and has been compared to Helaman’s 2,000 stripling warriors.<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding the remarkable attributes and tenacious faith and effort

of these young men, Helaman, their leader, states: “There were two hundred, out of my two thousand and sixty, who had fainted because of the loss of blood; nevertheless, according to the goodness of God, and to our great astonishment, and also the joy of our whole army, there was not one soul of them who did perish” (Alma 57:25).

They were delivered “because of their exceeding faith in that which they had been taught to believe—that there was a just God, and whosoever did not doubt, that they should be preserved by his marvelous power” (Alma 57:26).

Helaman says of them: “They are young, and their minds are firm, and they do put their trust in God continually” (Alma 57:27).

So it must be with us. In life, it is when the rains descend and the floods come and the winds blow and beat upon us and on our house that we determine whether our faith is strong and whether we put our trust

**Have faith in God  
and His promises,  
and do what is  
right all the time,  
regardless of  
who knows.**

in God continually. There simply is no test until there is adversity.

## Faint Not

Some years ago my wife, Mary, and I presided over the Japan Nagoya Mission. The terms *valiant*, *courageous*, *strong*, *active*, and *true* that describe the 2,000 stripling warriors (see Alma 53:20) also describe the missionaries with whom we served. Another description of the 2,000 stripling warriors—some





*fainted* (see Alma 57:25)—also describes some of our missionaries.

A mission is not easy. Neither is life. All will be injured in some way. Some of this hurt comes from unresolved transgression. Some comes by way of accident or illness. Some comes when we see those we love either reject the gospel of Jesus Christ or become unfaithful to what they know to be true. But through all of this we come to know God, and we grow to become the Savior's disciples. Our hearts change, and that change becomes permanent as we continue to choose righteousness over sin and doubt.

Those 2,000 stripling warriors were tenacious in their desires. They simply would not give up, even when their path was difficult. A generation earlier their fathers and mothers were taught by Ammon and his brethren. Those missionaries had great success, but they also had to hold on and not give up when their missions became difficult and discouraging.

Ammon describes those times: “Now when our hearts were depressed, and we were about to turn back, behold, the Lord comforted us, and said: Go amongst thy brethren, the Lamanites, and bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give unto you success” (Alma 26:27).

With patience and tenacity, Ammon and his companions worked through their afflictions and ultimately achieved remarkable success.

## Gospel Tenacity

In 1999, Sister Marci Barr came to the Japan Nagoya Mission from Columbus, Ohio, USA. Japanese was not easy for her, but she was tenacious. Once she learned to communicate, she never stopped talking with people about the gospel.

Great promises are made to faithful, persistent, and tenacious missionaries who open their mouths with boldness and love and who work with all their might in the ways the Lord has set forth (see D&C 31:7). But some missionaries become fearful of rejection and let their fears overcome their loving boldness.

Not Sister Barr! She found and taught, and she taught and found all of her mission.

On the last day of her mission, Sister Barr was traveling to the mission home in Nagoya. That night I would interview her and tell her that she had done a wonderful job. The next day she would go home.

As she traveled, she saw a group of high school-age girls talking together on the subway. She approached them and asked if she could visit with them. She spoke of the gospel and its Restoration. Then she gave a missionary tract to one of the girls who seemed interested and told her of the sister missionaries who could teach her the gospel.

Then Sister Barr came to the mission home and had her interview, never telling me of her experience on

the subway. To her it was unremarkable. She was simply doing what she knew was right, all the way to the end. Perhaps this is the best definition of gospel *tenacity* I know: No matter what, continue to have faith in God and His promises, and do what is right all the time, regardless of who knows.

Sister Barr returned home to Columbus. There in a student ward she met her husband, and together they are raising a family in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The girl on the subway—Hitomi Kitayama—was taught by the sister missionaries. Hitomi persevered and displayed her own form of tenacity as she embraced the truths of the gospel, overcoming opposition from family members and her own doubts.

We met Hitomi nearly six years later at a mission conference in Tokyo, where she was serving as a missionary. She told us of meeting Sister Barr on the subway and of her subsequent conversion to the gospel.





## STRIVE FOR GREATER DISCIPLINE

"I encourage everyone, young

and old, to review goals and objectives and strive to exercise greater discipline. Our daily conduct and choices should be consistent with our goals."

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Choose Wisely," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 49.

After her mission she met and married another returned missionary, Shimpei Yamashita. Interestingly, Shimpei is the son of a man whom Elder Randy Checketts and I taught in the summer of 1971 while I served my first mission to Japan.

It is not just in spreading the gospel that we need the tenacity to do what is right. We need this same righteous tenacity as we seek to overcome personal sin and temptation, complete our education, and seek temple marriage and an eternal family. We will need tenacity, love, and resilience as we hold on to our spouse and children and work through the challenges that come to every marriage and family. And we will need tenacity, commitment, and patience when the blessings we seek don't come in the time frame we anticipate.

In all of this and in every other righteous thing, our commitment to do right and be right will be challenged by the world. But we must not quit. We need to keep trying until we reach our goal. Our goal, ultimately, is eternal life with our husband or wife, with our children, and with their children for generations to come.

## Set Worthy Goals

How do we develop our commitment to do right, and how do we gain strength to keep it?

First, we establish goals worthy of achievement and compatible with our ultimate goal of eternal life. This includes education and employment goals that will lead to and be compatible with family, personal growth, service, activity in the Church, and personal happiness. Part of making these goals will be our own personal choice, but another part must include prayer and personal revelation. If you care enough to seek God's will, He will answer.

Among the many things you should pray about is finding a worthy companion with whom you can go to the temple and make sacred covenants. *If you want to make and keep sacred covenants and have the motivation to achieve your most righteous goals, prayerfully seek the blessings and responsibilities of marriage.*

In this and in other areas of your life, find out what God would have you do.

Study it out. Make decisions. Take them to the Lord and find out. Then move forward with achieving your goals.

In all of this, if we are going to be tenacious in righteous things, we must stay close to the Lord through righteous living. Few things will distract us more from achieving our righteous goals than being unworthy of the blessings of the Spirit in our lives.

Make righteous goals. Always pray and seek the Lord's guidance. Be worthy and avoid those things that will distract from or hinder your progress. Have and use your temple recommendation. Keep your covenants, especially when life is hard. Seek the blessings of eternal marriage and family. Then hold on. Don't give up. Don't quit.

Be tenacious in every righteous thing. You will see your faith strengthened, and you will see your strengths and talents deepened and magnified as your faith increases. And remember what Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has promised: "Some blessings come soon, some come late, and some don't come until heaven; but for those who embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ, *they come*."<sup>3</sup> ■

*From a devotional address, "Tenacity," delivered at Brigham Young University on November 4, 2014. For the full address in English, go to [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).*

## NOTES

1. [Vocabulary.com/dictionary/tenacity](http://Vocabulary.com/dictionary/tenacity).
2. See M. Russell Ballard, "The Greatest Generation of Missionaries," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2002, 47, 48; for how the Book of Mormon describes them, see Alma 53:17–21; 56:17, 45–48; 57:20–21.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, "An High Priest of Good Things to Come," *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 38.



# Champions for the Sabbath

By Samantha McFadyen

When my rugby coach told our team that our quarter-final game in the national championship tournament was scheduled for a Sunday, all I could think was, “Why now?”

My team, the 2010 Brigham Young University women’s rugby team, had been preparing for the championship all season. We were looking forward to playing the team that had defeated us in the tournament the year before. I was confident we could win—we had some of the best players in the nation. We wanted to prove ourselves to the rugby world by winning a national championship, but it turned out that Heavenly Father had a different path for us.

## Sticking to Our Standards

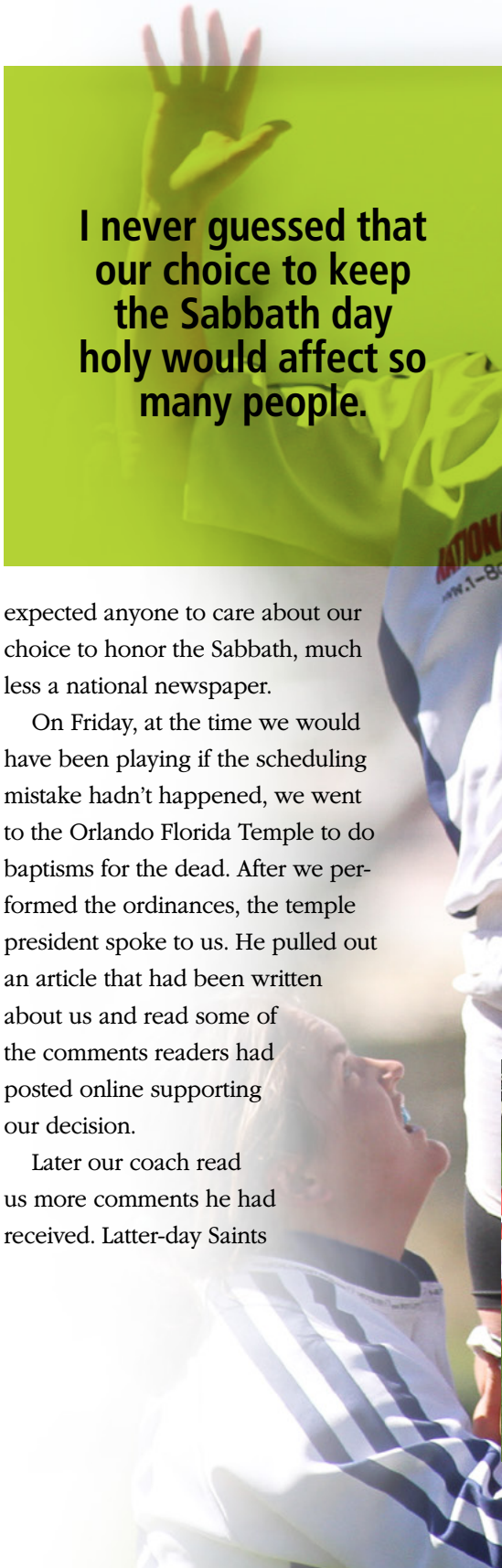
Tournament officials had assured us that our games would be scheduled on Friday and Saturday, but because of a mistake, the games were instead set for Saturday and Sunday.

We did not find out about the mistake until five days before the tournament, which was being held in Sanford, Florida, USA. Since women’s rugby was not an official BYU team at the time, the decision of whether to play or not was ours to make. We chose not to. It was a unanimous decision, and no one complained.

Playing on Sunday was not even an option. For me, it never had been. My parents taught me to keep the Sabbath day holy, and I honored that commandment my whole life. Obeying Heavenly Father’s commandments was more important than a rugby game.

But knowing that we were doing the right thing did not make it any easier. We were disheartened as we flew to Florida knowing that whether we won or lost, Saturday would be our last game.

After arriving in Florida, we received a call from a *New York Times* reporter who wanted to cover our story. We were stunned. We never



I never guessed that  
our choice to keep  
the Sabbath day  
holy would affect so  
many people.

expected anyone to care about our choice to honor the Sabbath, much less a national newspaper.

On Friday, at the time we would have been playing if the scheduling mistake hadn’t happened, we went to the Orlando Florida Temple to do baptisms for the dead. After we performed the ordinances, the temple president spoke to us. He pulled out an article that had been written about us and read some of the comments readers had posted online supporting our decision.

Later our coach read us more comments he had received. Latter-day Saints



and others thanked us for our example and told us that it was refreshing to see people sticking to their standards. Their words lifted our spirits. That is when we began to realize the impact that we could have even without becoming national champions.

I knew that Heavenly Father was aware of us, but I never thought anyone else was watching. The response to our decision gave us a new purpose for being in Florida: we weren't there to win, but to stick up for our standards.

### A Better Path

Saturday came, and we won our game 46 to 7. Afterward we walked up to the officials and told them we forfeited the game we were scheduled to play on Sunday—which happened to be against the team that defeated us the year before. I was disappointed that our season ended this way. I wish we could have played this team, but I don't wish we played them, or anyone, on the Sabbath.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF WOMEN'S COUGAR RUGBY (BYU) AND PAUL MEYERS



### HONORING THE SABBATH DAY

"The Savior identified Himself as Lord of the Sabbath. It is His day! Repeatedly, He has asked us to

keep the Sabbath or to *hallow* the Sabbath day. We are under covenant to do so.

" . . . [We] simply ask [ourselves], 'What *sign* do I want to give to God?' That question [makes our] choices about the Sabbath day crystal clear. . . .

" . . . We know that wherever we live we are to be examples of the believers among our families, neighbors, and friends. True believers keep the Sabbath day holy."

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Sabbath Is a Delight," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2015, 129–130, 132.

Dozens of articles were written about us, and we continued to get supportive letters and emails. By sticking up for our standards, we reached more people than we ever could have if we had won the championship.

I have learned to trust Heavenly Father to lead me to a better path than I have in mind for myself. My team wanted to prove ourselves by becoming champions, but now I realize that Heavenly Father wanted us to make a different point entirely. He led us to the opportunity to be examples when we thought no one was watching, and He was able to use us for good because we chose to obey. ■

*The author lives in Washington, USA.*



# The HARDEST PART of Being a MISSIONARY

*Sometimes the biggest challenge in missionary work isn't missionary work.*

By Wendy Ulrich, PhD

A missionary once told me, “When people said a mission was going to be hard, I assumed that meant I’d be cold or face difficult living conditions or struggle with the language. But for me the hardest part is what goes on in my head—like feeling discouraged or getting frustrated with companions or not liking talking to strangers—just dealing with all the ups and downs, the rejection, the change.”

To prepare for a mission, you can and should read *Preach My Gospel*, study the scriptures, and learn how to cook and do laundry. But you should also get practical experience now with the *emotional, social, and other* skills you’ll need as a missionary. Here’s a list of some of these skills. You can check off one or two of them to start practicing now.

## **The Skills of Being Humble without Feeling Humiliated**

A sister missionary in Alabama, USA, told me, “I guess I thought when they set me apart, somehow I was going to get superpowers. So it was kind of a shock to me to find out when I arrived in my mission that I was still just me. I still had my same weaknesses, fears, and inadequacies. And those really haven’t gone away. I’ve had to learn how to deal with feeling inadequate at doing the Lord’s work.”

Whether you come into the mission with many successes under your belt or few, if you are humble, teachable, and willing to

keep trying and working, the Lord can work with you. But your missionary skills will only improve as you practice, ask questions, get help, and keep trying. If you are convinced that people are just naturally good (or naturally bad) at missionary work, languages, testimony, or relationships, you’ll have a harder time.

A missionary once said to me, “I’ve had to learn that it’s the Lord’s work, not mine. And it’s OK if I feel inadequate at it because I *am* inadequate. I’ll never be adequate to do what only God can do. There’s a lot I can do to improve, but I don’t have to figure it all out by myself. I can count on Him.”



Try doing new and hard things. Then you'll learn not to take feelings of inadequacy too seriously. For example:

- Try things that take you a little out of your comfort zone, like new jobs, extracurricular activities, or unfamiliar classes. Ask questions, get help, analyze mistakes, and keep trying. Take on things you must practice and work at so you learn to trust that you *will* improve with effort.
- Talk back to voices in your head that tell you people are either born with talent, intelligence, or social skills or they aren't. The world's greatest athletes, musicians, scholars—and missionaries—experience many failures and practice many hours on their way to success.





### The Skills of Facing Possible (and Actual) Rejection

Rejection and disappointment are daily experiences on a mission. Practice taking risks and facing rejection so you get better at taking them in stride.

- Apply for a job, do job interviews, and work part-time or full-time.
- Try out for a team or a play.
- Ask people on dates or to activities.
- When things don't go well, notice thoughts and actions that help you cope and feel better.
- Learn from setbacks and try again.

### The Skills of Managing Motivation

We all have to figure out how to motivate ourselves when we're bored and calm ourselves down when we're overstressed.

- If a situation is boring or not progressing, become curious about what's wrong and how to fix it, make a game out of it, or figure out what you can learn.
- Notice when you're overstressed and learn things you could still do on a mission to calm down (talk to someone, relax, write, sing, walk). Take a step back, break the problem down, involve others, take small steps, pray, and talk back to negative thoughts.

### The Skills of Managing Differences

Companions, leaders, members, and investigators will be wonderful but will also try your patience at times.

Practice with siblings and friends to:

- Learn to appreciate others by asking why they do what they do.
- Take responsibility and sincerely apologize when your behavior hurts someone, even if you didn't intend harm.
- Look for a compassionate explanation for another's behavior. Don't hold a grudge.
- Bring up a problem and ask for help solving it rather than blaming or stewing.
- When conflict arises, use a soft voice and show respect for others' feelings.
- Be a roommate with someone who's different from you. Be positive and curious about their preferences.

RESUME



## The Skills of Conversation

Whether you're an introvert (shy) or an extrovert (outgoing), you can learn the skills of good conversation you'll need on a mission and throughout your life.

If you're more of an introvert:

- Set a goal to talk to someone new (especially unfamiliar adults) for five minutes every week.
- Smile, be curious about people, and learn good questions that get others talking.
- Figure out ways to start a conversation and to graciously end a conversation.
- Notice when others are trying to start a conversation so you can be open and responsive.

If you're more of an extrovert:

- Draw out others by asking questions.
- Practice being a good listener.
- Look for signs that your listener is tiring. Give others space.

## The Physical Skills of Well-Being

As a mission president, my husband talked to one missionary who was really depressed and struggling. My husband felt impressed to ask him, "So, Elder, what did you have for breakfast?"

"Ice cream."

"What did you have for lunch?"

"French fries."

"What did you have for dinner?"

"French fries and ice cream."

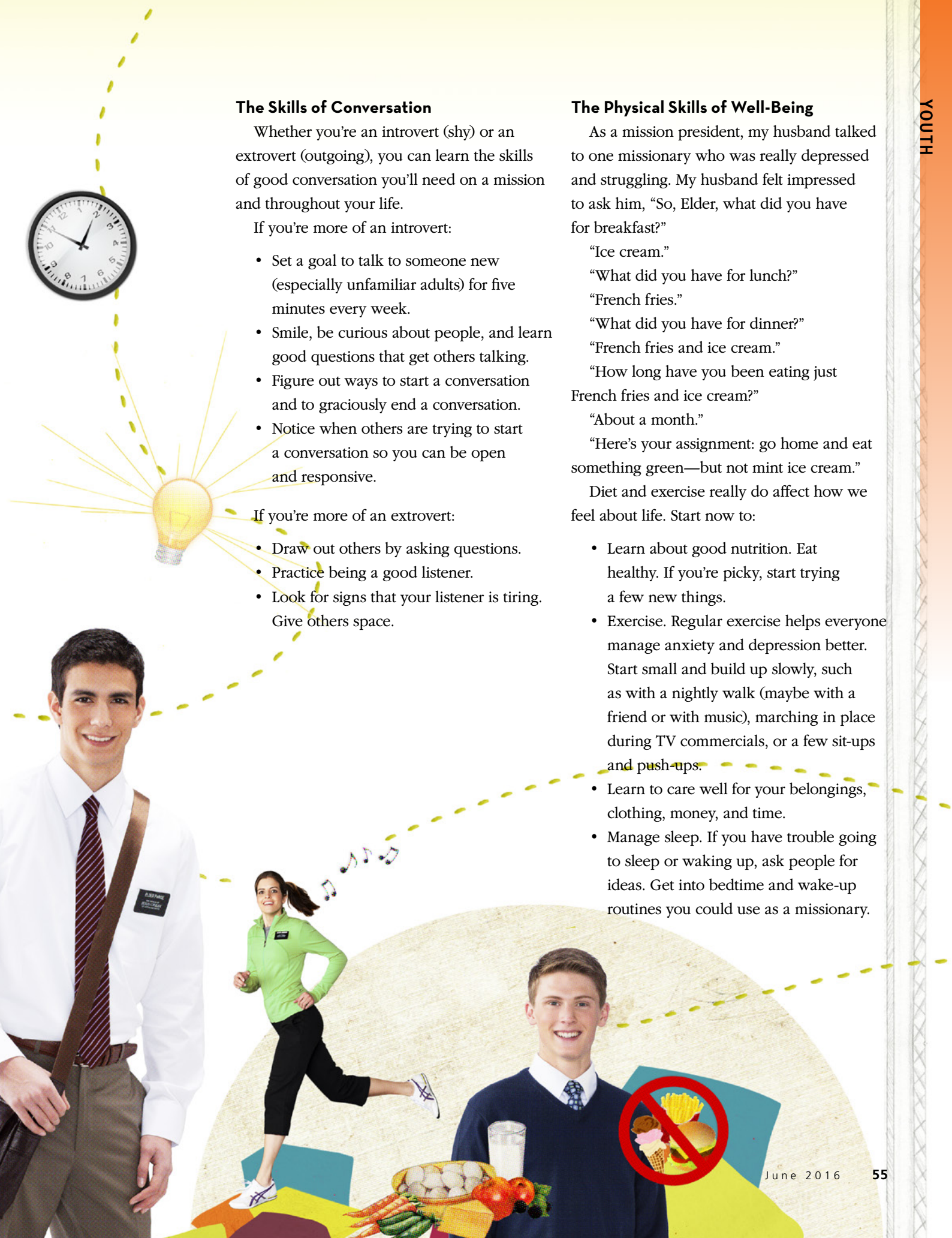
"How long have you been eating just French fries and ice cream?"

"About a month."

"Here's your assignment: go home and eat something green—but not mint ice cream."

Diet and exercise really do affect how we feel about life. Start now to:

- Learn about good nutrition. Eat healthy. If you're picky, start trying a few new things.
- Exercise. Regular exercise helps everyone manage anxiety and depression better. Start small and build up slowly, such as with a nightly walk (maybe with a friend or with music), marching in place during TV commercials, or a few sit-ups and push-ups.
- Learn to care well for your belongings, clothing, money, and time.
- Manage sleep. If you have trouble going to sleep or waking up, ask people for ideas. Get into bedtime and wake-up routines you could use as a missionary.







## The Skills of Positivity

- Develop a sense of humor. Laugh at yourself, not at others. Don't take everything so seriously that you stress yourself out.
- Ask former missionaries to tell you something that was hard for them and how they coped with it. Find ideas you can use.
- List scriptures and hymns that uplift you and fill you with faith.
- Talk back to the negative voice in your head with something positive. If that voice is sarcastic, belittling, shaming, angry, cruel, or makes you feel hopeless or helpless, it's not from the Lord. His voice will always be hopeful, encouraging, and compassionate, especially when you're trying.

## The Spiritual Skills of Well-Being

- Really pray. Invite Heavenly Father to sit near you, and talk to Him openly about your problems, desires, and gratitude. Try praying out loud, praying with a paper and pencil to record impressions, or praying only to give thanks.
- Study the scriptures. Look for and expect answers to your concerns.
- Be a missionary now. Go out and serve with the full-time missionaries, let the topic of the gospel come up in everyday conversations with your friends, and bear an honest testimony at church. You'll get more excited about missionary work as you do it. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

## TWO TYPES OF PEOPLE WHO OFTEN STRUGGLE

People who struggle emotionally on a mission often include:

- **Those who got through school without having to work very hard.** People who are smart or talented enough to get by without having to work very hard may see their gifts as a kind of magic. When the magic breaks down (and it always does at some point), they don't know what to do except try to hide their mistakes. Eventually everyone has to learn to be humble, work hard, practice, get help, and overcome obstacles and failures to keep growing and improving.
- **Those who never experienced much success.** Some people see difficulties as confirmation that they're dumb or untalented. But anyone's brain gets smarter and more capable when they focus, analyze what went wrong, try creative solutions, get help, work hard, and practice.

If you're in either group, remind yourself often that no one is born an amazing missionary. Missionary skills develop with practice, lots of hard work, taking risks, overcoming obstacles, trying again after mistakes, learning from others, and complete reliance on the Lord. He loves you and will help you fulfill your personal as well as full-time mission.

## PREPARING FOR MISSIONARY LIFE

*For more ideas on how to prepare for a mission right now, get the resource booklet Adjusting to Missionary Life at [store.lds.org](http://store.lds.org) or through your bishop.*



# OUR SPACE

*Have you experienced the power of the Book of Mormon in your life? Put it to the test as these missionaries did!*



## I FOUND THE MISSING PIECE

**W**hen I was in high school, I got offended about some of the Church doctrine. It eventually led me to become less active. I attended some activities at another church, but my joy was not full. It was as if there was something missing.

It took me time to find what was missing, but one day after I prayed, I opened my eyes and saw the Book of Mormon on my table. I was about to go to sleep when a thought came to me: “I was born a Mormon. How come I haven’t finished reading the Book of Mormon?” So that day I decided I would finish reading the Book of Mormon.

After many years of searching, I finally found the missing piece of that happiness. ■

Elder Jayme Promise, Philippines Quezon City Mission

## WHEN PEOPLE OPEN THE BOOK

**O**n my mission I’ve seen people who drink, smoke, and use drugs open the Book of Mormon and turn from their ways and come back to their families and the Church. I’ve seen prodigal sons return home and serve missions after they opened this book. I’ve seen broken families read

the Book of Mormon together and be sealed in the temple afterward. I’ve seen people who are totally desperate and don’t know what to do open this book, and everything begins to fall into place.

The moment I open the Book of Mormon and use a verse to help someone, miracles happen. The power of God lies beneath those

pages, waiting for a life to change, waiting for a miracle to unfold. I can promise you that miracles happen every time you open the Book of Mormon. They may not always be what we want them to be or happen when we want them to happen, but they will happen. ■

Elder Benjamin Baradi, Philippines Bacolod Mission



FROM THE  
MISSION FIELD



PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID STOKER

# A SOUL CRYING OUT

*He didn't look like a pleasant man to talk to. Part of me was scared, but another part really wanted to talk to him.*

**By Stephen Dugdale**

I had the opportunity to serve as a missionary in Catania, Italy. At one point, we hit a rough spot in the work. We'd had a whole week of pretty much everything going wrong, and each day was a test of whether or not we would retain good spirits, keep a smile on, and continue trying hard.

One evening, we were determined to change the flow of things. We went around talking to people in a park near our house, and we saw this guy sitting on a bench with his head down and a cigarette in his mouth. He was dressed in black from head to toe and wore the hood of his big puffy jacket over his head. He did not look like a very pleasant man to talk to. I looked at him, my companion looked at him, we looked at each other, and back at him.

Elder Farley asked me, "Have we talked with him before?"

"I think we have, because I really think I know him," I responded.

"Yeah, me too," Elder Farley said.

So we started walking toward him. Part of me was scared because he was just not a person I would normally talk to, but another part really wanted to talk to him.

"Good evening, how are you?" we asked.

He looked up with darkened eyes, as if to say, "Who disturbs my slumber!?" Then very softly he said, "Good evening." We introduced ourselves as missionaries, and he quickly told us that he was atheist and didn't believe in anything. We asked him why, which I think caught him by surprise.

"Well, because I lost my mom, dad, sister, and niece all in the same month, and I've lived a terrible, lonely life because of it. Religion didn't do anything but make it worse for me."

We asked him if he knew where his loved ones were.

"In Catania cemetery, where they have been for a long time," he responded.

We explained to him the spirit world and the Resurrection. We told him that right now we are each a spirit and a body, and that death is merely a temporary separation between the spirit and the body. We told him that his family members were just waiting for him until they could all be reunited with their bodies and live together for eternity.

He looked at us, confused, and said, "I didn't understand any of that. Could you repeat everything?"

So we repeated everything. Then he raised an eyebrow in confusion and said, "Wait, I'm a spirit and a body? And my family is just waiting for me and learning right now?"





We read him several scriptures from Alma 40 and other chapters, and he looked at us and asked, “So why have I never heard this before?”

I don’t think I had ever met a more truly humble person in my life. This man had been so lost for such a long time, so confused, so lonely. He took in everything we said, telling us that he understood very little of it because it was all stuff he had never heard before, but he liked everything.

We taught him about how we can get answers through prayer. He hadn’t prayed in over 30 years, and the last time had been a recited prayer in church when he was a child. After we talked about answers from the Spirit, he asked us what the Spirit feels like. Since it can be different for everyone, we both shared what it feels like for us. I told him that to me it feels like getting a hug from your mom after you haven’t seen her for a long time. I felt impressed to promise him that he could and would feel that same thing, a feeling like a hug from his mom who had been missing from his life for a long, long time.

We asked him if we could pray with him. He was really confused and asked, “Now? Here, in the park?”

“We can pray whenever, wherever we want,” I told him. “God wants to hear from us, and He is especially anxious to hear from you because He hasn’t heard from you in a long time.”

## BELONGING TO GOD’S FAMILY

“All [people] are children of God, your brothers and sisters. God loves them just as He loves you. Many of these people are searching for purpose in life. They are concerned for their families. They need the sense of belonging that comes from the knowledge that they are children of God, members of His eternal family.”

*Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service (2004), 1.*

He had never heard a prayer before that wasn’t a memorized prayer to a saint, so he was pretty eager to see how it worked. We bowed our heads, and my companion said the prayer for our new friend, Alfio, and asked for blessings, help, and comfort for him. He asked for Alfio to feel an answer that his family was all right and that God really exists. We finished our prayer, and Alfio looked at us with gigantic eyes.

“I must tell you something,” he said. “I am not a person who lies, especially about something like this. I feel like I just got a huge hug from my mother. I haven’t gotten a hug from anyone in a long, long time. That felt so good. I want to know how I can feel that again, because I want more hugs like that.”

---

**“Ever since that prayer, I have walked around with my head up, and I look at everything. This world is beautiful.”**

---

The next day we met again. Alfio sat down next to us on the same bench and said, “Elders, my entire life I have walked with my hood up and my head down, staring at the ground. I have never, ever walked with my head up. Ever since that prayer, I have walked around with my head up, and I look at everything. This world is beautiful.”

Needless to say, we continued working with Alfio to bring more hugs, more light, and more looking up into his life. The scary man on the bench who looked like he would hate us was really a soul crying out, begging to feel his Heavenly Father’s love again. ■

*The author lives in Missouri, USA.*

**Elder David A. Bednar**

Of the Quorum of the  
Twelve Apostles

## HOW TO HELP MISSIONARIES

**W**e properly pray for the safety and success of the full-time missionaries throughout the world. And a common element in many of our prayers is a request that the missionaries will be led to individuals and families who are prepared to receive the message of the Restoration. But ultimately it is my responsibility and your responsibility to find people for the missionaries to teach. Missionaries are full-time teachers; you and I are full-time finders. And you and I as lifelong missionaries should not be praying for the full-time missionaries to do our work!

If you and I would truly pray and ask in faith, as did Joseph Smith—if we would pray with the expectation to act and not just to express—then the work of proclaiming the gospel would move forward in a remarkable way. Such a prayer of faith might include some of the following elements:

- Thanking Heavenly Father for the doctrines and ordinances of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, which bring hope and happiness into our lives.
- Asking for courage and boldness to open our mouths and share the gospel with our family and friends.
- Entreating Heavenly Father to help us identify individuals and families who will be receptive to our invitation to be taught by the missionaries in our homes.
- Pledging to do our part this day and this week and petitioning for help to overcome anxiety, fear, and hesitation.
- Seeking for the gift of discernment—for eyes to see and ears to hear missionary opportunities as they occur.
- Praying fervently for the strength to act as we know we should.

Gratitude would be expressed, and other blessings might be requested in



such a prayer, which would be closed in the name of the Savior. And then the consecrated work of that prayer would continue and increase.

This same pattern of holy communication and consecrated work can be applied in our prayers for the poor and the needy, for the sick and the afflicted, for family members and friends who are struggling, and for those who are not attending Church meetings.

I testify that prayer becomes meaningful as we ask in faith and act. I invite all of us to pray in faith about our divinely given mandate to proclaim the gospel. As we do so, I promise doors will open and we will be blessed to recognize and act upon the opportunities that will be provided. ■

*From an April 2008 general conference address.*



“My parents swear, listen to loud music, and watch inappropriate TV shows. What can I do to feel the Spirit at home, especially on Sundays?”

**W**hen you were baptized, you received the gift of the Holy Ghost. This means that no matter your circumstances, you can have the companionship of the Spirit if you keep yourself worthy and make good personal decisions.

As you partake of the sacrament each week, you will be reminded of your covenants with Heavenly Father to “take upon [you] the name of [His] Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments . . . that [you] may always have his Spirit to be with [you]” (D&C 20:77). By keeping your covenants, you stay worthy of the Spirit’s companionship.

Attending sacrament meeting and other Church meetings isn’t the only way to focus your Sunday on covenant-keeping. Regardless of your home circumstances, you can show Heavenly Father your commitment to your covenants by working on your family history, studying the gospel, and serving others, especially those who are lonely or sick. Choosing these kinds of activities, even if your family members don’t, will bring you joy and rejoicing. (See Russell M. Nelson, “The Sabbath Is a Delight,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 129–32.)



### Speak Up

Whether or not your parents are members of the Church, talk with them about why

it is important to you to always have the Spirit in your home, especially on Sundays. In your case, you can choose the calmest place in the house and invite other members of the Church to come be with you and together invite the Spirit to be there. I know that if you keep the Sabbath day holy, the Lord will bless you greatly.

*Joskares C., age 16, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic*



### Pray for Your Parents

You can pray for your parents. As Mormon wrote, “The Lord will

remember the prayers of the righteous, which have been put up unto him for them” (Mormon 5:21). Your parents may not stop right away, but the Lord will help you.

*Cole M., age 17, Arizona, USA*

### Focus on Doing Good Things

Sundays are always hard for me at home. I’m the only member of the Church in my house, and my parents and brothers watch TV and listen to their music on the Sabbath. I want to show my love for Heavenly Father by keeping the Sabbath day holy. I’m able to go to my room and read scriptures, listen to Church music, and go

on visits with my friends or with the missionaries. I am so grateful to have the Lord's help to observe the Sabbath day diligently and for the strength He always gives me.

*Lais de Jesus M., age 19, Sergipe, Brazil*



### Use Church Resources

If you have a smart-phone or tablet, you can download the Mormon Channel and LDS Youth apps. They're full of wonderful songs, videos, and talks that always bring the Spirit when I play them! It's simple, but it really helps me to feel the Spirit even when I'm surrounded by noise. It makes a difference and brings peace throughout the whole house.

*HunterEve V., age 16, Texas, USA*

### Turn to the Scriptures

Talk to your parents about the things they do, but if they don't listen, you can pray for guidance on how to help you feel the Spirit in your home. To feel the Spirit in my home, I read the scriptures, and that brings the Spirit into the room instantly.

*Blake E., age 14, Utah, USA*

### Follow Christ's Example

It's important that a home be filled with the Spirit, but it's more important that a person be filled with it. Christ was the perfect example of having the Spirit with Him all the time. Just trying to live more like Christ, being kind to

others, and seeing the world the way that He would is probably the best way to keep the Spirit with you wherever you are.

*Isabel W., age 16, Oregon, USA*

### Suggest Family Activities

On Sundays, maybe suggest activities that you can do together as a family. Suggest something that the family can do to get together where those inappropriate things would not be happening. If you're doing something together as a family, it brings you closer together. And it gives them a different idea of what you can do on Sundays. Maybe next Sunday they'll say, "Hey, what we did last time was fun—let's do it again."

*Ryan B., age 19, Idaho, USA*



### ACT ON THE PROMPTINGS

"I offer this encouragement. You have had times when you have felt the influence of the Holy Ghost. . . .

"You can treat those moments of inspiration like the seed of faith that Alma described (see Alma 32:28). Plant each one. You can do that by acting on the prompting you felt. The most valuable inspiration will be for you to know what God would have you do. . . .

"As you obey, the impressions from the Spirit will come more frequently, becoming closer and closer to constant companionship. Your power to choose the right will increase."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "The Holy Ghost as Your Companion," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 105.

## UPCOMING QUESTION

"My best friend says she doesn't believe in God. How can I share the gospel with her?"

Submit your answer and, if desired, a high-resolution photograph by July 1, 2016, at [liahona@lds.org](mailto: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.



HOW TO BE

# A GOOD FRIEND

By David Morales

*We all want to feel included. Here's what you can do if you or someone else feels left out.*

## HOW TO MAKE GOOD FRIENDS

It hurts to be left out, but being upset or holding a grudge won't help you feel better. Instead, try doing these things:

- Participate in Church activities. These are good opportunities to surround yourself with people who respect your standards.
- Learn and develop skills. Joining student associations, sports teams, or clubs is a good way to get to know people who share interests similar to yours.
- Don't always wait for other people to ask you to be their friend. Introduce yourself to others.
- Be the best person you can be and maintain your standards. You will find friends who appreciate you for your character and the light you radiate.
- Spend time with your family. You may realize that some of your best friends are found in your own home.

I began investigating the Church as a teenager, but I stopped attending the Sunday meetings because I felt excluded by many of the youth. Some time later, one of those youth invited me to a Church activity. I accepted and liked the activities because they were things I enjoy doing: acting, playing basketball, and running.



As I continued to attend activities, I got to know the youth and realized that many of them went to my school. With time I was able to develop friendships with young men and young women who had the same standards that I live by. I am grateful that someone invited me to a Church activity, and I am grateful that I accepted.

Have you ever felt like I did: left out or like you didn't fit in? Or have you known someone who didn't feel accepted and didn't have many friends? Whether at school, at church, or in some other place, most people have felt that way at some time in their lives.



## BE CONSIDERATE TO OTHERS

"I would hope that we would strive always to be considerate and to be

sensitive to the thoughts and feelings and circumstances of those around us. Let us not demean or belittle. Rather, let us be compassionate and encouraging."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Love—the Essence of the Gospel," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2014, 93.

## HOW TO INCLUDE OTHERS

Sometimes it may seem difficult to leave our comfort zone and be friendly to other people, but as we remember that we are all children of God, we will see the importance of helping others. Here are some ideas:

- Speak to new people at school and at church. Introduce them to your friends.
- Invite someone who needs a friend to a school or Church activity.
- Confront—with kindness and patience—people who intentionally make others feel unwelcome.
- Sit next to someone who is alone or invite him or her to sit with you and your friends.
- Pray to Heavenly Father when you don't know how to help someone. He knows perfectly what that person needs to be happy and can help you to offer that help. ■

*The author lives in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.*





# Standing for the Right

By Aysia Tan, Utah, USA

## HI, I'M EVAN!

I live in Ireland, and I like to play a game called hurling. It's an Irish sport that's like field hockey. My favorite subject is math. Being a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a blessing to me.



## STANDING TALL AT SCHOOL

*A new boy at school bullied my sisters. I stepped between them and protected my sisters. I also obey the Word of Wisdom. Many students at school drink tea and coffee. When someone offers me tea, I say, "No, thank you."*





## EVAN'S TIPS FOR STANDING TALL

It takes courage to live the gospel.

- Don't give up.
- Listen to the Holy Ghost. He will guide you.
- Remember that helping other people have the gospel will make their lives happier.

### PRAYING WITH FRIENDS

*I go to a Catholic school. My sisters and I are the only students there who are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. When my grandma was sick, I asked my teacher if I could say a prayer for her. Everyone in class folded their arms and bowed their heads. I said a prayer out loud in front of the class.*

### THE BEST BIG BROTHER

*I make goals to keep doing what is right. I help my parents take care of my sisters. When my sisters are scared, I play with them until they forget they are afraid. One time when my parents were away, I told my sister stories until she fell asleep.*

### BE AN EXAMPLE

*My friends at school see that I'm happy. I set a good example by not swearing or taking the Lord's name in vain. I can also be an example in my family.*

## SEND US YOUR FOOTPRINT!

How do you stand tall in following Jesus? Trace your footprint and send us your story and photo, along with your parent's permission. Submit it through [liahona.lds.org](http://liahona.lds.org) (click "Submit an Article") or email [liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org).







# Jordan's Study Buddy

**By Kirstin Ide**

Based on a true story

*"The Spirit will guide, and, deep inside, I'll know the scriptures are true"* (Children's Songbook, 109).

Jordan hadn't seen his sister Kirsi for over a year—it felt like forever! Soon she'd be coming home from her mission to have surgery. Jordan was sad that she was sick, but he was happy that they'd be together soon.

When he came home from school

the next day, Kirsi was sitting on the couch. Jordan ran and hugged her.

"Hi, Jordan! I missed you!" Kirsi said.

Jordan smiled. "I missed you too! I'm sorry that you're sick."

"Thanks, buddy," Kirsi said. She was holding the Book of Mormon in her lap.

"Can I read with you?" he asked.

"Why don't you go get your Book of Mormon, and we can start at the beginning together."

Jordan ran to his room and grabbed his copy. "Got it!" he yelled as he ran back. He scooted in next to Kirsi.

They opened to the title page. "The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ," Jordan read. They took turns reading.

"On my mission I studied the scriptures with my companion every day," Kirsi said. "Would you be my study buddy until it's time for me to go back to my mission?" Kirsi asked.



*Jordan missed being Kirsi's study buddy.  
But then he got a great idea!*

"Yeah!" he said.

A few days later, Kirsi had her surgery. She came home from the hospital to rest and heal for a few weeks. She and Jordan studied the Book of Mormon together every day.

Before she went back to her mission, Kirsi said, "Jordan, I want to challenge you to finish the Book of Mormon before you are baptized!"

Jordan thought about that. His eighth birthday was only a few months away. He would have a lot of reading to do. But he wanted to do it. "Yes," Jordan said.

"As you read, will you pray and ask if it's true?" Kirsi asked. "Moroni promised that if we do that, the Holy Ghost will tell us if it's true."

her study buddy. But then he got a great idea!

At school the next day, he walked over to his best friend Jake's desk.

"I'm going to read the whole Book of Mormon before I get baptized," Jordan said. "Since we're both getting baptized on the same day, do you want to do it too?"

"Yeah," Jake said. "I've never read the whole Book of Mormon before."

Every day at school, they asked each other the same question.

"How far along are you?"

"The end of Jacob. How far along are you?"

Soon they didn't even have to ask the question anymore. They gave

each other a look and they knew the question.

"I think we'll finish just in time for our baptisms," Jordan said.

Finally the day of their baptisms came.

"I finished last night," Jordan whispered.

"Me too!" Jake said. "And I prayed to know if it was true, and I felt really warm and happy."

Jordan smiled. "Same. I felt really happy when I prayed." He was so thankful for Kirsi's challenge. Now he was building his very own testimony. ■

*The author lives in Virginia, USA.*





# The Whole Armor of God

**T**he scriptures teach that we should put on the “whole armor” of God (see Ephesians 6:11–18 and D&C 27:15–18). When we study the scriptures and pray, it’s like we put on armor that helps keep us safe.

## HELMET OF SALVATION

A helmet protects the head. We keep our mind safe when we follow Jesus and do what He wants us to do.

## SHIELD OF FAITH

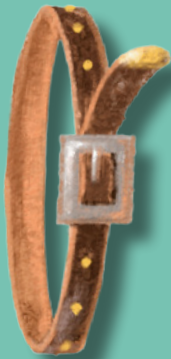
Faith in Jesus Christ is like a shield of protection. When we believe in Jesus and try to be like Him, we can make good choices, even when things are hard.





### BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The breastplate protects the heart. When we love God with all our heart, we try to keep His commandments. We are blessed when we choose the right.



### GIRDLE OF TRUTH

A girdle is a belt that helps protect a soldier's body. Knowing what is true protects us. The gospel is true, and living the gospel makes us strong.



### SHOES OF THE PREPARATION OF PEACE

Shoes protect the feet. We try to follow Jesus Christ's footsteps so we can live with Him someday.



### SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

A sword helps fight against wrong. The Spirit helps us when we face bad or hard things. Listening to the Spirit helps us stay safe.

What can you do every day to keep  
your spirit safe and happy?





By Elder Neil L. Andersen

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

# What promises do we make at baptism?



We take the name of Jesus Christ upon us and become a member of His Church.

After that, as we take the sacrament each week, we promise to remember Jesus. We promise to keep His commandments.



We believe in Him.  
We worship Him.  
We follow Him.

*From "Thy Kingdom Come," Ensign or Liahona, May 2015, 119–123.*

# OUR PAGE



*I felt very good during my baptism. I was a little nervous at the beginning, but after I entered in the water, the nervousness passed. I felt very secure in the baptismal font. I feel very happy that I made a decision to be baptized. I know that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is true and that there is a living God.*

**Neyliana V., age 8, Brazil**



*My family and I went to the temple, and I know that the temple is the true house of Jesus Christ.*

**Helam A., age 5, Peru**



*My dad and mom talk to us about the temple. They show us a picture of the temple and testify of its eternal blessings.*

**Tresor I., age 7, Congo**

## The Creation

In righteousness Heavenly Father created this lively world.

He brought light into darkness and made air, oceans, and lands,

With things in abundance and changing seasons to add to the excitement.

Then there was the sun, the moon, and the stars, and animals to accompany us.

Man was then created to rule this earth.

Heavenly Father could now rest.

On the holy day we learn of many of these truths.

**C. Ling-yao, age 10, Taiwan**



# Abish Was a Missionary

**A**bish's father taught her to believe in Jesus Christ. In her city, not many people believed in Jesus. After Ammon came to her people and taught King Lamoni, Abish knew that Heavenly Father wanted her to share the gospel with the people. She was finally able to tell everyone about Jesus.



Once our family made a mission plan. We decided what each of us was going to do. I decided to give my second-grade teacher a Book of Mormon. When I gave it to her, she said, "Thanks, Adam. I like to read." I'm really glad we could do a family mission plan.

**Adam W., age 8, Utah, USA**



*"Abish and the Queen," by Marley D., age 6, Washington, USA*

ILLUSTRATION BY JARED BECKSTRAND



Cut, fold, and keep this challenge card!



## I Can Be a Missionary!

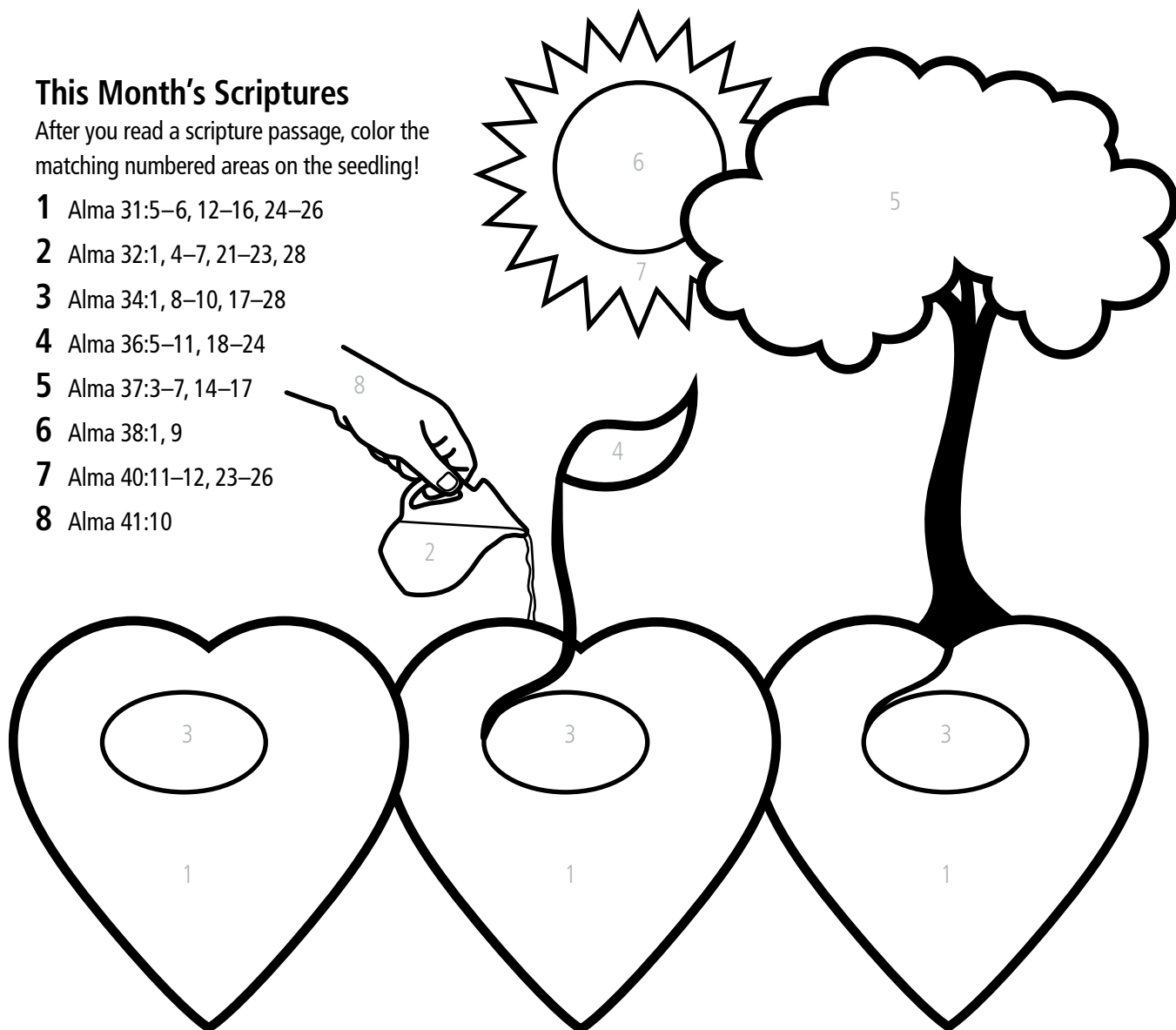
- ☐ Memorize Alma 19:36.
- ☐ Invite a friend to come to Primary to learn about the gospel.
- ☐ Help your testimony grow by sharing it with someone!
- ☐ I challenge myself to . . .


\_\_\_\_\_

## This Month's Scriptures

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

- 1 Alma 31:5–6, 12–16, 24–26
- 2 Alma 32:1, 4–7, 21–23, 28
- 3 Alma 34:1, 8–10, 17–28
- 4 Alma 36:5–11, 18–24
- 5 Alma 37:3–7, 14–17
- 6 Alma 38:1, 9
- 7 Alma 40:11–12, 23–26
- 8 Alma 41:10





### Growing Faith

Alma and Amulek taught many people about Jesus Christ. They changed people's lives by planting the seed of faith. Alma and others were missionaries and preached the word of God. Look for another reading challenge next month! ■



# Alma Teaches How to Pray



Alma the Younger went with others to teach the Zoramites. The Zoramites used to believe in Heavenly Father, but didn't keep His commandments anymore. They didn't believe in Jesus. And they didn't remember the right way to pray.

Once a week, the Zoramites took turns praying. They climbed onto a tall stand. They held their arms up high. Then they thanked Heavenly Father that they were more special than other people. Every person said exactly the same prayer.







The Zoramites prayed only when they climbed the stand. They didn't think about Heavenly Father or pray to Him at home or anywhere else.



Alma taught the people that they could pray anytime. They could pray at home, in the fields, or in the wilderness. He taught that they could pray about anything and Heavenly Father would help them.





We can pray how Alma taught. We can pray anytime and anyplace. We can even pray silently in our heart. Heavenly Father will always hear us! ■

# I Can Be Reverent







By President  
Spencer W. Kimball  
(1895–1985)

Twelfth President  
of the Church

## THE WHAT AND WHY AND HOW OF BEARING A TESTIMONY

*Every time you bear your testimony it becomes strengthened.*

Every soul in this world may have a revelation, the same one that Peter had [see Matthew 16:13–17]. That revelation will be a testimony, a knowledge that Christ lives, that Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of this world. Every soul may have this assurance, and when he gets this testimony, it will have come from God and not from study alone. Study is an important element, of course, but there must be associated with study much prayer and reaching, and then this revelation comes. . . .

Testimony meetings are some of the best meetings in the ward in the whole month, if you have the Spirit. If you are bored at a testimony meeting, there is something the matter with you, and not the other people. You can get up and bear your testimony and you think it is the best meeting in the month; but if you sit there and count the grammatical errors and laugh at the man who can't speak very well, you'll be bored, and on



that board you'll slip right out of the kingdom. . . .

Every month the First Presidency and the Twelve meet with all the General Authorities in the temple. They bear testimony and they tell each other how they love one another just like all of you. Why do the General Authorities need a testimony meeting? The same reason that you need a testimony meeting. Do you think that you can go three, and six, and nine, and twelve months without bearing your testimony and still keep its full value?

Some of our good people get so terrified at triteness that they try to steer around and away from their testimonies by getting out on the fringes. Don't you ever worry about triteness in testimony. When the President of

the Church bears his testimony, he says, "I know that Joseph Smith was called of God, a divine representative. I know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." You see, the same thing every one of you says. That is a testimony. . . .

A testimony is not an exhortation; a testimony is not a sermon (none of you are there to exhort the rest); it is not a travelogue. You are there to bear your own witness. It is amazing what you can say in 60 seconds by way of testimony, or 120, or 240, or whatever time you are given, if you confine yourselves to testimony. We'd like to know how you feel. Do you love the work, really? Are you happy in your work? Do you love the Lord? Are you glad that you are a member of the Church?

. . . Don't you sit there in your fast meeting and cheat yourself and say, "I guess I won't bear my testimony today. I guess that wouldn't be fair to these other members because I have had so many opportunities." You bear your testimony. And one minute is long enough to bear it.

You have a testimony! It needs building and lifting and enlarging, of course; and that is what you are doing. Every time you bear your testimony it becomes strengthened. ■

*From "President Kimball Speaks Out on Testimony," New Era, Aug. 1981, 4–7; capitalization standardized.*

# INSIGHTS



## **How can we sense the love that Heavenly Father has for all of His children?**

"To effectively serve others we must see them through a parent's eyes, through Heavenly Father's eyes. Only then can we begin to comprehend the true worth of a soul. Only then can we sense the love that Heavenly Father has for all of His children. Only then can we sense the Savior's caring concern for them. We cannot completely fulfill our covenant obligation to mourn with those who mourn and comfort those who stand in need of comfort unless we see them through God's eyes."

**Elder Dale G. Renlund** of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Through God's Eyes," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 94.



# Also in This Issue

## FOR YOUNG ADULTS



### Champions for the Sabbath

p. 50

We had to decide between keeping the Sabbath day holy and trying to win a national rugby championship against our rivals. In the end, we won more than we had expected.

## FOR YOUTH

### The **HARDEST PART** of Being a **MISSIONARY**

p. 52

Mission preparation means more than just studying the scriptures. It also means learning how to work with companions, face rejection, and know that it's not OK to eat ice cream for breakfast, lunch, and dinner!



## FOR CHILDREN



### Jordan's Study Buddy

p. 68

Jordan loved being his sister's study buddy for a few days. But what would he do when she went back to her mission?

