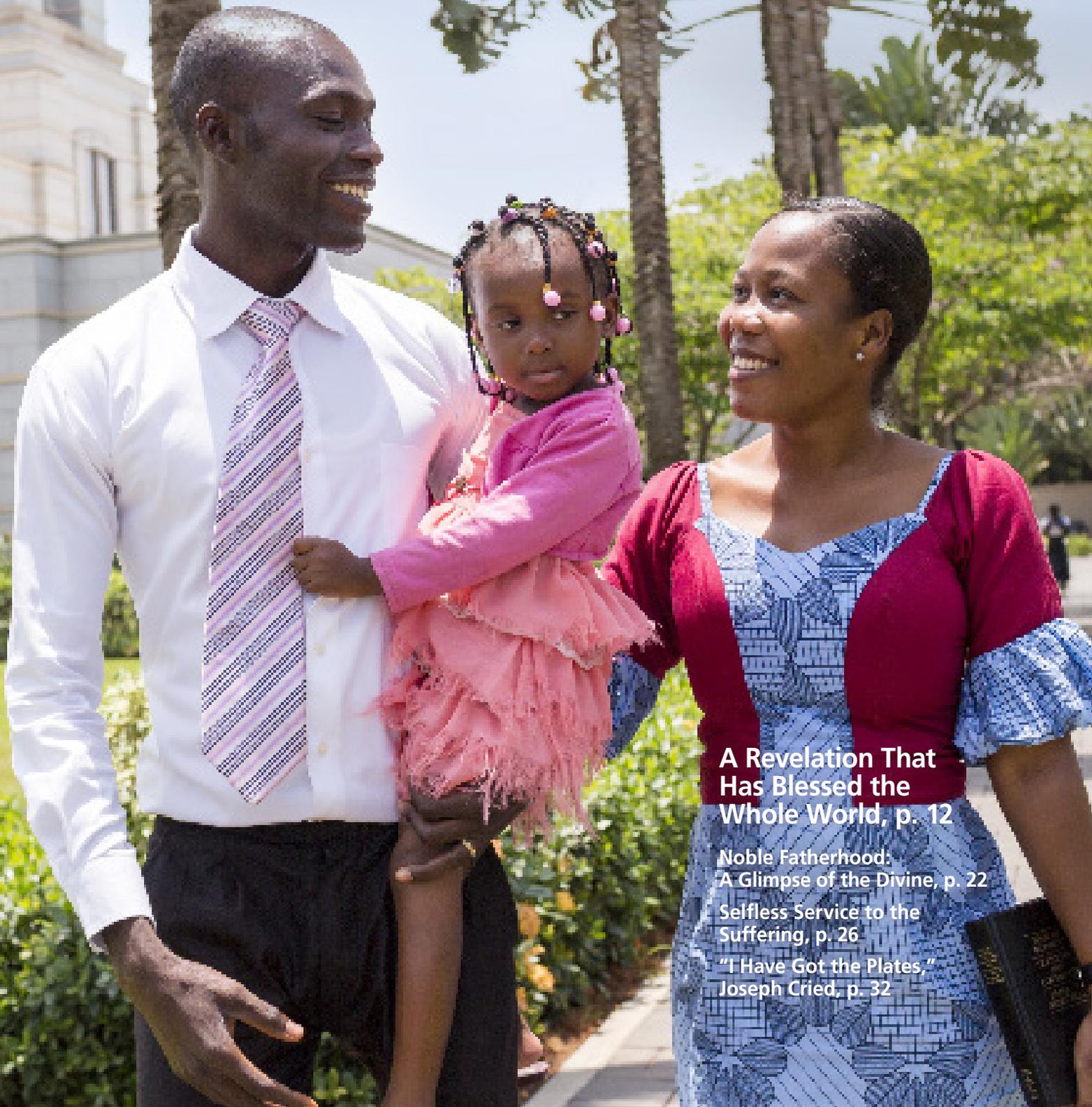


Liahona



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**Selfless Service to the
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Joseph Cried, p. 32**



“NOBLE FATHERHOOD
GIVES US A GLIMPSE OF THE
DIVINE ATTRIBUTES
OF OUR FATHER
IN HEAVEN.”

PRESIDENT JAMES E. FAUST

From “A Righteous Father’s Influence,” page 22.

Liahona, June 2018

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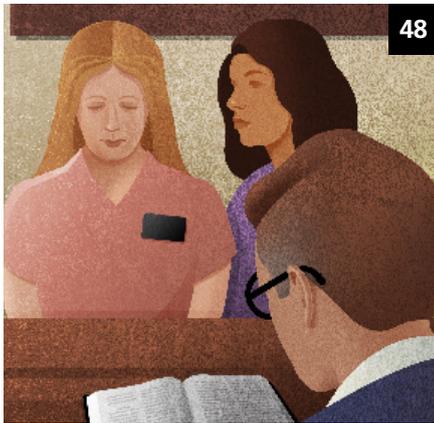
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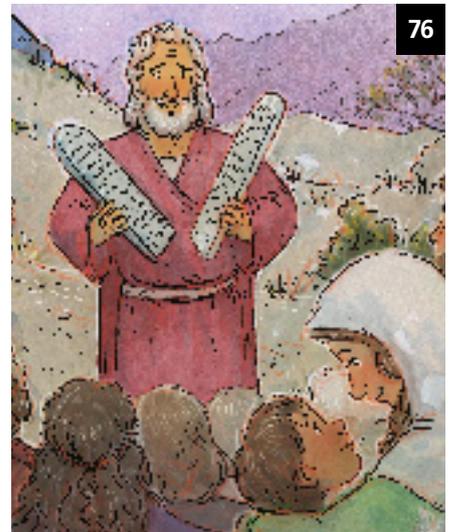
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PORTRAITS OF FAITH

Four months into her second pregnancy, Delva was told that her baby had a rare chromosome disorder called trisomy 13. There was little chance for the baby's survival, and because Delva's life could also be at risk, doctors repeatedly advised her to abort the pregnancy. Faced with an uncertain outcome, Delva chose to trust Heavenly Father no matter what happened.

CHRISTINA SMITH, PHOTOGRAPHER

Delva Netane

California, USA

At eight and a half months, I went in for a 4D ultrasound.

In previous ultrasounds, doctors couldn't see any physical features. Because of this, they said our daughter's hands would be stubs and her face would be deformed. The images in a 4D ultrasound are more detailed, so when the technician began the ultrasound, I saw my daughter's perfect hand waving at me on the screen. I also saw two perfect eyes and a perfect mouth. I had an overwhelming feeling that she wasn't going to die.

When our daughter, MeLa, was born, specialists were standing by but were not needed. MeLa did not have trisomy 13. Doctors and specialists could not explain why, but my husband and I knew it was a miracle.

Ministering Principles

FIVE THINGS GOOD LISTENERS DO

Truly listening will help you know how to help meet the spiritual and temporal needs of others as the Savior would.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “Perhaps even more important than speaking is listening. . . . If we listen with love, we won’t need to wonder what to say. It will be given to us—by the Spirit.”¹

Listening is a skill we can learn. Listening shows our love for others, helps build strong relationships, and invites the Spirit to bless us with the gift of discernment to help us understand others’ needs.² Here are five ways we can improve how we listen.

Find Common Ground

You might not agree with everything said, but agree with what you can without misrepresenting your own feelings. Being agreeable can help defuse anxiety and defensiveness (see Matthew 5:25).

Reflect

Paraphrase what you heard and how you understand the other to feel. This helps them know if they have been understood and gives them an opportunity to clarify.

Give Them Time

Many people need time to gather their thoughts before speaking. Give them time to think both before and after they say something (see James 1:19). Just because they are finished speaking doesn't mean they have said everything they need to. Don't be afraid of silence (see Job 2:11-3:1 and Alma 18:14-16).



Pay Attention

We think faster than others speak. Resist the temptation to jump to conclusions or to think ahead to what you'll say when they're through (see Proverbs 18:13). Instead, listen with the intent to understand. Your response will be better because it will be informed by greater understanding.



Clarify

Don't be afraid to ask questions that clarify something you didn't understand (see Mark 9:32). Clarifying reduces misunderstanding and shows your interest in what is being said.



President Russell M. Nelson taught that we should “learn to listen, and listen to learn from one another.”³ As you learn to listen with the intent of learning about others, you will be in a better position to understand their needs and hear promptings about how you can care for those around you as the Savior would.

Listening Is Loving

A story from Elder Holland illustrates the power of listening:

“My friend Troy Russell pulled his pickup truck slowly out of his garage. . . .

He felt his back tire roll over a bump. . . . He got out only to find his precious nine-year-old son, Austen, lying face down on the pavement. . . . Austen was gone.

“Unable to sleep, unable to find peace, Troy was inconsolable. . . . But into that agonizing breach came . . . John Manning. . . .

“I frankly don’t know on what schedule John and his junior companion made visits to the Russell home. . . . What I do know is that last spring Brother Manning reached down and picked Troy Russell up off the tragedy of

that driveway just as if he were picking up little Austen himself. Like the . . . brother in the gospel he was supposed to be, John simply took over the priesthood care and keeping of Troy Russell. He started by saying, ‘Troy, Austen wants you back on your feet—including on the basketball court—so I will be here every morning at 5:15 a.m. Be ready. . . .’

“‘I didn’t want to go,’ Troy told me later, ‘because I had always taken Austen with me. . . . But John insisted, so I went. From that first day back, we talked—or rather I talked and John listened. . . . At first it was difficult, but over time I realized I had found my strength in the form of [John Manning], who loved me and listened to me until the sun finally rose again on my life.’”⁴ ■

NOTES

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Witnesses unto Me,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 15; *Liahona*, July 2001, 16.
2. See David A. Bednar, in “Panel Discussion” (worldwide leadership training meeting, Nov. 2010), broadcasts.lds.org.
3. Russell M. Nelson, “Listen to Learn,” *Ensign*, May 1991, 23.
4. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Emissaries to the Church,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 62, 67.

MINISTERING AS THE SAVIOR DID

As Jesus departed from Jericho, two blind men cried out to Him saying, “Have mercy on us, O Lord. . . .

“And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you?

“They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.

“So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes:

and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him” (Matthew 20:30, 32–34).

What can we learn from how the Savior listened?





INVITATION TO ACT

Consider how you will apply these principles in how you minister. Ask those to whom you minister what

they need. Listen to their response and the promptings of the Holy Ghost. Act on what you hear.



Ministering principles are intended to help us learn to care for one another—not to be shared as a message. As we come to know those we are assigned, the Holy Ghost will prompt us to know what message they might need in addition to our care and compassion.

WHERE WE WERE NEEDED

By Wilfried and Laura Eyi

A prompting to move to Brooklyn, New York, led us to service and blessings we never could have imagined.

In 2013 we were living in Manhattan, New York, USA. We loved our ward. Because we were expecting our first child, we began looking for a larger apartment in the ward. We found one that seemed perfect, but it didn't feel right.

That spring, Laura started to feel that maybe we should move to Brooklyn. Wil wasn't so sure. We didn't know anything about Brooklyn, and Wil wanted to be close to his investment-banking job so that, given his long work hours, he had a short commute. We decided to pray about it and listen for an answer during general conference.

As we watched the talks on a laptop computer in our studio apartment, Elder Stanley G. Ellis of the Seventy shared an experience he had as a member of a stake presidency. He said that families moving into his stake in Texas, USA, would often ask which ward was best. Only once in 16 years did a family ask which ward needed help.¹

We were touched by his story. It answered our prayers. So, instead of staying in a ward we loved, that we felt comfortable in, and that had a great nursery and Primary, we took Elder Ellis's advice to heart and prayed about where we should move.

At the time, we were serving as ordinance workers in the Manhattan New York Temple. One of the workers there knew New York City well. He suggested two wards where he thought we could help—*both in Brooklyn*.

The first ward was too far from Wil's work. The second one was closer, and we felt we had found the right place when we visited the ward's sacrament meeting. Many of the members were Haitian immigrants. Because Wil is from Gabon and speaks French, we thought the ward would be a great home for us.

Remarkable Experiences

A few weeks later we found an apartment and moved in. Wil was soon called to serve in various

meaningful ways. Understanding the language took some time, but he felt blessed to quickly become proficient enough in Haitian Creole to help interpret for members during meetings and interviews. Laura was also blessed to serve in various capacities, and we became involved in missionary work.

One of the friends we made was a young investigator named Normil Romelus, who had come from Haiti to get an education. He would visit our home with the missionaries, and we would help teach him in French and Creole. After Normil was baptized, we sponsored him in the Church's Pathway program, where he met his future wife. Wil felt grateful to attend their marriage in the Manhattan Temple.

We also met a faithful sister who came to New York from Haiti to be treated for cancer. During her stays, the ward council did everything it could to help her and make sure she had what she needed, including transportation to and from her treatments. We were blessed to serve and visit her during

this time. We hoped for a better ending, but she passed away.

Those two experiences represent what the ward did for people—help them and lift them. We are grateful for these and other remarkable experiences.

What Really Matters

We learned that when we serve the Lord and His children, He takes care of us. Our experiences in Brooklyn helped keep us grounded. They especially helped Wil care less about the fanfare of Wall Street and remember what matters most. In investment banking, almost everyone works on Sundays. Wil occasionally had to do catch-up work from home, but the Lord blessed us so that he never had to go into the office on Sundays.

When we moved to Brooklyn, we thought we were going to be one of only two families with young children in the ward. But the ward's boundaries changed two weeks after we



moved in, and several other young families also moved in.

Eventually, we intend to move to Gabon. We feel that our experiences in Brooklyn have helped prepare us to better serve the Church and people of Africa. We're thankful we

followed the prompting to move. The Lord blessed us—and continues to bless us—in ways we never could have imagined. ■

The authors now live in Massachusetts, USA.

NOTE

1. See Stanley G. Ellis, "The Lord's Way," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 36–38.

EXTENDING THE BLESSINGS OF THE PRIESTHOOD

God loves all of His children and has provided a way for each of us to return to Him.

Editors' note: Rarely is an event so significant that everyone remembers where they were when they heard about it. The 1978 revelation on the priesthood had that kind of impact on an entire generation of Saints. It is impossible in the space available to adequately explore the history of the revelation or its profound influence on the family of God, but in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the revelation, the Liahona offers this short collection of personal essays following the brief introduction below. For more detailed information, see the list of additional resources on page 21.

The Book of Mormon teaches that “all are alike unto God,” including “black and white, bond and free, male and female” (2 Nephi 26:33). Because God loves all of us, He has provided a way for each of us to return to Him (see Moses 5:9; Articles of Faith 1:3). Throughout the history of the Church, people of every race and ethnicity have been baptized to that end and have lived as faithful Latter-day Saints.

The First Presidency stands during the October 1978 general conference, when members unanimously accepted Official Declaration 2.

The revelation regarding the priesthood blessed families and opened the door to temple blessings. Far right: A family walks the grounds of the Accra Ghana Temple, one of eight temples announced, under construction, or in operation in Africa.



PHOTOGRAPH OF FIRST PRESIDENCY IN 1978 COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY LIBRARY



From the mid-1800s, the Church did not ordain men of black African descent to the priesthood or allow black men or women to participate in temple endowment or sealing ordinances.¹ No known records exist that explain the origin of the practice, and Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has emphasized that any theories given in an attempt to explain the restrictions are “folklore” that must never be perpetuated: “However well-intended the explanations were, I think almost all of them were inadequate and/or wrong. . . . We simply do not know why that practice . . . was in place.”²

Many prophets and Presidents of the Church, including Brigham Young, had promised that the day would come when all men who were worthy would receive the priesthood. Knowing these promises and witnessing the faithfulness of black Latter-day Saints, Church leaders in the mid-20th century “pleaded long and earnestly . . . supplicating the Lord for divine guidance.”³

Revelation from God

That guidance came to President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) “after extended meditation and prayer in the sacred rooms of the holy temple.” On June 1, 1978, the Lord revealed to His prophet and to the members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles that “the long-promised day ha[d] come when every faithful, worthy man

in the Church may receive the holy priesthood, with power to exercise its divine authority, and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows therefrom, including the blessings of the temple.”⁴

In announcing the revelation, the First Presidency stated, “We declare with soberness that the Lord has now made known his will for the blessing of all his children throughout the earth.”⁵

During the next general conference, the First Presidency presented the revelation to Church membership, who accepted it as “the word and will of the Lord” and unanimously sustained Official Declaration 2 as part of scriptural canon.

The Revelation’s Result

The impact of the revelation was profound. Not only had God extended the blessings of the priesthood and the temple to all worthy members regardless of race, but temple ordinances could be performed for everyone who has ever lived.

With the revelation came opportunities to expand missionary work, and membership flourished among many nations, kindreds, tongues, and people.

A young man teaches during a quorum meeting in Paris, France, where most wards have members from a wide variety of countries around the world.



Church Teachings

As the work of the Lord has continued to spread across the world, members of the Church have enjoyed an era of greater unity. As Church members increasingly interact with others from many nationalities and cultures, Church leaders have emphasized the importance of loving and strengthening one another and eliminating prejudice and racism of any kind.

“We need to embrace God’s children compassionately and eliminate any prejudice, including racism, sexism, and nationalism,” taught President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Let it be said that we truly believe the blessings of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ are for every child of God.”⁶ Speaking of God’s eternal family, President Russell M. Nelson taught: “Only the comprehension of the true Fatherhood of God can bring full appreciation of the true brotherhood of man. That understanding inspires desire to build bridges of cooperation instead of walls of segregation.”⁷

Moving Forward Together

While we don’t know everything, there are a few things each of us can know. We can know that God loves us and has a plan for all of us to be a unified, eternal family. We can know that this is the Lord’s restored Church and that He leads it through His prophets. Having a personal witness



of these truths can help as we move forward together through the opportunities and challenges we face on the path to becoming like Him (see Moroni 7:48). ■

NOTES

1. See “Race and the Priesthood,” Gospel Topics, topics.lds.org.
2. In “The Mormons” (interview with Jeffrey R. Holland, Mar. 4, 2006), pbs.org/mormons/interviews; see also Dallin H. Oaks, in “Apostles Talk about Reasons for Lifting Ban,” *Daily Herald*, June 5, 1988, 21.
3. Official Declaration 2.
4. Official Declaration 2.
5. Official Declaration 2.
6. M. Russell Ballard, “The Trek Continues!” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 106.
7. Russell M. Nelson, “Teach Us Tolerance and Love,” *Ensign*, May 1994, 70.

REVELATION FOR OUR TIME

Prophets and apostles' recollections of the 1978 revelation.

Editors' note: President Thomas S. Monson was the last living Apostle who was in the room when God revealed to the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles that it was time for the blessings of the priesthood to be extended to all worthy members regardless of race. Here are a few brief accounts from four of the Brethren who were there that day.

The Seeking



President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985)
12th President of the Church

“Day after day I went alone and with great solemnity and seriousness in the upper rooms of the temple, and there I offered my soul and offered my efforts to

go forward with the program. I wanted to do what [God] wanted. . . .

“We had the glorious experience of having the Lord indicate clearly that the time had come when all worthy men and women everywhere can be fellowheirs and partakers of the full blessings of the gospel. I want you to know, as a special witness of the Savior, how close I have felt to him and to our Heavenly Father as I have made numerous visits to the upper rooms in the temple, going on some days several times by myself. The Lord made it very clear to me what was to be done.”

Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball (2006), 238, 239.

The Prayer



President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018)
16th President of the Church

“At the conclusion of the meeting with the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, we had a special prayer at the altar [in the temple] where President

Kimball was voice. He implored the Lord for light and knowledge on this issue which has such far-reaching consequences. It was a source of great comfort to the Brethren to hear his humble pleadings as he sought guidance in his lofty calling. . . .

“The First Presidency later expressed gratitude that ‘the spirit of peace and unity which prevailed in the meeting . . . was the finest it had ever been and that it [was] evidence that the Lord was pleased with our discussion.’ . . .

“. . . It was a moment of exultation, for we had heard the Lord’s prophet declare the Lord’s revelation for this time.”

In Heidi S. Swinton, To the Rescue: The Biography of Thomas S. Monson (2010), 393.



Deacons in Manaus, Brazil, pass the sacrament. Because of the 1978 revelation, worthy priesthood holders of any race can administer in priesthood ordinances.

The Revelation



Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85)
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

“The Lord in his providences poured out the Holy Ghost upon the First Presidency and the Twelve. . . . The revelation came to the president of the

Church; it also came to each individual present. There were ten members of the Council of the Twelve and three of the First Presidency there assembled. The result was that President Kimball knew, and each one of us knew, independent of any other person, by direct and personal revelation to us, that the time had now come to extend the gospel and all its blessings and all its obligations, including the priesthood and the blessings of the house of the Lord, to those of every nation, culture, and race, including the black race. There was no question whatsoever as to what happened or as to the word and message that came.”

“All Are Alike unto God” (Brigham Young University devotional, Aug. 18, 1978), 4, speeches.byu.edu.

The Assurance



President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008)
15th President of the Church

“There was a hallowed and sanctified atmosphere in the room. For me, it felt as if a conduit opened between the heavenly throne and the kneeling, pleading

prophet of God who was joined by his Brethren. The Spirit of God was there. And by the power of the Holy Ghost there came to that prophet an assurance that the thing for which he prayed was right, that the time had come, and that now the wondrous blessings of the priesthood should be extended to worthy men everywhere regardless of lineage.

“Every man in that circle, by the power of the Holy Ghost, knew the same thing. . . .

“. . . Not one of us who was present on that occasion was ever quite the same after that. Nor has the Church been quite the same.”

“Priesthood Restoration,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1988, 70.

Hear President Kimball and President Hinckley recall their experience with this revelation at [lds.org/go/061816](https://www.lds.org/go/061816).



By Elder
Edward Dube
Of the Seventy

BLESSED IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE

*How the revelation has blessed me, my family,
and the Church in Africa.*

Editors' note: Even after the 1978 revelation lifted restrictions on who could hold the priesthood, many members have sought understanding about why God would allow those restrictions in the first place. Here, Elder Dube shares his personal experience with the question.

The first time I heard about the restriction on black men holding the priesthood, I was on my mission. I was

baptized in 1984, after the restriction had already ended. Two years later I was called to serve in the South Africa Johannesburg Mission.

While assigned to Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, my companion, Elder Francis Jack, and I visited a less-active sister. Her husband was a theological professor from another church. He asked us why the priesthood had been withheld from men of black African descent. He said many things that bothered me—things I had never heard before. When I walked out of that room, I felt very low and very discouraged.

Elder Jack and I rode our bikes back to our apartment without speaking. When we got there, he looked at me and said, “Elder Dube, what is wrong with you? You seem very disturbed.”



“Didn’t you hear what he said?” I responded. “How could this happen?”

“Elder, do you believe that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appeared to the boy Joseph?”

“Yes,” I said. “But what does that have to do with this?”

“It has everything to do with it,” Elder Jack replied. “We believe in revelation, don’t we?”

I thought about his words and what the professor had said. That night I woke up in the middle of the night. I felt happy and at peace.

The answer to every gospel question ties back to what happened in 1820. Knowing that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith means that he was a prophet and that this is the Lord’s Church. If Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appeared to the boy Joseph, then all gospel principles and questions fall into place. This is a church of revelation, and the Lord reveals certain processes at certain times to His servants, the prophets, and that is what brought peace to me.

I started jumping up and down and woke my companion shouting, “Yes, yes! You are right, Elder Jack! Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appeared to the boy Joseph! This is the Lord’s Church!”

The lifting of this restriction has been a blessing to members throughout Africa. The priesthood has blessed me and my family in every way possible. It has been a great

Youth attend the temple in Preston, England. After the 1978 revelation, temple ordinances were available to everyone who has ever lived on the earth.

strength to me to have the blessings of the temple, the blessing of knowing that we will live together as families for eternity.

Access to the priesthood has blessed Africa. People here are happy and positive already, but the gospel has added to it. Families are very important in Africa. So the temple is seen as a great blessing. The Church is growing very quickly here.

Members here listen to the will of God and we go and do it. This has blessed the members. At a time when some areas in Africa have 90 percent unemployment, our members seem to be doing well because they are self-reliant. The priesthood and direction from priesthood leaders have blessed us.

I am grateful to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ for the opportunity to bear the priesthood, for the blessing it has been in my life, and how it has blessed members throughout the African continent. ■

Elder Edward Dube was born in Zimbabwe, and he and his wife, Naume, have four children.



THE PRIESTHOOD HELD IN HIGH ESTEEM

By Charlotte Acquah

How the 1978 revelation blessed me and my family.

Editors' note: The effects of the revelation went beyond offering priesthood ordination to worthy men of all races. It extended all of the blessings of the priesthood to all people, including the privileges and obligations of temple ordinances and covenants. Charlotte Acquah, an early member of the Church in Ghana, discusses ways the revelation blessed her entire family, including witnessing the official establishment of the Church in Africa, having a priesthood holder in her home, and being sealed as a family in the temple.



I first heard about the Church when my mother joined Brother Joseph W. B. Johnson's group in 1968.¹ I was about 10 years old. My father's business had declined because of the 1966 coup d'état, and the family was going through a hard time. So my mother thought it wise to seek spiritual help.

Before the revelation in 1978, the Church was informal because the priesthood had not been extended to the blacks yet. After the revelation, the Church could be established with priesthood authority. I was baptized on the 24th of February 1979.²

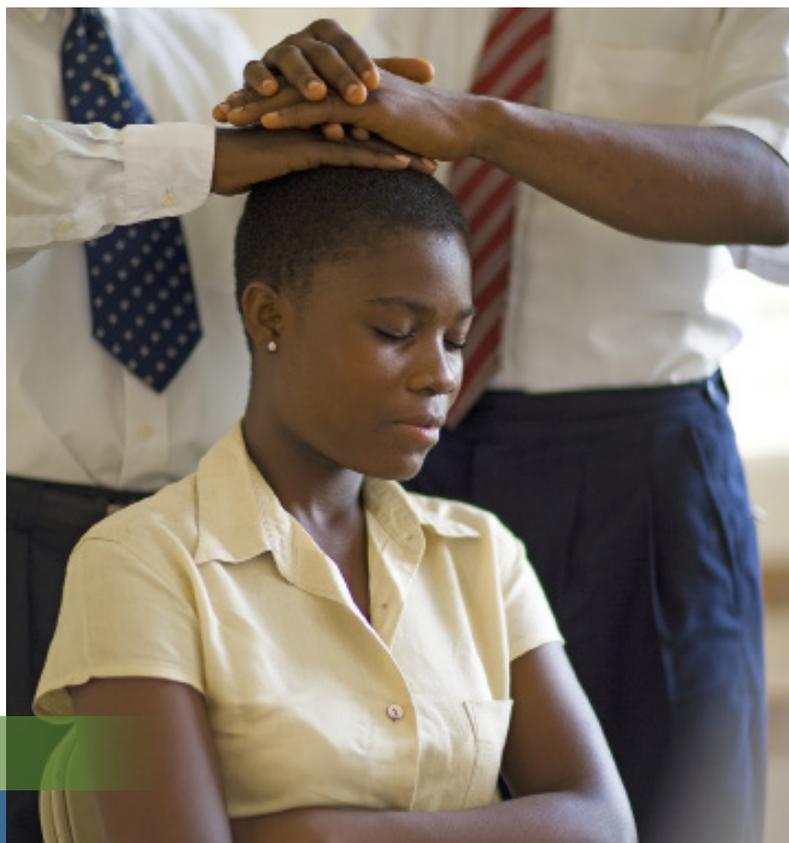
It took my husband two years of studying—and a little bit of arguing—to join the Church. He was finally baptized in 1980, and then he got the priesthood. He became a very calm person, so that his own family members couldn't believe how he had changed. He was cautious

with the priesthood that he held and also to make sure he was always doing the right thing before the Lord. Without the priesthood, he says he would have gone for the honors and the glories of men. But with the priesthood, he found that the most important things are your marriage, your home, your family, and serving others.

In our part of the world, if you are the father, what you say must be. But we don't use the priesthood that way. We sit together in a family council. Fathers help their wives and children to understand that what he is teaching them is right.

Men who are members of the Church serve their wives instead of their wives serving them. That brings them to love and peace with each other.

The first time I saw him bless the sacrament was during "the freeze" because we held our sacrament meeting in our own house.³ We felt very great when he



held the priesthood at that time. No one had to come in the house to bless the sacrament for us; he did. It was special and we loved it.

The first time I read any literature on blacks not being allowed to hold the priesthood was during the freeze, when anti-Mormon literature started coming into the public domain. I wasn't much bothered about it because I know the Church is true. We are taught not to lean on anyone but to center our lives on Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice. So that's what my faith centers on.

On the 17th of December 1996, we were able to go to the Johannesburg South Africa Temple. I felt excited, especially when I heard that our first child, a baby boy who died after just a few short days, was going to be sealed to us. I thought he was dead and gone, even though I knew he was innocent. But then for him to be sealed to us was a spiritual experience I'll never forget.

So when people ask me how many children we have, I tell them we have eight children. They ask, "How?" I say, "Yes, the first one is waiting for us, so it's up to us to obey the commandments of God and live them so that we can go back and be together as a family."

The priesthood is the power of God. I've had so many blessings from the priesthood. I always feel delighted and uplifted when the children ask for a priesthood blessing from their father. Then I know they trust him and they trust that Heavenly Father works through their dad, who holds the priesthood. We hold the priesthood in high esteem in our home. Now three of our boys are married, and they are using the priesthood in their families.

I know the priesthood is true because it is the power of God, and it is a living power because Heavenly Father lives. He has given a portion of that power to His male children on earth. We women have a share in the priesthood. I hold it in high esteem. The priesthood has

helped our family and it continues to do so. ■

The author lives in Central Region, Ghana.

NOTES

1. In the mid-1960s in Ghana, Joseph William Billy Johnson received copies of the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price and felt compelled to establish unofficial Church congregations.
2. Missionaries were officially assigned to Ghana for the first time in November 1978.
3. On June 14, 1989, Ghana's government expelled the missionaries and banned the Church but permitted members to hold services in their homes. Eighteen months later the government expressed satisfaction that the Church teaches members to be obedient to government laws and promotes racial harmony, and on December 1, 1990, Ghana permitted Church activities to resume.

DISCOVER MORE ONLINE

- For a more in-depth look, read the Gospel Topics essay "Race and the Priesthood" at [topics.lds.org](https://www.lds.org/topics).
- Read the powerful experiences of several black members whose firsthand accounts show how the 1978 revelation affected their lives and their conversion:
 - Charlotte and William Acquah (Ghana), Helvécio and Rudá Martins (Brazil), and Joseph and Toe Freeman (USA) in "Witnessing the Faithfulness: Official Declaration 2" at [lds.org/go/061820a](https://www.lds.org/go/061820a).
 - George Rickford (England) in "I Will Take It in Faith" at [lds.org/go/061820b](https://www.lds.org/go/061820b).
 - Victor Nugent (Jamaica) in "It Was the Truth!" at [lds.org/go/061820c](https://www.lds.org/go/061820c).
 - Joseph William Billy Johnson (Ghana) in "A People Prepared" at [lds.org/go/061820d](https://www.lds.org/go/061820d).
 - Anthony Obinna (Nigeria) in "You Have Come at Last" at [lds.org/go/061820e](https://www.lds.org/go/061820e).
- See images and video footage of the first missionaries to West Africa finding hundreds already prepared for baptism at [lds.org/go/061820f](https://www.lds.org/go/061820f).

A Righteous Father's Influence

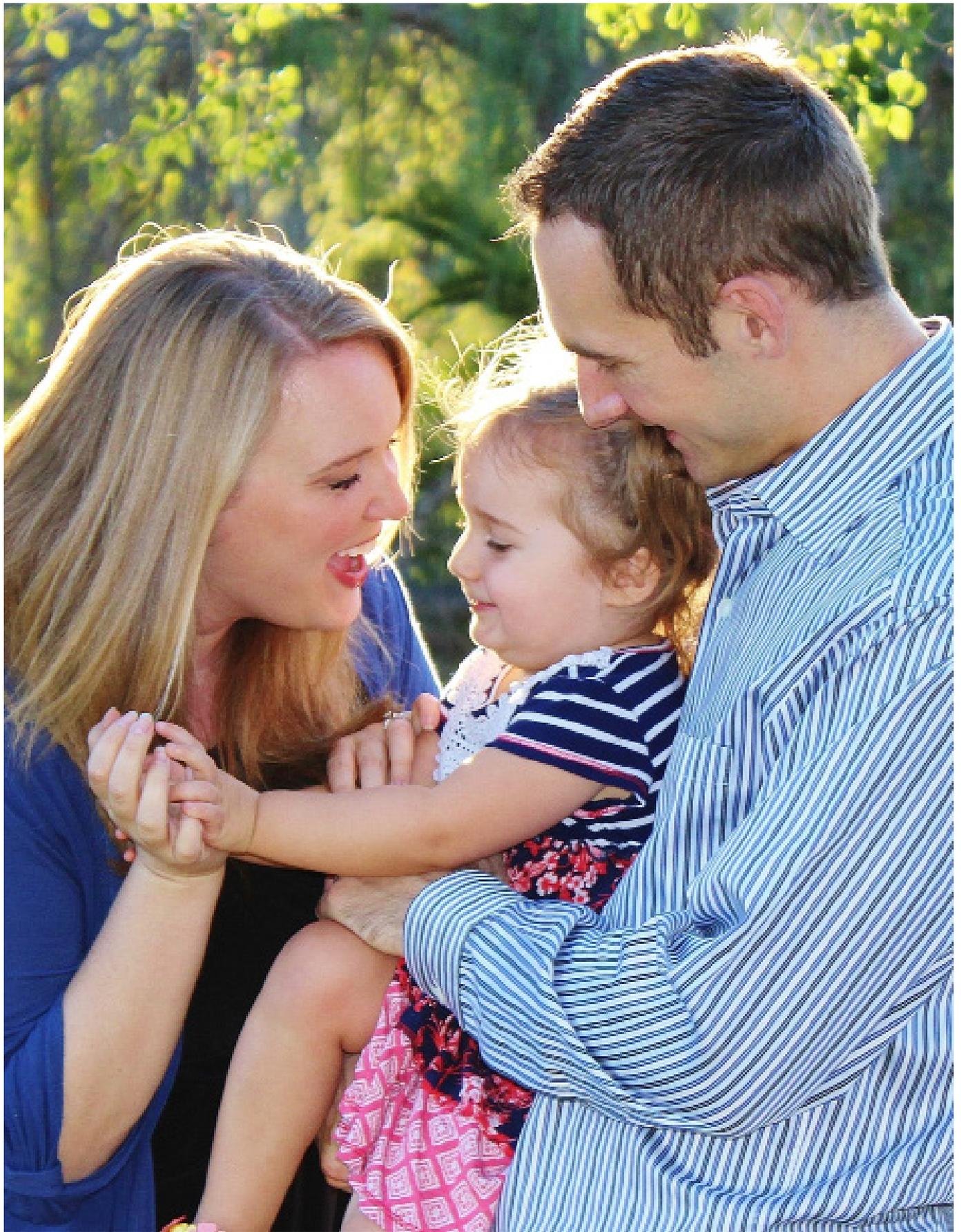
*By looking to righteous father figures
and my Heavenly Father, I learned
what true fatherhood is.*

By Megan Warren

Growing up, I didn't have an earthly father in my life to familiarize me with the kind of love my Heavenly Father has for me. Instead, I observed other men who emanated His love and were examples of true fatherhood. President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, taught, "Noble fatherhood gives us a glimpse of the divine attributes of our Father in Heaven."¹ Through the examples of many father figures, including extended family members, Church leaders, righteous men in the scriptures, and even diligent home teachers, I learned about Heavenly Father's character and the noble attributes earthly fathers can develop to emulate Him. Eventually I was able to turn the heartache I felt from lacking an earthly father into rejoicing over the close relationship that I could develop with my Heavenly Father.

Steady and Supportive

Our Father in Heaven is unchanging. We read that He "is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Mormon 9:9). I have observed that noble earthly fathers follow Heavenly Father's example of being unwavering. A noble father is true to his word in all things. He understands that consistency helps his children feel secure and loved, and he is present in times of both crisis and joy.



PHOTOGRAPH OF THE AUTHOR WITH HER HUSBAND AND DAUGHTER BY JESSE WARREN

Our Heavenly Father also understands the kind of hard work it takes to be worthy to live with Him eternally. He knows each of us by name, and He allows us to have challenges in order to refine us. A noble earthly father also allows his children to struggle from time to time because he knows that challenges bring opportunities for growth.

My husband is a talented martial artist. He was taught by his father and often relates that his dad was harder on him than he was on the other students. His father's discipline strengthened him and helped him advance more quickly. Like our Heavenly Father, noble earthly fathers encourage their children to do their best while offering strength, love, and support.

“Works without End”

Our Heavenly Father's work is eternal and without end (see Alma 12:25–33). In a similar way, a noble earthly father's work also never ends. Noble fathers constantly do good works and strive for righteousness. They are true and honest in their adherence to God's commandments. They set aside selfish pursuits for the good of their family. In “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” living prophets have taught that “by divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families.”² This includes not just physical protection but spiritual protection as well. Noble fathers lead by example and offer love and counsel to their children. They also warn against spiritual danger when needed.

An Empowering Family Narrative

In his *New York Times* article “The Stories That Bind Us,” Bruce Feiler gives an overview of studies regarding the deterioration of the family. In these studies, psychologists found that children who demonstrated the greatest resilience had been exposed to an empowering family narrative, which helped them feel that they belonged to something bigger. “If you want a happier family,” says Feiler, “create, refine and retell the story of your family's

positive moments and your ability to bounce back from the difficult ones. That act alone may increase the odds that your family will thrive for many generations to come.”³

An example of this can be seen in Moses 1. Moses was empowered by his knowledge of God's plan and his own divine identity. When Satan came tempting him, Moses resiliently replied, “Who art thou? For behold, I am a son of God, in the similitude of his Only Begotten; and where is thy glory, that I should worship thee?” (Moses 1:13). Moses then even had the courage to command Satan to depart.

Noble earthly fathers empower their children by reminding them of their divine identity as spirit children of God. They help build a strong family through their good examples and ensure that their children take part in it. This gives their children a strong sense of purpose and the confidence to succeed.

Searching for a Noble Husband

When I was dating, I was seeking an eternal companion who would be a noble father. Since I grew up without that example in my childhood, it was harder for me to know all the characteristics that a noble earthly father should have. I was disappointed that my patriarchal blessing did not give more detailed direction about the person Heavenly Father wanted me to marry. It said only that I should seek someone who could take me to the temple. But even this seemingly simple instruction was challenged. Although I had some positive dating experiences, I often worried that either such a man did not truly exist or I was meant to suffer endless trials of the heart.

Despite my experience-driven anxiety, I continued to pray for a husband who would be a righteous father for my children, who would love them and stay present in their lives. Like my faithful mother, I knew that no matter what happened, I would be able to lean on my Eternal Father for support.

To my surprise and delight, my prayers were answered on Heavenly Father's perfect timetable. It is healing for me to observe my husband's loving example of what a



A watercolor painted by the author of her husband and daughter. She was inspired to pursue art by her home teacher—one of the father figures in her life.

father should be. I'm grateful he follows the examples set by prophets and apostles and that he chooses to cherish and love me unselfishly. His example as a loving husband also blesses our children. My heart is full of gratitude for his faithfulness through trials, his example of hard work, his worthiness to exercise the priesthood, and the pure, unwavering love he demonstrates as a young father.

The Fathers around Us

There is no limit to the influence of a man who understands, like Moses, who he is. Sister Sheri Dew, former Second Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, taught that all women who nurture fulfill the role of motherhood, even when they are not yet mothers. “*We are all mothers in Israel*,” she testified, “and our calling is to love and help lead the rising generation through the dangerous streets of mortality.”⁴ Men who are righteous examples fulfill the role of being fathers in Israel, and their virtuous examples can extend beyond the reach of their own family.

After my childhood challenges, I am confident that Heavenly Father knew exactly what I needed to enable me

to trust my eternal companion. He placed many steadfast examples of fatherhood in my life. These included my righteous grandfather, who loved the Lord, and a diligent home teacher who—understanding my family’s financial limitations—took me on as a student at his art studio and inspired me to follow in his footsteps professionally. In my young adult life, heavenly healing was also delivered through the unexpected blessing of gaining a righteous stepfather, who was patient with my hesitancy to trust a father figure and who continually showed me kindness.

Through the righteous influence of these father figures, I have found hope, healing, and joy. I am grateful for all men who follow the example set by our Father in Heaven and strive to be examples of noble fatherhood. ■

The author lives in California, USA.

NOTES

1. James E. Faust, “Them That Honour Me I Will Honour,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 46; *Liahona*, July 2001, 54.
2. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 145.
3. Bruce Feiler, “The Stories That Bind Us,” *New York Times*, Mar. 15, 2013, nytimes.com.
4. Sheri L. Dew, “Are We Not All Mothers?” *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 97; *Liahona*, Jan. 2002, 113.



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

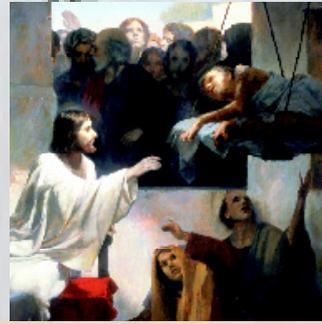
BEARING One Another's Burdens

From an address given to LDS Family Services employees in June 2017. Elder Holland adapted this version for a broader audience.

The Apostle Peter wrote that disciples of Jesus Christ are to have “compassion one of another” (1 Peter 3:8). Many of you fulfill that commandment honorably and admirably every day of your lives. Certainly, the need for compassion is as great today as it ever has been. Current data suggests that approximately one in five adults in the United States (43.8 million people) experiences mental illness every year.¹ Pornography abounds, with one website receiving over 23 billion visits in 2016 alone.² “Two-parent households are on [a precipitous] decline in the United States as divorce, . . . cohabitation, [and out-of-wedlock births] are on the rise. . . . Today fully four-in-ten births occur to women who are single or living with a non-marital partner.”³

To be called the Savior’s people and to stand in His Church, we must be “willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light; yea, and [be] willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things” (Mosiah 18:8–9).

For me, bearing another’s burden is a simple but powerful definition of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. When we seek to lift the burden of another, we are “saviours . . . on mount Zion”



We may not be able to alter the journey, but we can make sure no one walks it alone. Surely that is what it means to bear one another's burdens.



PHOTOGRAPH FROM GETTY IMAGES
DETAIL FROM CHRIST AND THE PALSED MAN, BY J. KIRK RICHARDS



When we seek to lift the burden of another, we are “saviours . . . on mount Zion” —symbolically aligning ourselves with the Redeemer of the world and His Atonement.

(Obadiah 1:21). We are symbolically aligning ourselves with the Redeemer of the world and His Atonement. We are “bind[ing] up the brokenhearted, . . . proclaim[ing] liberty to the captives, and . . . opening . . . the prison to them that are bound” (Isaiah 61:1).

Divine Empathy

Let’s stay with this matter of Christ’s Atonement for a moment. If I understand the doctrine properly, in the experience of the Atonement, Jesus Christ vicariously experienced—and bore the burden of—the sins and sorrows and troubles and tears of all mankind, from Adam and Eve to the end of the world. In this, He Himself did not actually sin, but He felt the pain and consequence of those who did. He did not personally experience a broken marriage, but He felt the pain and consequence of those who do. He did not personally experience rape or schizophrenia or cancer or the loss of a child, but He felt the pain and consequence of those who do, and so on and on through the litany of life’s burdens and broken hearts.

That view of how the Atonement works suggests the one true divine example of *empathy* the world has ever known. Obviously, no word does justice to the universe’s most consequential act, but today I don’t have a better substitute, so I will use it.

Empathy is defined as “the action of understanding . . . and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another

of either the past or present.”⁴ As already noted, that is actually a reasonably good statement of the atoning process, especially if we add “future” to “past” and “present.”

We all know that too many of God’s children do suffer silently and alone. Take, for example, a young man who wrote me expressing his testimony in a remarkably articulate letter but then adding that his heart breaks because he does not see any fulfillment or future joy for him as a person with same-sex attraction:

“I face a lifetime of lonely nights and dreary mornings. I attend my YSA ward faithfully and each week leave church knowing that I can never really fit in. I will never teach my son to ride a bike. I will never feel my baby girl hold my finger as she learns to walk. I will never have grandchildren.

“I will come home to an empty house, day after day, month after month, decade after decade, anchored only by my hope in Christ. Sometimes I wonder why He would do this to me and ask me to make such an impossible sacrifice. I cry at night when nobody can see. I have not told anybody, not even my parents. They and my friends . . . would reject me if they knew, just as they all have rejected those who have walked this path in front of me. I will live life at the margins. I have the option of either being harassed and avoided for being single, or pitied and ignored for telling the reason. Life looms long before me. Is there no balm in Gilead?”⁵

With so much pain and despondency, so much hopelessness, one thing we certainly





ought to try to give such a person is the reassurance that he is not alone. We should be adamant in stressing that God is with him, angels are with him, and we are with him.

Empathy. Sounds pretty inadequate, but it is a place to start. We may not be able to alter the journey, but we can make sure no one walks it alone. Surely that is what it means to bear one another's burdens—they *are* burdens. And who knows when or if they will be lifted in mortality. But we can walk together and share the load. We can lift our brothers and sisters as Jesus Christ lifted us (see Alma 7:11–13).

And through all of this, we certainly gain new and brighter appreciation for what the Savior ultimately does for us. As I once said:

“In striving for some peace and understanding in these difficult matters, it is crucial to remember that we are living—and chose to live—in a fallen world where for divine purposes our pursuit of godliness will be tested and tried again and again. Of greatest assurance in God's plan is that a Savior was promised, a Redeemer, who through our faith in Him would lift us triumphantly over those tests and trials, even though the cost to do so would be unfathomable

for both the Father who sent Him and the Son who came. It is only an appreciation of this divine love that will make our own lesser suffering first bearable, then understandable, and finally redemptive.”⁶

We learn quickly that our best and most selfless services are often not adequate to comfort or encourage in the way people need. Or if we succeed once, we often can't seem to repeat it. Nor are we superheroes at preventing regression in those we care about. All this is why we must ultimately turn to Jesus Christ and rely on Him (see 2 Nephi 9:21).

Often enough we can't help—or at least can't sustain our help or can't repeat it when we do sometimes succeed. But Christ can help. God the Father can help. The Holy Ghost can help, and we need to keep trying to be Their agents, helping when and where we can.

Refortify Yourself

For those of you who earnestly seek to bear another's burdens, it is important that you refortify yourself and build yourself back up when others expect so much of you and indeed take so much out of you. No one is so strong that they do not ever feel fatigued or frustrated or recognize the



The service we provide when we bear another's burdens is crucially important—literally the work of the Master.

need to care for themselves. Jesus certainly experienced that fatigue, felt the drain on His strength. He gave and gave, but there was a cost attached to that, and He felt the effects of so many relying on Him. When the woman with an issue of blood touched Him in the crowd, He healed her, but He also noted “that virtue had gone out of him” (see Mark 5:25–34).

I have always been amazed that He could sleep through a storm on the Sea of Galilee so serious and severe that His experienced fishermen disciples thought the ship was going down. How tired is that? How many sermons can you give and blessings can you administer without being absolutely exhausted? The caregivers have to have care too. You have to have fuel in the tank before you can give it to others.

Rosalynn Carter, board president of the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving, once said, “There are only four kinds of people in this world: those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers, and those who will need caregivers.”⁷

Obviously, “the relationship between a caregiver and care receiver is a [serious one, even a] sacred one.”⁸ However, as we experience the challenge of bearing one another's burdens, we can remember that none of us are immune from the impact of empathizing with the pain and suffering of someone about whom we care.

Seek Balance

It is important to find ways to balance your caregiving role with other aspects of your life—including work, family, relationships, and activities you enjoy. In a general conference talk on this subject, I tried to “pay tribute to all of you, to all who do so much and care so deeply and labor with ‘the intent to do good.’ So many are so generous. I know that some of you [may struggle emotionally or financially] in your own lives and still you find something to share [with others]. As King Benjamin cautioned his people, it is not intended that we run faster than we have strength and all things should be done in order (see Mosiah 4:27).”⁹ But despite that, I know that many of you run very fast and that your energy and emotional supply sometimes registers close to empty.

When the problems seem too large, remember these lines from an essay by David Batty:

“Hope is not a feeling—it's not a tidal wave of joy in the middle of a problem.

“. . . Hope is not the magic wand that makes the problem disappear. Hope is the lifeline that can keep you from being overwhelmed by the storms in your life.

“When you place your hope in Jesus, you place your confidence in His promises that He will never leave you or forsake you—that He will do what is best for you. Even though you may be in the middle of a huge problem, hope enables you to be at peace, knowing that Jesus is with you every step of the way.”¹⁰

I love how Paul dealt with this struggle and feeling of inadequacy. In the scriptures,



the Lord explained that His grace was sufficient for Paul and that, in fact, His strength was actually “made perfect in weakness.” Then Paul wrote, “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Corinthians 12:9).¹¹



Trust the Father and the Son

We must trust that our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ truly care about us and what we are doing, that They want us to be made “perfect in weakness”—just what you want for those for whom you care.

I bear witness that God is aware of our burdens and will strengthen us to strengthen others. This does not mean our problems will always disappear or the world will suddenly be at peace. But neither do your prayers fall on deaf ears. And neither do the prayers of those you care for—the widowed, the divorced, the lonely, the overwhelmed, the addicted, the ill, the hopeless—everyone.¹²

Brothers and sisters, the service we provide when we bear another’s burdens is crucially important—literally the work of the Master. The number of letters received in my office underscores how much help is needed. That help is manna from heaven to those who struggle.

I said once: “When we speak of those who are instruments in the hand of God, we are reminded that not all angels are from the other side of the veil. Some of them we walk with and talk with—here, now, every day. Some of them reside in our own neighborhoods. Some of them gave birth to us, and in my case, one of them consented to marry me. Indeed heaven never seems closer than when

we see the love of God manifested in the kindness and devotion of people so good and so pure that *angelic* is the only word that comes to mind.”¹³

To me, when you strive to lighten another’s burdens, you are truly angels of mercy in the most literal sense. May you receive back a hundredfold all that you try to give. ■

NOTES

1. See “Mental Health by the Numbers,” National Alliance on Mental Illness, nami.org.
2. See “World’s Largest Porn Site Reveals the Most-Searches Porn Genre of 2016,” *Fight the New Drug*, Jan. 9, 2017, fightthenewdrug.org.
3. “Parenting in America,” Pew Research Center, Dec. 17, 2015, pewsocialtrends.org; see also D’Vera Cohn and Andrea Caumont, “10 Demographic Trends That Are Shaping the U.S. and the World,” Pew Research Center, Mar. 31, 2016, pewsocialtrends.org.
4. *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. [2003], “empathy.”
5. Personal correspondence.
6. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Like a Broken Vessel,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 40.
7. See rosalynncarter.org/UserFiles/Jensen.pdf; see also Rosalynn Carter, in Randi Kaplan, “How to Care for the Caregiver,” May 13, 2015, health.usnews.com.
8. Nancy Madsen-Wilkerson, “When One Needs Care, Two Need Help,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2016, 38.
9. Jeffrey R. Holland, “A Handful of Meal and a Little Oil,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 31.
10. David Batty, “Finding Hope in the Midst of Life’s Problems,” livingfree.org.
11. See Anne C. Pingree, “Making Weak Things Become Strong,” *Ensign*, Dec. 2004, 28–30.
12. See Dallin H. Oaks, “He Heals the Heavy Laden,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 6–9.
13. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Ministry of Angels,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 30.





CHAPTER 4

Be Watchful

This is chapter 4 of the new four-volume narrative history of the Church titled Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days. The book will be available in 14 languages in print, in the Church History section of the Gospel Library app, and at saints.lds.org. The next several chapters will be published in upcoming issues until volume 1 is released later this year. Those chapters will be available in 47 languages in the Gospel Library app and at saints.lds.org.

Twenty-one-year-old Emma Hale first heard about Joseph Smith when he came to work for Josiah Stowell in the fall of 1825. Josiah had hired the young man and his father to help him find buried treasure on his property.¹ Local legends claimed that a band of explorers had mined a silver deposit and hidden the treasure in the area hundreds of years earlier. Knowing Joseph had a gift for using seer stones, Josiah offered him good wages and a share of the findings if he would help in the search.²

Emma's father, Isaac, supported the venture. When Joseph and his father came to the Stowell farm in Harmony, Pennsylvania—a village some 150 miles (240 km) south of Palmyra—Isaac served as a witness when they signed their contracts. He also allowed the workers to live in his home.³

Emma met Joseph soon after. He was younger than she was, stood over six feet (1.8 m) tall, and looked like someone who was used to hard work. He had blue eyes and a light complexion, and he walked with a faint limp. His grammar was uneven, and he sometimes used too many words to express himself, but he displayed a natural intelligence when he spoke. He and his father were good men who preferred to worship on their own rather than attend the church where Emma and her family worshipped.⁴

Both Joseph and Emma liked being outdoors. Since childhood, Emma had enjoyed riding horses and canoeing in the river near her home. Joseph was not a skilled horseman, but he excelled in wrestling and ball games. He was at ease around others and quick to smile, often telling jokes or humorous stories. Emma was more reserved, but she loved a good joke and could talk with anyone. She also liked to read and sing.⁵

As the weeks passed and Emma got to know Joseph better, her parents grew anxious about their relationship. Joseph was a poor laborer from another state, and they hoped their daughter would lose interest in him and marry into one of the prosperous families in their valley. Emma's father had

also grown wary of the treasure hunt and was suspicious of Joseph's role in it. It did not seem to matter to Isaac Hale that Joseph had tried to convince Josiah Stowell to call the search off when it became clear nothing would come of it.⁶

Emma liked Joseph better than any other man she knew, and she did not stop spending time with him. After he succeeded in convincing Josiah to stop looking for silver, Joseph remained in Harmony to work on Josiah's farm. Sometimes he also worked for Joseph and Polly Knight, another farming family in the area. When he was not working, he visited Emma.⁷

Joseph and his seer stone soon became the subject of gossip in Harmony. Some of the older folks in town

In 2015 the Church rebuilt this replica of the Isaac and Elizabeth Hale home in Harmony, Pennsylvania. Joseph Smith met their daughter Emma when he lived on the property while working for Josiah Stowell.





The Smith family frame home in Manchester, New York, was restored using the original structure. After their marriage in 1827, Joseph and Emma lived here with his parents.

believed in seers, but many of their children and grandchildren did not. Josiah's nephew, claiming that Joseph had taken advantage of his uncle, brought the young man to court and charged him with being a fraud.

Standing before the local judge, Joseph explained how he had found the stone. Joseph Sr. testified that he had constantly asked God to show them His will for Joseph's marvelous gift as a seer. Finally, Josiah stood before the court and stated that Joseph had not swindled him.

"Do I understand," said the judge, "that you believe the prisoner can see by the aid of the stone?"

No, Josiah insisted, "I positively know it to be true."

Josiah was a well-respected man in the community, and people accepted his word. In the end, the hearing produced no evidence that Joseph had deceived him, so the judge dismissed the charge.⁸

In September 1826, Joseph returned to the hill for the plates [see chapter 3], but Moroni said he was still not ready for them. "Quit the company of the money diggers," the angel told him. There were wicked men among them.⁹ Moroni gave him one more year to align his will with God's. If he did not, the plates would never be entrusted to him.

The angel also told him to bring someone with him next time. It was the same request he had made at the end of Joseph's first visit to the hill. But since Alvin was dead, Joseph was confused.

"Who is the right person?" he asked.

"You will know," Moroni said.

Joseph sought the Lord's direction through his seer stone. The right person, he learned, was Emma.¹⁰

Joseph had been drawn to Emma as soon as he met her. Like Alvin, she was someone who could help him become the man the Lord needed to carry out His work. But there was more to Emma than that. Joseph loved her and wanted to marry her.¹¹

In December, Joseph turned 21 years old. In the past, he had let himself be pulled this way and that by the expectations of those who wanted to take advantage of his gift.¹² But after his last visit to the hill, he knew he had to do more to prepare himself to receive the plates.

Before returning to Harmony, Joseph spoke with his parents. "I have concluded to get married," he told them, "and, if you have no objections, Miss Emma Hale would be



On the night of September 22, 1827, Joseph and Emma drove a carriage to this hill, where the Book of Mormon plates were buried. After obtaining the plates, Joseph hid them in a hollow log for a time to protect them from treasure seekers.

my choice.” His parents were pleased with his decision, and Lucy urged him to come live with them after they married.¹³

Joseph spent as much time as he could with Emma that winter, sometimes borrowing the Knights’ sleigh when snow made it hard to travel to the Hales’ house. But her parents still did not like him, and his efforts to win over the family failed.¹⁴

In January 1827, Emma visited the Stowells’ home, where she and Joseph could spend time together without her family’s disapproving looks. Joseph proposed to Emma there, and at first, Emma seemed surprised. She knew her parents would oppose the marriage.¹⁵ But Joseph urged her to think about it. They could elope right away.

Emma considered the proposal. Marrying Joseph would disappoint her parents, but it was her choice, and she loved him.¹⁶

A short time later, on January 18, 1827, Joseph and Emma were married in the home of the local justice of the peace. They then went to Manchester and began life together in the new home of Joseph’s parents. The house was comfortable, but Joseph Sr. and Lucy had overspent on it, fallen behind on their payments, and lost the property.

They were now renting it from the new owners.¹⁷

The Smiths liked having Joseph and Emma with them. But their son’s divine call made them anxious. People in the area had heard about the gold plates and sometimes went looking for them.¹⁸

One day, Joseph went to town on an errand. Expecting him back for dinner, his parents were alarmed when he did not return. They waited for hours, unable to sleep. At last Joseph opened the door and threw himself into a chair, exhausted.

“Why are you so late?” his father asked.

“I have had the severest chastisement that I ever had in my life,” Joseph said.

“Who has been taking you to task?” demanded his father.

“It was the angel of the Lord,” Joseph replied. “He says I have been negligent.” The day of his next meeting with Moroni was coming soon. “I must be up and doing,” he said. “I must set myself about the things which God has commanded me to do.”¹⁹

After the fall harvest, Josiah Stowell and Joseph Knight traveled to the Manchester area on business. Both men

a group of men plotting to steal the gold plates. “We will have the plates,” one of them said, “in spite of Joe Smith or all the devils in hell.”

Alarmed, Joseph Sr. returned home and told Emma. She said she did not know where the plates were, but she was sure Joseph had protected them.

“Yes,” Joseph Sr. replied, “but remember that for a small thing Esau lost his blessing and birthright. It may be so with Joseph.”²⁸

To be sure the plates were secure, Emma mounted a horse and rode for more than an hour to the farm where Joseph was working. She found him by the well, caked in dirt and sweat from the day’s work.

Hearing of the danger, Joseph looked into the Urim and Thummim and saw that the plates were safe.

Back home, Joseph Sr. paced back and forth outside the house, glancing every minute down the road until he saw Joseph and Emma.

“Father,” Joseph said as they rode up, “all is perfectly safe—there is no cause of alarm.”²⁹

But it was time to act.

Hurrying to the hill, Joseph found the log where the plates were hidden and carefully wrapped them in a shirt.³⁰ He then ducked into the woods and headed for home, his eyes alert to danger. The forest concealed him from people on the main road, but it gave thieves plenty of places to hide.

Straining under the weight of the record, Joseph tramped through the woods as fast as he could. A fallen tree blocked the path ahead of him, and as he bounded over it, he felt something hard strike him from behind. Turning around, he saw a man coming at him, wielding a gun like a club.

Clutching the plates tightly with one arm, Joseph knocked the man to the ground and scrambled deeper into the thicket. He ran for about half a mile when another man

sprang from behind a tree and struck him with the butt of his gun. Joseph fought the man off and darted away, desperate to be out of the woods. But before he could get very far a third man attacked, landing a heavy blow that sent him reeling. Gathering his strength, Joseph hit the man hard and ran for home.³¹

Back at the house, Joseph burst through the door with his heavy bundle tucked beneath one arm. “Father,” he cried, “I have got the plates.”

His 14-year-old sister, Katharine, helped him set the bundle on a table as the rest of the family gathered around him. Joseph could tell that his father and younger brother

William wanted to unwrap the plates, but he stopped them.

“Can we not see them?” Joseph Sr. asked.

“No,” Joseph said. “I was disobedient the first time, but I intend to be faithful this time.”

He told them they could feel the plates through the cloth, and his brother William picked up the bundle. It was heavier than stone, and William could tell that it had leaves that moved like the pages of a

book.³² Joseph also sent his youngest brother, Don Carlos, to get a lockbox from Hyrum, who lived down the road with his wife, Jerusha, and their newborn daughter.

Hyrum arrived soon after, and once the plates were securely in the box, Joseph collapsed onto a nearby bed and started telling his family about the men in the woods.

As he spoke, he realized his hand ached. Sometime during the attacks he had dislocated a thumb.

“I must stop talking, Father,” he said suddenly, “and get you to put my thumb back in place.”³³ ■

A complete list of works cited is available in English at saints.lds.org. The word *Topic* in the notes indicates additional information online at saints.lds.org.

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Joseph borrowed a lockbox like this from his brother Hyrum to store the Book of Mormon plates.

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THE CHURCH IS *HERE?*

I joined the Church at age 36, and at times I felt spiritually strong. Other times I just went through the motions. Between a hectic work schedule, my wife starting a new career, poor health, and other challenges, I began to struggle spiritually. I attended church and helped teach the deacons quorum, but that was all I could bring myself to do. I couldn't find the strength to open my scriptures or kneel to pray.

I was still struggling when I left on a business trip to northern Chile. From the airport in Copiapó, we drove two hours to the site for a solar installation project in Chile's Atacama Desert. I was surprised by how remote this region was, only red desert for miles and

miles. The loneliness of the landscape was startling.

After being on site for about a week, we drove to the nearest town for supplies. There I saw a building that caught my eye. I asked the driver to pull over. The building had beautiful grounds that were surrounded by a black wrought-iron fence. On the front of the building was a familiar sign, "La Iglesia de Jesucristo de los Santos de los Últimos Días" or "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

"The Church is *here?*" I thought. I was amazed that the Church had made it to this remote part of the world. I took a picture of the meeting-house and texted it to my wife. Her

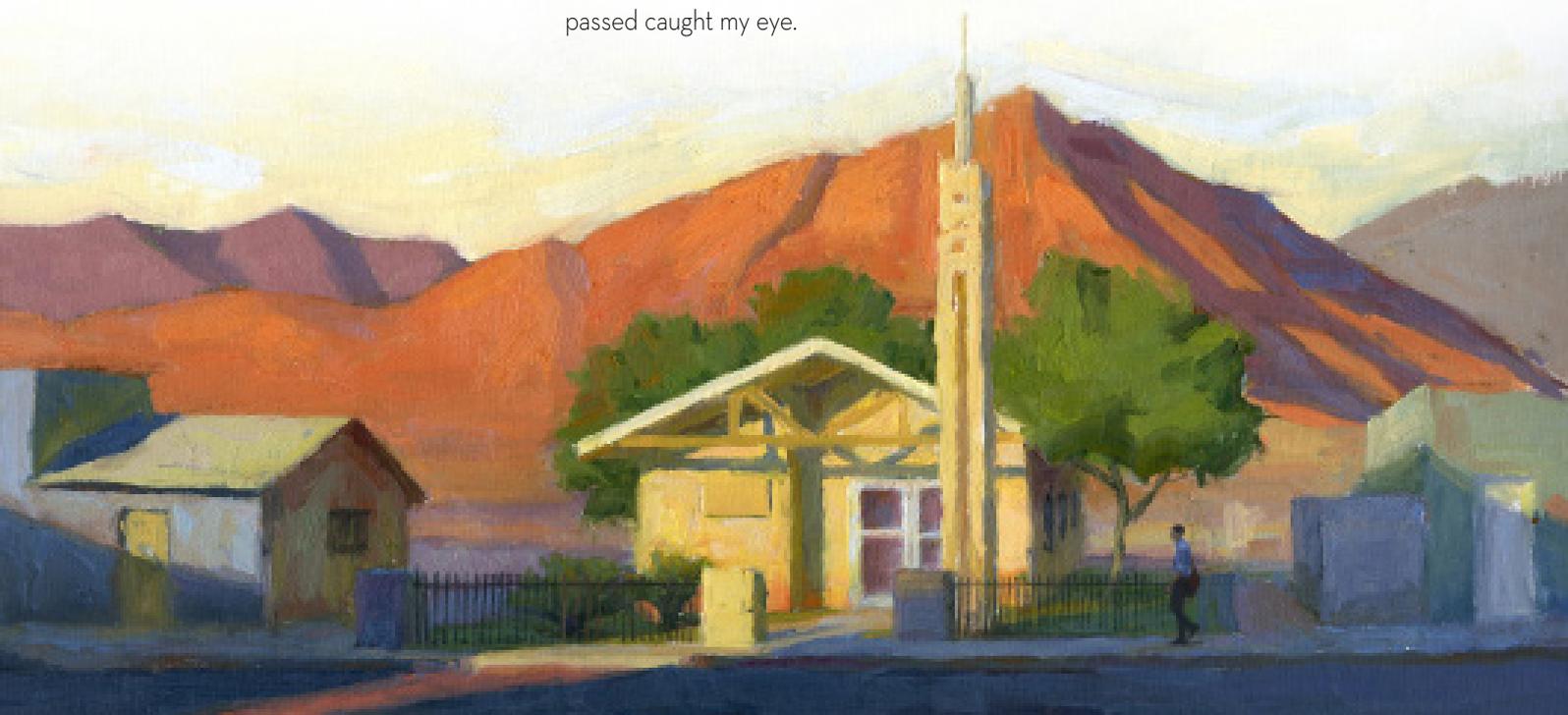
response had a profound effect on me: "Heavenly Father is aware of His people everywhere."

This was a direct message for me from my Heavenly Father. In the stress of living day to day, I had forgotten, and needed to be reminded, that Heavenly Father loves all His children. He loves those Saints in that small and remote town in the middle of the desert, and He also loves me.

That night I knelt and thanked Heavenly Father for the blessings He had given me that day. Knowing that He loves me has helped me rebuild my spirituality, and it continues to strengthen me each day. ■

Jon Evans, California, USA

As we drove to the nearest town for supplies, a building we passed caught my eye.



TWO MISSIONS, TWO FAMILIES BLESSED

While serving in the Arizona Mesa Mission, I often received emails from my older sister in Argentina. Natalia was not a member of the Church. Several years before, when her daughter passed away, our family tried to share the gospel with her, but she was never receptive.

I continued to share my testimony with her on my mission. In one email, I told her about a woman my companion and I had met. Her daughter had also passed away. We testified of eternal families and she felt hope in what we shared. I told Natalia she could feel the same. She wrote back, telling me that she wanted to feel that hope but thought her faith wasn't strong enough.

I decided to send Natalia a handwritten letter inviting her to pray for help to believe. I also felt prompted to write one paragraph in English and address it to a missionary. Natalia only knew Spanish, so I told her to look for the missionaries and ask them to translate for her. I figured a missionary would know English.

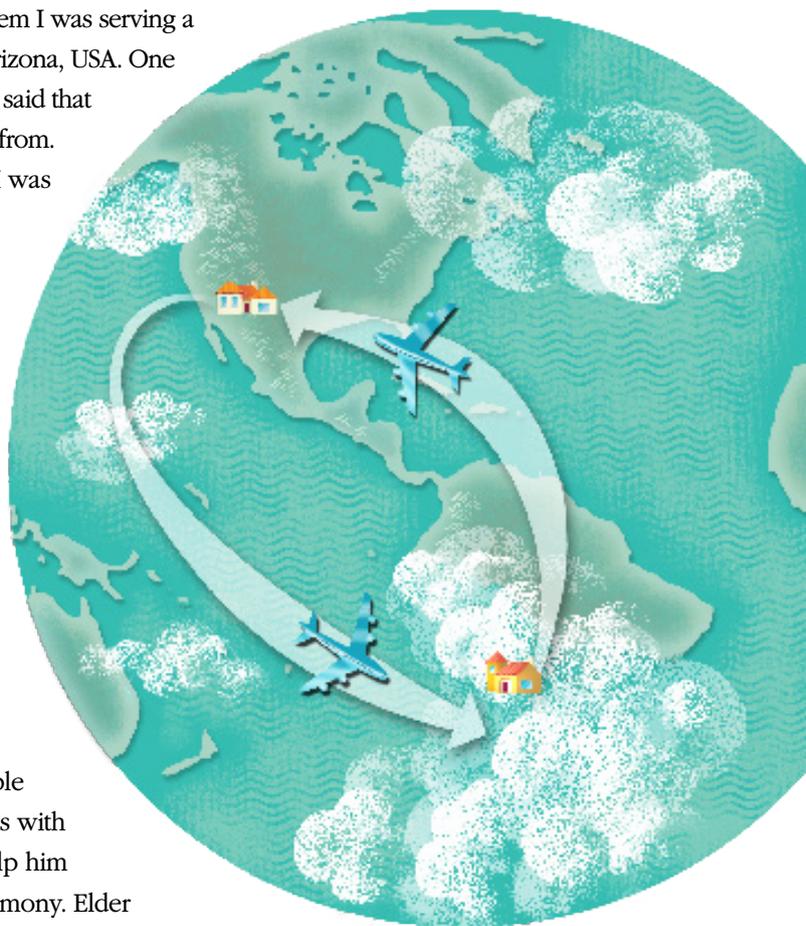
Soon after, I received an email from Natalia. She had found the missionaries and asked them to translate my letter. They read it silently and smiled. When Natalia asked what I had written, they replied, "Let's talk about it!" I had written that Natalia was struggling with the death of her daughter, and

I asked the missionaries to teach her about the plan of salvation.

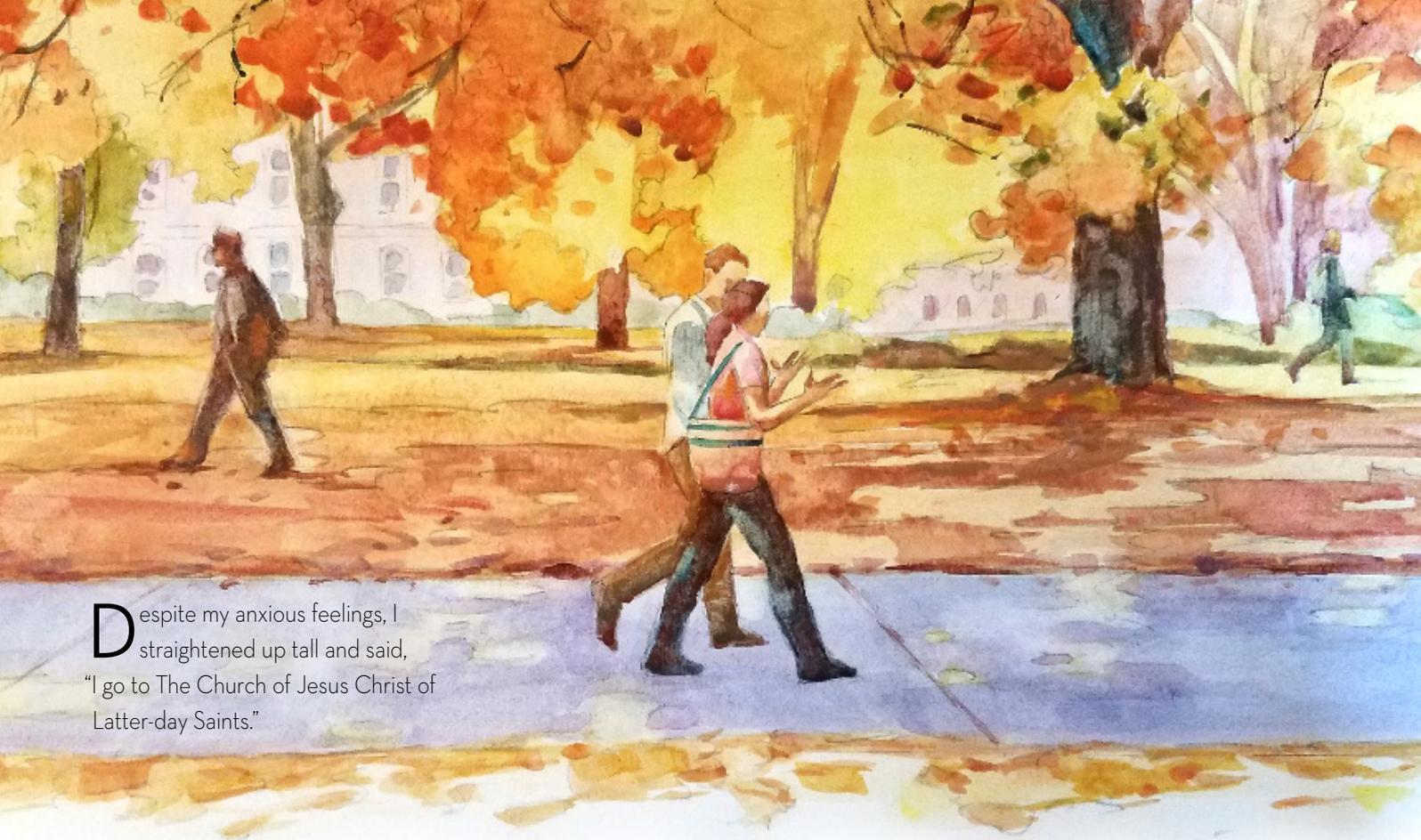
The missionaries shared a short message, and Natalia liked what they taught. Natalia then told them I was serving a mission in Mesa, Arizona, USA. One elder, Elder Larson, said that was where he was from.

One year later, I was transferred to the area where Elder Larson's family lived. I got to know his family as he got to know mine, and both families were blessed. Elder Larson had been praying for his younger brother, who was struggling with his testimony. I was able to go on exchanges with his brother and help him strengthen his testimony. Elder Larson and his companion continued to teach Natalia and eventually she was baptized. I know the Lord sent us in two directions, me to Arizona, and Elder Larson to Argentina, so we could both help Him strengthen our families in the gospel. ■

Juan Manuel Gomez, Rosario, Argentina



I am grateful I was assigned to Arizona and Elder Larson was assigned to Argentina so we could both help the Lord bless our families.



Despite my anxious feelings, I straightened up tall and said, “I go to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”

BLESSED FOR DECLARING MY FAITH

I was baptized when I was 19. Many of my family and friends did not accept my decision to join the Church, but that didn’t stop me. Two weeks later, I started my second year of college. When I got back to campus, I became nervous about my new faith.

I started to worry that I wouldn’t have the courage stand up for my religion. I felt alone. I had never met a member of the Church at college, and I didn’t know where to find a meetinghouse, or if there was even a ward or branch nearby. I prayed to Heavenly Father for courage. I prayed I would have confidence to stand up for my newfound beliefs.

A few days later, I helped some people move in. I met a young man

named Brian and we became friends. We were walking through campus one day when he asked me what my plans were for Sunday. I told him I was going to church.

“Oh, what church do you go to?” he asked.

Despite the anxious feeling in my stomach, I straightened up tall and said, “I go to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”

I was proud of myself! I was also nervous about how Brian would respond. Just then, I saw the missionaries. Before Brian said anything, I told him I would be right back. I ran over to the missionaries. They were happy to meet me and gave me all the details I needed to get to church the next day.

I went back to Brian and explained what had happened. I also shared a little bit about the Church with him, and we continued walking without much difference, except I now had a spring in my step. I also felt the warmth and peace only the Spirit can bring. I had been worried about being alone and not knowing where to go to church. But I believe that those missionaries arriving at that exact spot at that time was Heavenly Father’s way of blessing me for declaring my faith.

More than 10 years have gone by, and since that day I have never been afraid to say, “I’m a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints!” ■

Kristin McElderry, Massachusetts, USA

THE LORD'S HELP THROUGH TWO BRAIN SURGERIES

During physical therapy for back pain, I noticed that the left side of my body felt weak and numb. When I explained these symptoms to my physical therapist, he became concerned and encouraged me to see a doctor.

An MRI revealed that my brain had grown below my skull and had trapped spinal fluid in my neck for years. This caused severe and persistent headaches and pain. The only option was surgery. But despite the operation, I still experienced constant pain.

Six months later, I returned to my doctor for further tests only to discover that the trapped spinal fluid had grown even larger. I was terrified to undergo another painful operation. My husband and I sought several medical opinions and then moved forward with a doctor

who felt confident that removing part of my brain would help.

Recovering from my second brain surgery was the most painful experience of my life. I searched desperately for the Spirit to comfort me. I listened to talks and hymns, prayed continually, and received many priesthood blessings.

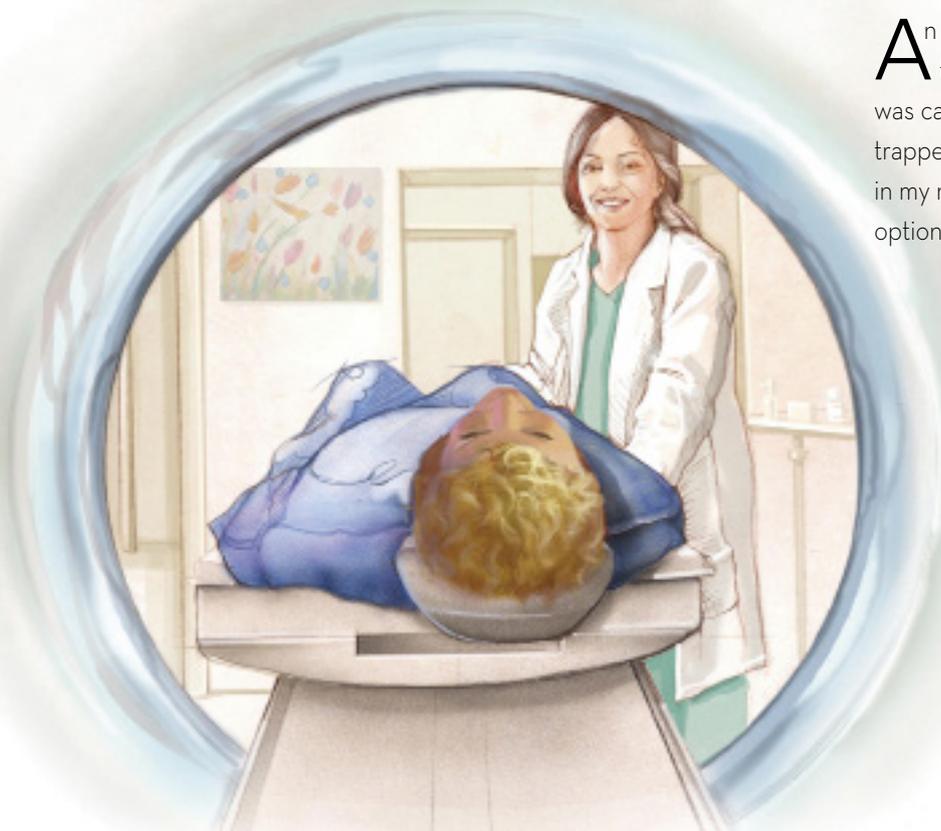
Through my painful recovery, I know that Heavenly Father heard my prayers and the prayers that others offered in my behalf. He sent people to me when I needed them. A nurse in my ward helped me learn how to manage my medications. My aunt and uncle, noticing signs of dehydration, took me to the hospital. And a Primary boy, wanting to help our family, left his toys on our doorstep for my son.

Through this experience and many others, I could feel the Savior bearing me up and my testimony growing stronger each day. This was a remarkable and sacred experience stemming from a truly painful one.

Although my second surgery was a success, my discomfort has continued, and I've had to learn to adjust to a life with chronic pain and trust that Heavenly Father has a purpose in it. But I have hope in His promise that He will continue to strengthen me in my challenges, as He said: "I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up" (D&C 84:88). ■

Bryn Booker, Idaho, USA

An MRI revealed that my pain was caused by trapped spinal fluid in my neck. The only option was surgery.





By Elder Michael
John U. Teh
Of the Seventy

The Balancing Act

of Endurance

I recently spoke to my children, nieces, and a young friend to gain a sense of the questions, challenges, frustrations, and triumphs young adults face today. I have pondered and prayed about what was shared with me and have summarized it into points that I now share in hopes that they may help answer some of those questions and challenges.

Listen to the Holy Ghost

Contrary to how some of you may feel at times, I declare that our Heavenly Father does answer our prayers in His way. Consider the following scriptures:

“For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened” (3 Nephi 14:8).

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:5).

“Behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart” (D&C 8:2).

How then do we receive answers and revelation? How do we know it's the Holy Ghost and not just our own thinking? I share two experiences in my life that have become patterns.

After Sister Teh and I dated for a little while, it became obvious that I wanted to spend eternity with her. Naturally, I made it a subject of earnest prayer and fasting. No particular change in my feeling followed. I did not feel a burning in my bosom. I did, however, continue to feel good about

I testify that we can “enjoy to the end” as we follow promptings from the Holy Ghost, choose good over evil, and balance our responsibilities.

my decision, so I persevered. Sister Teh got the same answer, so here we are. Since that experience, I have arrived at many of my decisions in a similar fashion (see D&C 6:22–23).

Contrast that with experiences I now have concerning specific



ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID GREEN

assignments from the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to call a new stake president. As I approach this assignment in the spirit of prayer and fasting, I have been blessed with distinct impressions that help me know who should be called. The impressions come sometimes before, sometimes during, or sometimes even after the interview process. I always feel a burning in my bosom. I have since recognized that as the way the Holy Ghost guides me in such assignments.

Why the difference in the way the Holy Ghost communicates with me? I do not know. The important thing is that I have learned to recognize these patterns as ways I receive personal revelation. I take comfort and confidence in the following admonition: “Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers” (D&C 112:10).

Choose Good over Evil

Some people think that it is becoming harder and harder to distinguish right from wrong. There appear to be more and more gray areas. Many of the incorrect but popular opinions of the day appear to make sense when viewed solely through a narrow lens. But old garbage covered with new

packaging and backed by creative advertising is still garbage.

Discerning between right and wrong need not be complicated. Even before we receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, we are blessed with the Light of Christ:

“For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God.

“But whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil; for after this manner doth the devil work, for he persuadeth no man to do good” (Moroni 7:16–17).

One of the greatest tests of our day is sustaining the living prophet. Most of us will say, “Oh, that’s easy. I already got that. Check.”

But it is amazing to see how some people who supposedly sustain the living prophet react to some of the popular opinions of the day. When faced with peer pressure, some of us act as if or form opinions that suggest that we don’t know there is a living prophet.

Find the Right Balance

Do you have so much to do that you feel you are being pulled in different directions? Guess what? It will only get worse. So the question is: How do you find the right balance?

Establish as your beacon the eternal nature of our spirits and your identity as a son or daughter of God. Focus your energy on that truth and what it means. Everything else will either drop out of your life or fall into its proper place.¹ Two scriptures can serve as guiding principles:

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” (3 Nephi 13:33).

“Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:20–21).



Believe it or not, I was once in your shoes. There was a point in my life when I had a full-time job, went to school at night, and had a second part-time job after school until the wee hours of the morning—while Sister Teh and I were raising our young family. I got only a couple of hours of sleep a few days a week for two months. On top of all that, I was serving in a ward bishopric.

That was one of the most productive times in my life. I don't think I have ever utilized 24 hours a day as efficiently as I did during that period.

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) reminded us that we have a responsibility to our family, to our employer, to the Lord, and to ourselves.

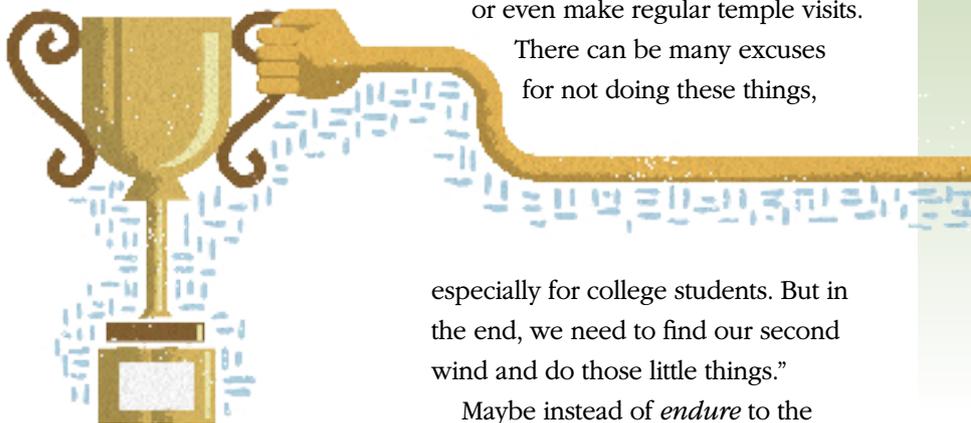
How do we balance those responsibilities? President Hinckley said: “I don't think that is difficult. I served in many capacities in this Church. I am the father of five children, who were young and growing up when I was serving in those various capacities. . . . We enjoyed life. We had family home evenings. We just did what the Church expected us to do.”²

Enjoy to the End

Enduring to the end is not about completing a gospel checklist and then saying: “I'm good. All I have to

do now is coast along and maintain it.” Rather, it is about continually learning and growing. The gospel of Jesus Christ is about constant repentance and change—it is an uphill climb rather than a stroll in the park.

King Benjamin said, “See that all these things are done in wisdom and order; for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength” (Mosiah 4:27).



Some Latter-day Saints embrace this passage as a justification for their unwillingness to try harder or do their best. The problem is they focus only on the first half of the passage.

Here is the second half: “It is expedient that he should be diligent, that thereby he might win the prize; therefore, all things must be done in order.” The two halves together clarify what it really means to do things in wisdom and order.

A young athlete friend introduced me to the phenomenon called *second wind*, which is a feeling of renewed energy that gives you strength to carry on even when you're tired.

As for finding a second wind in other aspects of his life, my friend says: “As a college student, it can be really easy to come home from a late night and make an excuse to be too tired to say prayers or read scriptures or even make regular temple visits.

There can be many excuses for not doing these things,

especially for college students. But in the end, we need to find our second wind and do those little things.”

Maybe instead of *endure* to the end, we can find our second wind—our spiritual wind—and *enjoy* to the end. I testify that we can do so as we follow promptings from the Holy Ghost, choose good over evil, and balance our responsibilities. ■

From a devotional address, “These Are Your Days,” delivered at Brigham Young University–Idaho on June 9, 2015. For the full address, go to web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches.

NOTES

1. See Ezra Taft Benson, “The Great Commandment—Love the Lord,” *Ensign*, May 1988, 4.
2. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 33.

Being Honest

with Myself—and with God

By Faith Sutherlin Blackhurst

About halfway through my mission, my companion and I were struggling to work well with our ward mission leader. There had been various disagreements, so we decided to talk to the bishop to see what we should do. Deep down, I hoped that the bishop would just have a talk with him and fix our problems for us.

But instead, the bishop had told me that I was being prideful and overly critical of others. I went stomping home feeling misunderstood and frustrated—how could he say that about me? Did he even care about our struggles to share the gospel?

As we walked, I vented my feelings to my companion. But suddenly a phrase came into my head: “The guilty taketh the truth to be hard” (1 Nephi 16:2). It stopped me in my tracks. It was obvious to me that the thought came from the Spirit. My pride may have prevented me from accepting the bishop’s

chastisement as truth—but could I really argue with the Holy Ghost?

I was guilty, and God was letting me know it.

Stomping Out Self-Justification

At that time, it was very tempting to ignore the things I was doing wrong. “None of us likes to admit when we are drifting off the right course,” agrees Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “. . . Consequently, when we do examine our lives, we look through the filter of biases, excuses, and stories we tell ourselves in order to justify unworthy thoughts and actions.”¹

In my case, I had convinced myself that I was complaining for the good of the missionary work in our area. And rather than accepting our ward mission leader’s faithful service—imperfect as it seemed to me—I suddenly saw that I was being ungrateful, impatient, and frankly, unkind. Because of the Spirit’s

My pride prevented me from accepting the bishop’s chastisement as truth—but could I really argue with the Holy Ghost?

prompting, I could see my actions for what they truly were.

A Spiritual Reality Check

Receiving such direct chastisement from the Spirit was painful, but in the best way. It made me realize that I had to be honest with myself about my flaws.

I knew firsthand that the Spirit could be my greatest ally in the



weaknesses in humility, God can help me turn them into strengths through His grace (see Ether 12:27, 1 Peter 5:5).

After all, honestly acknowledging our weaknesses—or seeing ourselves as we truly are—is the first step on the path to positive change. As I continue to be honest and seek guidance from the Spirit, my Heavenly Father will help me know what needs to change in my life. And as I rely on Jesus Christ, His Atonement, and His refining power, I will see improvement in myself.

Although it was unpleasant to admit my mistakes in that moment of chastisement, I know that when I choose to be humble and honest with myself and with God, I am happier and more accepting of myself. I know that despite my flaws, I am of divine worth to my Heavenly Father—but He still wants me to improve. Through the power of His Son Jesus Christ and sincere repentance, I can become so much better than I ever dreamed I could be. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Lord, Is It I?” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 58.
2. Larry R. Lawrence, “What Lack I Yet?” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 35.
3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Lord, Is It I?” 58.

process. I felt that Elder Larry R. Lawrence of the Seventy spoke directly to me when he invited Church members to “humbly ask the Lord the following question: ‘What is keeping me from progressing?’ . . . If you are sincere,” he said, “the answer will soon become clear. It will be revelation intended just for you.”² I knew that I had the power to not only receive promptings

about my weaknesses but also improve them.

From Weakness to Strength

My experience taught me that “if [my] weaknesses and shortcomings remain obscured in the shadows, then the redeeming power of the Savior cannot heal them and make them strengths.”³

However, if I am brave enough to be vulnerable and admit my

WILL RELIEF SOCIETY BE BORING?

I was super nervous to join Relief Society, but because of how they welcomed me, I learned to love it.

By Charlotte Larcabal

Church Magazines

When I turned 18, I was definitely happy about it. What teenager isn't? Sure, I was still in high school, still had acne, and still had to do chores around our family's house in California, USA, but I was an adult. I was entering a whole new stage of life, and I was excited about it. What I wasn't exactly excited about was the idea of being with all the "old ladies" in Relief Society. They had kids and careers and Crock-Pots and probably liked to bake pies in house slippers. I had homework and swim meets and blue nail polish and liked to avoid cleaning my room for as long as possible. How could I possibly relate to anyone there? I was sure it was going to be awkward, lonely, and boring. And then I went.

First of all, Relief Society wasn't at all boring. There was a ton of smiling and laughter. They shared interesting and heartfelt comments, but they weren't afraid to laugh either. Second of all, they weren't that different from me. Sure, they were older than me, but they were joking around with each other the same way my

friends and I did. More than once, someone asked the exact question I had been wondering. And when they announced the enrichment meeting that week, I was shocked. They were learning self-defense! I wanted to do that!

I was super nervous when Sister Larsen, the Relief Society president, asked me to stand and introduce myself, but that wasn't bad either. Everyone was beaming at me. Sister Edwards, my sophomore seminary teacher, gave me a thumbs-up, and Sister Richards, who remembered me from Primary, said she couldn't believe I was already "all grown up." And they really treated me like I was "all grown up." I felt like a little kid playing dress-up, but to most of the women that day, I was a new sister.

Since then, I've loved Relief Society, no matter what ward I'm in. As soon as I walk into a Relief Society room, I can feel it: that sisterly bond and sense of belonging. I love doing my best to uplift my Relief Society sisters and learning all I can from them.

And as it turns out, I'm pretty good at baking pies. ■





“Cherish one another, watch over one another, comfort one another and gain instruction, that we may all sit down in heaven together.”

—Lucy Mack Smith, mother of the Prophet Joseph Smith (in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* [2011], 25).

WHAT EXACTLY IS RELIEF SOCIETY?

The Relief Society was founded by the Prophet Joseph Smith on March 17, 1842, in Nauvoo, Illinois. The organization has two main purposes: to provide relief for the poor and needy and to bring people to Christ. Relief Society continues today, as one of the largest women’s organizations in the world. Sisters meet together on Sunday and in other settings as needed.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN RELIEF SOCIETY

- A group of women who will love you and support you.
- The opportunity to love and serve other women as a visiting teacher.
- Sunday lessons and other gatherings that will help you in your personal life and provide opportunities to serve and develop your roles as a woman, daughter, sister, aunt, and/or mother.

MY FIRST DAY

IN ELDERS QUORUM

I was young and a brand new elder. What did I have to offer to elders quorum? Turns out, a lot!



“It is a duty which every Saint ought to render to his brethren freely—to always love them, and ever succor them. . . . We must visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction.”

—Joseph Smith (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 426)

By Dallin Luedtke

I wasn't exactly nervous to join elders quorum because I felt like I knew what to expect. I also knew everyone in my ward's elders quorum. They were my friends' dads and men I already looked up to as mentors. I knew they were happy to help me understand things, so it wasn't nerve-racking to join them in elders quorum.

What was a little nerve-racking was contributing to the lessons. At first it was hard to think that I could offer anything to men who had so much more life experience and so much more wisdom than I did.

It Was Different, Yet the Same

Elders quorum is definitely different from priests quorum. Instead of a bunch of guys your age, you're suddenly with adults. The first couple times I went, I didn't really say anything. I worried that I was too young and didn't know enough to contribute.

But the more I've been going, the more comfortable I've become, and the more I've come to realize that no matter how old you are, everybody has something to contribute. Everyone has different experiences with the gospel and everyone has different levels of understanding of different principles.

I Had Something to Share

One time we were talking about the Savior's Atonement, and I raised

my hand. I just told how thanks to His Atonement, Jesus Christ not only frees us but can also help us become closer to Himself and to God. I talked about my relationship with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and how it has been strengthened as my understanding of the Atonement has grown. After class, a man came up to me and thanked me for my comments. He told me he had never thought about things the way I had said them and really appreciated my insight.

Home Teaching Is Cool!

In elders quorum, you don't just learn from a teacher; you also learn from the Spirit and everyone else in the quorum. All that perspective helps you gain greater insight into the things that you are taught. And that helps you be a better servant of the Lord. For example, since I've become an elder, I've started liking home teaching a lot more! I think I take it a little more seriously because I know that when I'm a missionary in a few months, I'll be visiting people and sharing gospel messages with them just like I do when I home teach. Instead of just sitting there and letting my companion do all the teaching, I've started preparing for our visits. I make sure to speak up. I know it's good preparation for my mission, but it has also made home teaching become more meaningful to me. I

WHAT TO EXPECT IN ELDERS QUORUM

- Sunday lessons where quorum members share insights and perspectives that will strengthen your testimony of Jesus Christ and His gospel and will help you prepare for your future roles as a husband, father, and priesthood leader.
- The opportunities to give priesthood service will bless your life and strengthen the bonds between you and your fellow quorum members.
- You will be part of a quorum where you will be supported as you learn your new responsibilities as a Melchizedek Priesthood holder.

now have a greater appreciation for the people in my ward and the people I home teach.

If I Can Do It, You Can Do It

You don't need to be intimidated by elders quorum, but you can definitely look forward to hear more wisdom about the topics you're learning about. You can look forward to becoming a better teacher, leader, and servant of the Lord. And that is so cool! ■

The author lives in California, USA.

Extra Help

By Allie Arnell

I descended at my own pace. Five feet (1.5 m) . . . I felt a current jostle me. Now ten feet. Suddenly it became dark. I felt my breaths shorten. This freezing, murky ocean was nothing like the pool we had practiced in. Scared and claustrophobic, I darted up to the water's surface.

"What happened?" the instructor's assistant asked me. Tears welled up inside my mask. I was in the middle of my scuba-diving certification exam, performing a 30-foot (9 m) descent, one of the necessary skills to pass the exam. The assistant saw my panic and assured me I would be OK. He was encouraging, yet not prodding. At one point he told me, "You don't have to do this." It was then I realized that I wanted to.

I realized that although this was hard for me, I wanted to accomplish it; I wanted to gain my certification. So I bridled my fear and completed the remaining skills with the class to pass the exam. It was hard, but with some encouragement I was able to do it.

Months later when I was serving as a missionary in Peru, I was reminded of my difficult scuba-diving experience as I invited people

to strengthen their faith and change their lives. One family my companion and I especially loved to visit was the Rumays. Carina and Enrique and their two teenage daughters, Karen and Nicole, welcomed us often and quickly stole our hearts. It wasn't long before Carina, Karen, and Nicole accepted the gospel and joined the church.

Enrique, however, needed a bit of extra help. Our message differed from what his upbringing had exposed him to, so it took us a while to earn

his trust. Enrique had various concerns. The main aspect of the gospel that troubled him was the Book of Mormon. He had never heard of this book and had a hard time reading and understanding it. Its unfamiliarity made Enrique feel unsure.

At that point, Enrique was like me when I swam back up to the water's surface: everyone else seemed to be descending with ease, while I was frozen with fear. Also like me, all that Enrique needed to be successful was some extra help.



On your mission, you might meet investigators who need someone at their side, willing to dive into the process with them.

This help came to him in various forms. He had missionaries to help him address his concerns and feel the Spirit. He also had ward members who fellowshiped him and taught him about his role as a father. The biggest help of all, though, was Enrique's own family.

Even before their baptism, the Rumays made a habit of holding family prayer and scripture study. They got Enrique a set of scriptures with larger text and an audio version so that he could study the Book of Mormon more easily. These simple efforts helped Enrique immensely. At no time did anyone pressure him; they simply supported him. Through their actions, they told him, "We know you can do this."

This help allowed Enrique discover for himself the power of the Book of Mormon. One day he announced that he had listened to the entire book and that he knew it was the word of God. About four months after the baptism of his wife and daughters, Enrique took the same step and was baptized too.

Enrique says he's thankful for the help and patience he received that allowed him to reach where he is today. As a missionary, I felt blessed to have witnessed this family's

example of love as they helped their husband and father overcome his doubts. I was also grateful that I had my challenging scuba-diving experience that allowed me to relate in a small way to how Enrique felt and how other investigators might feel during the conversion process.

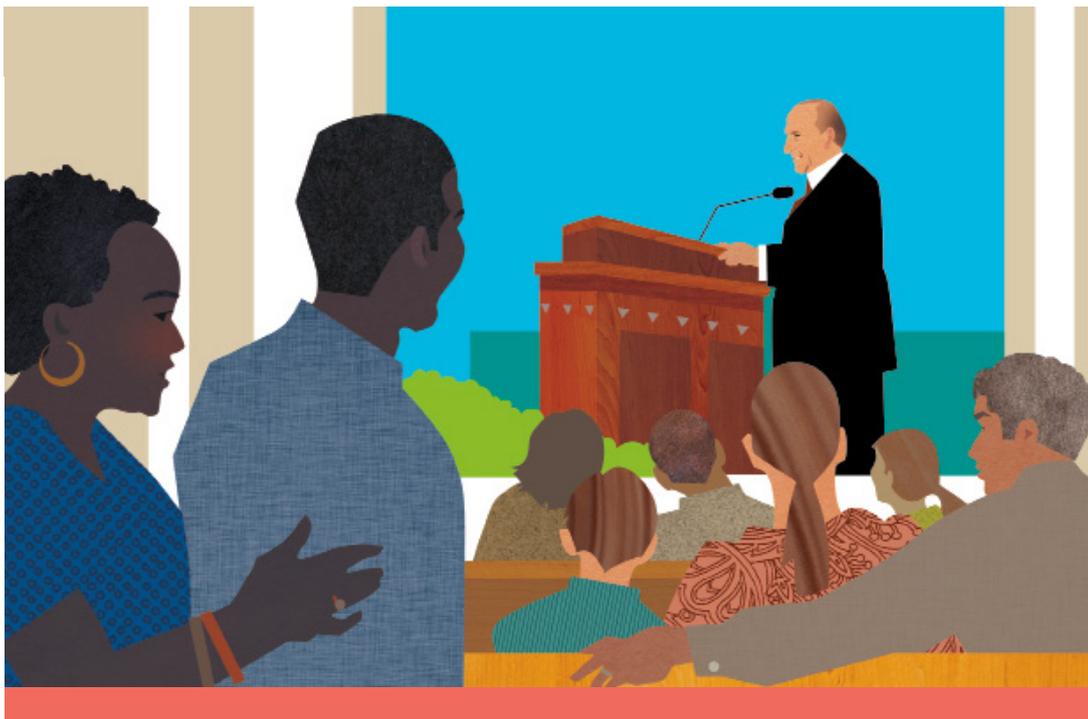
As you invite people to repent and change on your mission, remember that sometimes all people need to be successful is some extra

encouragement. They might need someone trusted and experienced at their side saying, "It's going to be OK. I know you can do it. I really believe in you." They might be hoping that you'll be that person who is willing to dive into the process with them, help them master new habits and skills, and help them gain their certification, which is ultimately the approval of the Lord. ■

The author lives in Iowa, USA.



OUR SPACE



TOUCHED BY THE WORDS OF A LIVING PROPHET

WHEN I WAS 15 YEARS OLD, I spotted two missionaries in front of a supermarket. One of them invited me to come to church. I wasn't very interested, so I told them, "Maybe someday," and walked away.

The next day, my aunt called and asked my mother to come to her house to hear a special message. My mother and I ran over and saw the same missionaries I had seen the day before sitting in my aunt's house! My mother was interested by their message, and I started listening as well. However, when the missionaries asked me if I believed in a living prophet, I responded with a resolute no. One of the elders held up a picture of Thomas S. Monson and testified that President Monson was a prophet. They invited me to come to general conference the next day to decide for myself. Curious, I agreed to come.

The next day, we reached the chapel just as the opening prayer was finishing. As I walked into the room, I saw President Monson come onto the screen. He smiled and said, "My dear brothers and sisters, I greet you . . ."

As soon as President Monson opened his mouth, a strong feeling swept over me, confirming that he was a prophet of God. At the end of conference, I told the missionaries, "I want to be baptized." I have since served a mission myself and have taught many others the wonderful truths of the restored gospel.

I know that God has blessed us by calling prophets again. God loves us and speaks to us through modern-day prophets. ■

Maicon B., São Paulo, Brazil

How can we sustain prophets and apostles?

1. Pray for a testimony that God called them as His prophets to teach the world (see Jeremiah 1:5, 7).
2. Love them and pray for them.
3. Support them, even when it's unpopular.
4. Study their teachings and their examples.
5. Follow them. Believe what they say, and strive to do what they teach (see D&C 21:4-6).

I AM NOT ASHAMED

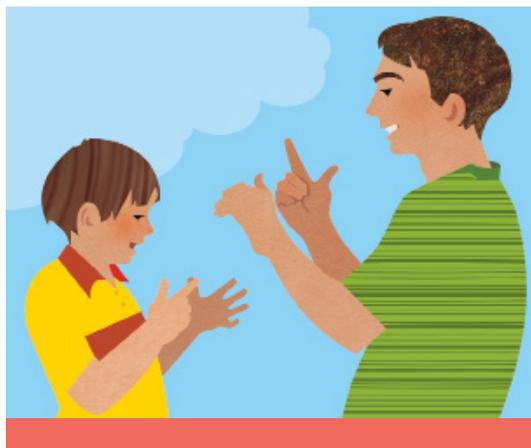
WHILE ATTENDING A BOARDING SCHOOL, I lived in a hostel with other students. I tried my best to live the principles of the gospel by praying and studying the scriptures often.

One day a classmate noticed me studying the Book of Mormon on my bed. She began to angrily list all the ways she thought that my church was false. She then told everyone else in the hostel about my “strange” beliefs. Some classmates began to mock me and my religion; others just avoided me. I finally hid my Book of Mormon under a box of my clothes and studied only the Bible so my classmates would stop taunting me.

I went on studying the Bible until I came across Romans 1:16, which proclaims: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” I realized that by hiding the Book of Mormon, I was showing my classmates that I was ashamed of my beliefs. I retrieved my Book of Mormon and asked Heavenly Father for forgiveness. Then I went to my peers and bore my testimony of the restored gospel. Most of them stopped insulting me and became my friends again.

I know that God understands the trials we pass through. When we stand up for our beliefs and show that we are “not ashamed of the gospel of Christ,” He will provide us with His power, protection, and direction. ■

Pamela O., Abuja, Nigeria



SERVICE THROUGH SIGNING

WHEN I WAS SIX MONTHS OLD, my first sign was “milk” and, several weeks later, I verbally said “panda.” I am capable of hearing, yet my first language was American Sign Language. My mom had served an ASL mission and then continued to study sign language in school, and she wanted me to know it too.

Sign language has been an incredible blessing in my life. It’s allowed me to see and learn so much more than I would have without it. It brings people together. I love being able to teach people what I know through one-on-one teaching and giving presentations in school and in church. It’s also really fun to watch general conference and other Church videos in sign language with my mom.

Having sign language in my life has been an incredible testimony builder. I am able to get to know more children of God than I would without it, and it’s also a great tool to use as a service for others. I am grateful for this blessing in my life and for the amazing people I have been able to meet and learn from. ■

Israel H., Oregon, USA



PAGE AFTER PAGE SAYS WE BELIEVE

When my classmate said that Mormons don't believe in Christ, I decided to read the Book of Mormon in a whole new way.

By **Richard M. Romney**
Church Magazines

“Mormons aren't Christians.” The statement from one of my high school classmates caught me off guard.

“Of course we are,” I said.

“Then why do you read the Book of Mormon?” he said as he walked away, leaving me no chance to reply.

I thought about his question a lot. The answer is, of course, that Mormons *are* Christians and the Book of Mormon *is* another testament of Jesus Christ. We read it along with the Bible to learn even more about the Savior.

I had read the Book of Mormon before. I knew it was true. But because of my classmate's question, I felt prompted to study it in a new way, keeping track of how often it mentions Jesus Christ. As I did, I was amazed.

I had hardly opened the book when I read on the title page that the Book of Mormon is written to convince readers “that Jesus is the Christ,

the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations.”

In the introduction to the Book of Mormon, I read, “The crowning event recorded in the Book of Mormon is the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ among the Nephites soon after His resurrection.” It said that those who gain a witness from the Holy

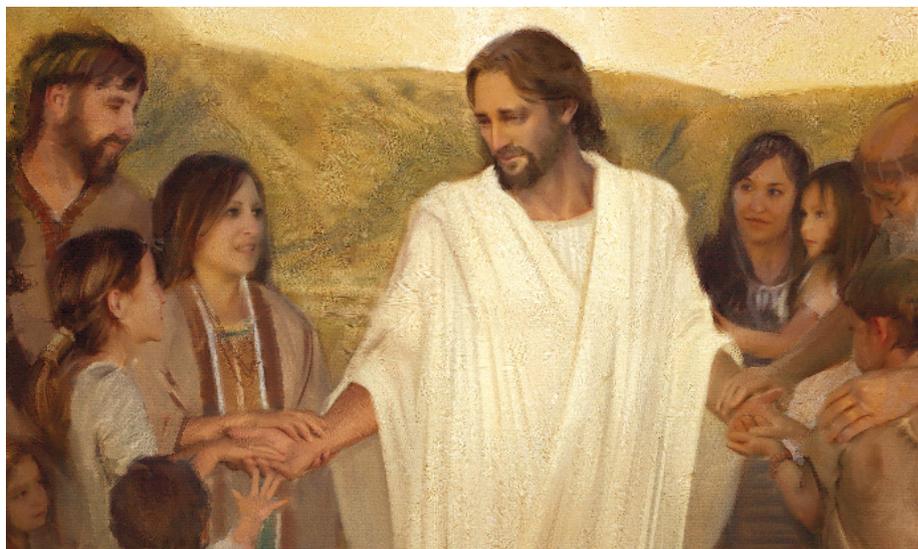
Ghost that the record is true “will also come to know by the same power that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world.”

I turned to “The Testimony of Three Witnesses,” who said that an angel showed them the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated, and that “we know that it is by the



YOUR OWN SEARCH

As you study the Book of Mormon, it's easy to learn about Jesus Christ. You can make notes as you read or use study helps like the Guide to the Scriptures, which lists many Book of Mormon references to Jesus Christ. The Book of Mormon truly is another testament of Jesus Christ.



grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true.”

Next, “The Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith” told of the visit of angel Moroni, who said the Book of Mormon contains the fulness of the everlasting gospel “as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants” of America.

I hadn’t even made it to 1 Nephi, and already I had found a lot!

My search continued. In 1 Nephi, I found that Lehi knew about the coming of the Messiah (see 1 Nephi 1:19). I read his prophecies about the Redeemer, “who should take away the sins of the world” (1 Nephi 10:10; see verses 4–10). I read Nephi’s description of the birth of Jesus Christ, His ministry, death, Resurrection, and future visit to ancient America (see 1 Nephi 10–12).

I read prophecies that the Book of Mormon would affirm Bible truths that “the Lamb of God is the Son of the

Eternal Father, and the Savior of the world; and that all men must come unto him” (1 Nephi 13:40). And I read Nephi’s testimony that “all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people shall dwell safely in the Holy One of Israel if it so be that they will repent” (1 Nephi 22:28).

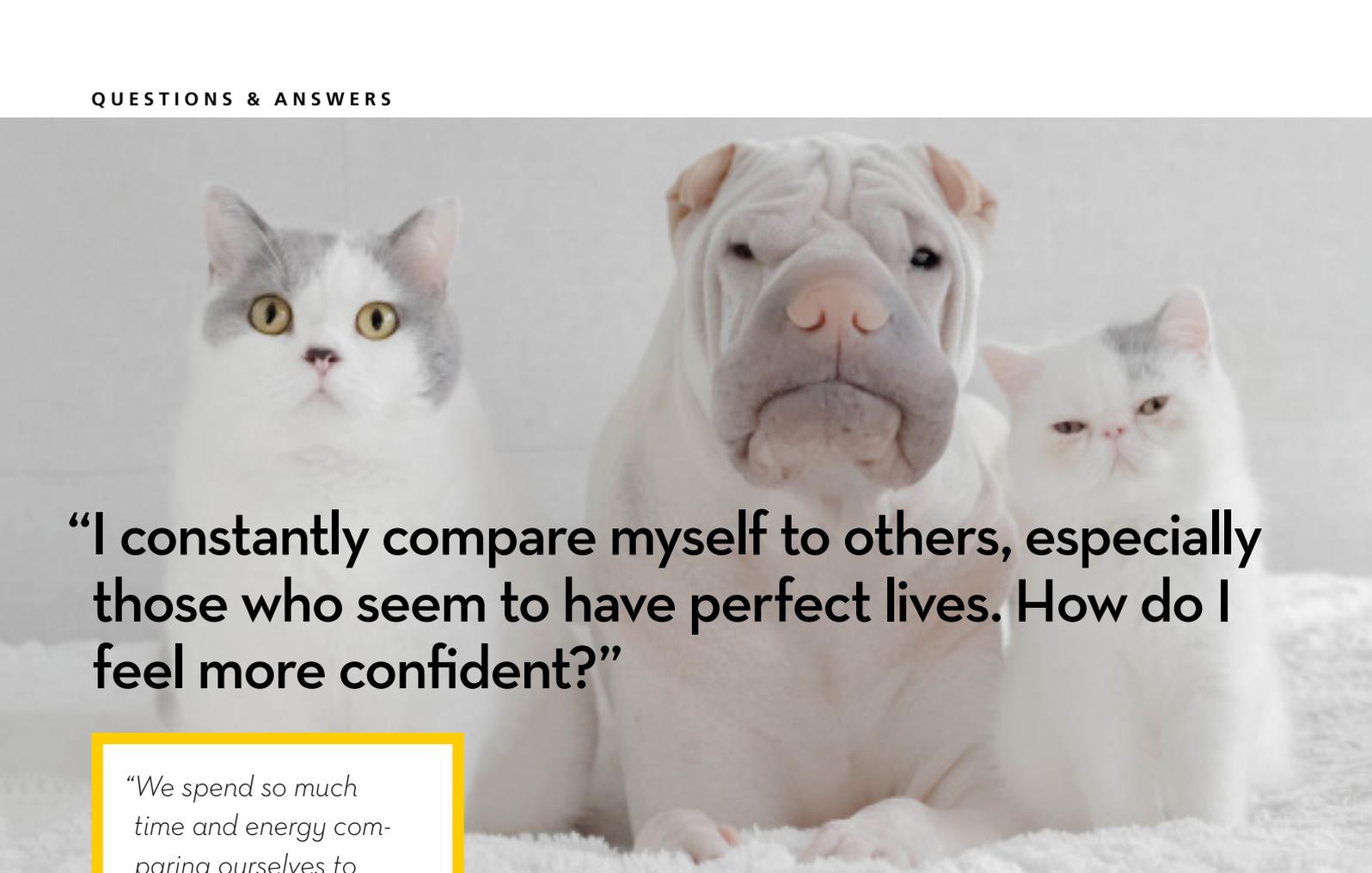
After one day, I was on page 53. I had finished just *one* of the books in the Book of Mormon, but what powerful witnesses I had already received!

In the weeks that followed, I found page after page of testimonies of Jesus Christ, visions in which He appeared to prophets, and the detailed description of His ministry among the ancient Americans. I concluded my reading with Moroni’s powerful testimony of Jesus Christ (see Moroni 9); his challenge to, “ask God, the Eternal Father,

in the name of Christ, if [the Book of Mormon is] true” (Moroni 10:4; emphasis added); and, on the last page, his tender and compelling invitation to “come unto Christ” (Moroni 10:30, 32).

I found that the Book of Mormon refuted my classmate’s statement completely. If a Christian is someone who believes in Jesus Christ, then page after page in the Book of Mormon says, “We believe!”

Eventually, I saw my friend again. I told him about my experience and invited him to read the Book of Mormon. He politely declined but said he was happy that I accept Jesus Christ as my Savior. And after our discussion, I think he understood better what I mean when I say, “Of course we are Christians.” ■



“I constantly compare myself to others, especially those who seem to have perfect lives. How do I feel more confident?”

*“We spend so much time and energy comparing ourselves to others. . . . This drives us to create expectations for ourselves that are impossible to meet. . . .
“... [God] wants us to become perfect, and if we stay on the path of discipleship, one day we will. It’s OK that you’re not quite there yet. Keep working on it, but stop punishing yourself.”*

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Forget Me Not,” Oct. 2011 general conference.



Pray to Know Your Gifts

You have so many talents and spiritual gifts that Heavenly Father has

given you personally. There are ways that only you can bless other people’s lives. This is Heavenly Father’s plan. Pray to know what gifts you have been given, and if you need more guidance, ask those close to you. By listening to the Spirit and striving to discover and develop your talents and divine qualities, you can find confidence in yourself that you may have never found before.

Amy P., age 17, Kentucky, USA



Get to Know Them Better

Whenever I find that I am comparing myself to someone else, I try to get

to know that person a little bit better. When I become acquainted with my “idol,” the reality hits hard that every human being on earth faces trials in their life. The more I talk to that person, the more I begin to view them as a friend and not someone who is seemingly flawless.

Amelia C., age 15, Idaho, USA



Only Heavenly Father's Opinion Matters

In his October 2016 conference address "Am I Good Enough? Will I Make It?"

Elder J. Devn Cornish of the Seventy says, "The only opinion of us that matters is what our Heavenly Father thinks of us. Please sincerely ask Him what He thinks of you. He will love and correct but never discourage us." When I think I will never be as good as the people around me, I turn to my Heavenly Father and try to remember that I am the daughter of a loving God who is willing to help me reach my full potential and be who He knows I can be if I seek Him.

Amanda M., age 19, Paran, Brazil

Pray for Confidence

I used to compare myself to others who I thought were far ahead of me, particularly people who were more financially stable. Whenever I prayed to Heavenly Father, He gave me confidence in myself. I knew that no matter the challenge, God would help me because He does not give us a duty save it be that He prepares way for us to accomplish it (see 1 Nephi 3:7; 17:3).

Joshua O., age 19, Lagos, Nigeria

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as official pronouncements of Church doctrine.



What is the gift of discernment?

The scriptures talk about the "discerning of spirits" as a gift of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:10; D&C 46:23). It means "to understand or know something through the power of the Spirit. . . . It includes perceiving the true character of people and the source and meaning of spiritual manifestations" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Discernment, Gift of," scriptures.lds.org).

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught that the gift of discernment can help us (1) "detect hidden error and evil in others," (2) "detect hidden errors and evil in ourselves," (3) "find and bring forth the good that may be concealed in others," and (4) "find and bring forth the good that may be concealed in us" ("Quick to Observe," *Ensign*, Dec. 2006, 35; *Liahona*, Dec. 2006, 19).

What Do You Think?

"How do I keep my electronics from distracting me, especially at church and seminary?"

Submit your answer and, if desired, a high-resolution photograph by July 15, 2018, at liahona.lds.org (click "Submit an Article or Feedback").

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

DISCOVER YOUR

By Justina Lichner

It seems everybody always says, “If you only knew how great you are.” Well, the truth is, sometimes you just don’t know how great you are. When we don’t feel like the smartest, the nicest, the best looking, the funniest, and the most talented, our self-assurance seems to disappear.

But think about this: we are all sons and daughters of Heavenly Father. As such, He has given us unique gifts and talents to help us fulfill our divine potential. As we discover these gifts, we are reminded of our divine worth as His children, and we are able to draw closer to Him and help others do the same.

DISCOVER YOUR GIFTS

Here are nine ideas to help you discover some of your not-so-obvious gifts.

1. Ask others to let you know.

Sometimes we don’t see in ourselves what others can see in us. Ask a friend, relative, or Church leader to write you a note about a gift or talent they see in you.

2. Look for gifts in adversity. During hard times we can choose between letting our best qualities or our worst qualities come out. When times are tough, focus on discovering and using your best qualities and gifts.

3. Pray for the help to recognize

your gifts. Heavenly Father knows our divine potential. If we have a difficult time seeing that in ourselves, He can help. You can pray for help to recognize your gifts.

4. Don’t be afraid to branch out.

Do we only develop the gifts that we already know we have because we’re too afraid to do something we haven’t done before? Now’s the time to try something new and discover unknown gifts.

5. Search the word of God. Heavenly Father helps us discover and develop our gifts through clues found in the

scriptures—usually through invitations to act. Take this scripture for example: “Cease to contend one with another; cease to speak evil one of another” (D&C 136:23). What gifts could you develop from this invitation? The gift of speaking kind words, the gift to calm others, the gift of restraint, and more. And that’s just from one verse! Reading the scriptures and listening to the promptings of the Spirit can help you discover your gifts.

6. Look outside yourself. Sometimes our best qualities come out when we’re not focusing on ourselves but focusing instead on how we can work with and help others. When we do that, we’ll see that we have many Christlike gifts.

7. Think about people you look up to. Who are some of your role models? You can make a list of all of the gifts your role models have and, instead of focusing on which gifts you don’t have in common, celebrate discovering the ones you do.

8. Reflect on your family. What gifts do you have that your siblings, parents,

GIFTS

or grandparents have too? Go further! Research family history, discover stories, and identify even more gifts you share with your family.

9. Receive or read your patriarchal blessing. Your blessing could talk about gifts you have and should develop, and it could also point you to the path that will lead to the discovery of other new gifts and talents.

BE PERFECTED IN HIM

We don't have to be the best at everything to know we're worthwhile children of God. We just need to be dedicated to discovering and developing our gifts and talents—then, through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can become perfect in Him (see Moroni 10:32). ■

The author lives in Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany.



THE DESIRE TO DISCOVER

"I know our Heavenly Father has many gifts and talents that He wishes to bestow upon us, but they 'are made conditional on our asking for them. Blessings require some work or effort on our part' (Bible Dictionary, 'Prayer')."

Elder Mervyn B. Arnold of the Seventy, "Where Am I? How to Discover and Develop Your Spiritual Gifts and Talents," *Liahona*, Dec. 2014, 61; *New Era*, Dec. 2014, 37.

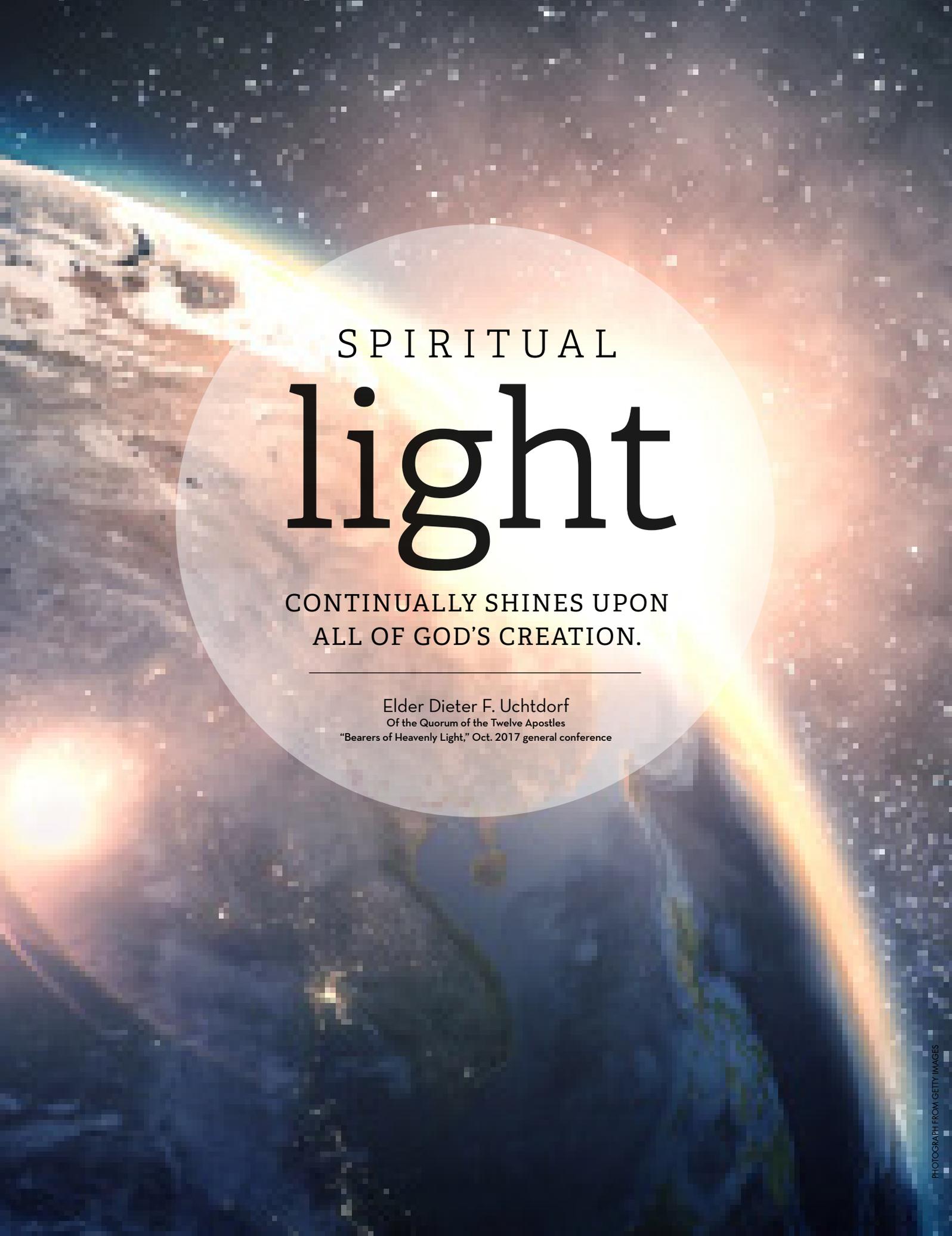
HELP OTHERS DISCOVER GIFTS

We see things in others that they may not be able to see in themselves. This week share those things with a friend or family member. Here are some questions to ask yourself that can help you discover others' gifts.

1. What is something they've done to help you?
2. What do you like about them?
3. What are they good at?
4. What are they trying to get better at?

CARING

PONDERING

A cosmic scene featuring a bright, glowing light source, possibly a star or galaxy core, with a planet's horizon visible in the foreground. The background is filled with stars and nebulae, creating a sense of vastness and light.

SPIRITUAL
light

CONTINUALLY SHINES UPON
ALL OF GOD'S CREATION.

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
"Bearers of Heavenly Light," Oct. 2017 general conference

The Light Is Always There

By Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

During my flights as an airline captain across our planet earth, I was always fascinated by the beauty and perfection of God's creation. I found especially captivating the relationship between the earth and the sun. I consider it a profound object lesson of how darkness and light exist.

As we all know, within every 24 hours night turns to day and day turns to night.

So, then, what is night?

Night is nothing more than a shadow.

Even in the darkest of nights, the sun does not cease to radiate its light. It continues to shine as bright as ever. But half of the earth is in darkness.

The absence of light causes darkness.

When the darkness of night falls, we do not despair and worry that the sun is extinguished. We do not postulate that the sun is not there or is dead. We understand that we are in a shadow, that the earth will continue to rotate, and that eventually the rays of the sun will reach us once again.

Darkness is not an indication that there is no light. Most often, it simply

means we're not in the right place to receive the light.

Spiritual light continually shines upon all of God's creation.

It is up to us to be in the right place to see the divine light and truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Even when night has fallen and the world seems dark, we can choose to walk in Christ's light, keep His commandments, and courageously testify of His reality and His greatness.

Every time you turn your hearts to God in humble prayer, you experience His light. Every time you seek His word and will in the scriptures, the light grows in brightness. Every time you notice someone in need and sacrifice your own comfort to reach out in love, the light expands and swells. Every time you reject temptation and choose purity, every time you seek or extend forgiveness, every time you courageously testify of truth, the light chases away darkness and attracts others who are also seeking light and truth. ■

From an October 2017 general conference address, when Elder Uchtdorf was Second Counselor in the First Presidency.



Born in **Ostrava, Czechoslovakia,**
on November 6, 1940



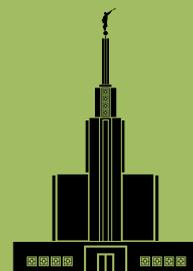
He started attending church in 1947 in Zwickau, Germany.

Sustained as a member of the **Quorum of the Twelve Apostles**
on October 2, 2004



As a boy, he and his family were **refugees,** fleeing from Czechoslovakia to Germany and then from East Germany to West Germany.

Married Harriet Reich in 1962 in the **Bern Switzerland Temple**



He worked for **Lufthansa German Airlines** as a pilot.

He became a captain at age 29.

SHINE YOUR LIGHT

Showing Her Love

HELLO!
My name is Love.
I shine my light by
showing love to
my family.

About Me

I live in Nigeria. That's a country in Africa. I live with my parents and my brothers. My favorite song is "Children All over the World." My favorite scripture is 1 Nephi 3:7.

Close to the Temple

We live very close to the Aba Nigeria Temple. It only takes five minutes to walk there! I feel so glad when I visit the temple. I'm preparing for the time when I can go inside to do baptisms.



The Best Place to Be

On Mondays, I remind my brothers about family home evening. I like it when my dad cooks dinner and we all dance together. Home is the best place to be.

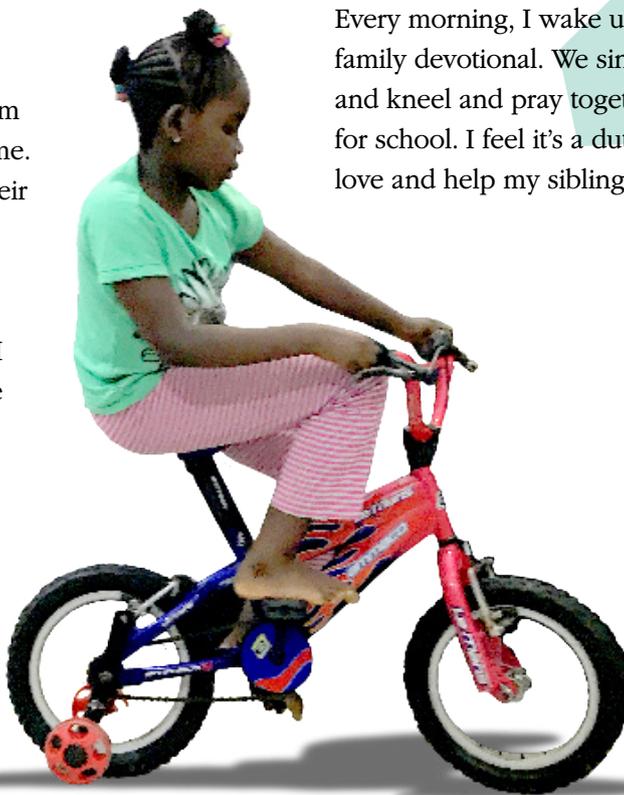


Helping My Brothers

Every morning, I wake up my younger brothers for our family devotional. We sing hymns, study the scriptures, and kneel and pray together. Then I help them get ready for school. I feel it's a duty I owe my Heavenly Father to love and help my siblings.

Work and Play

After school I help my mum with work around our home. I help my brothers with their school assignments too. I don't have much time to play, but I love riding my bicycle and making kites. I feel Heavenly Father's love when I show love to my family.



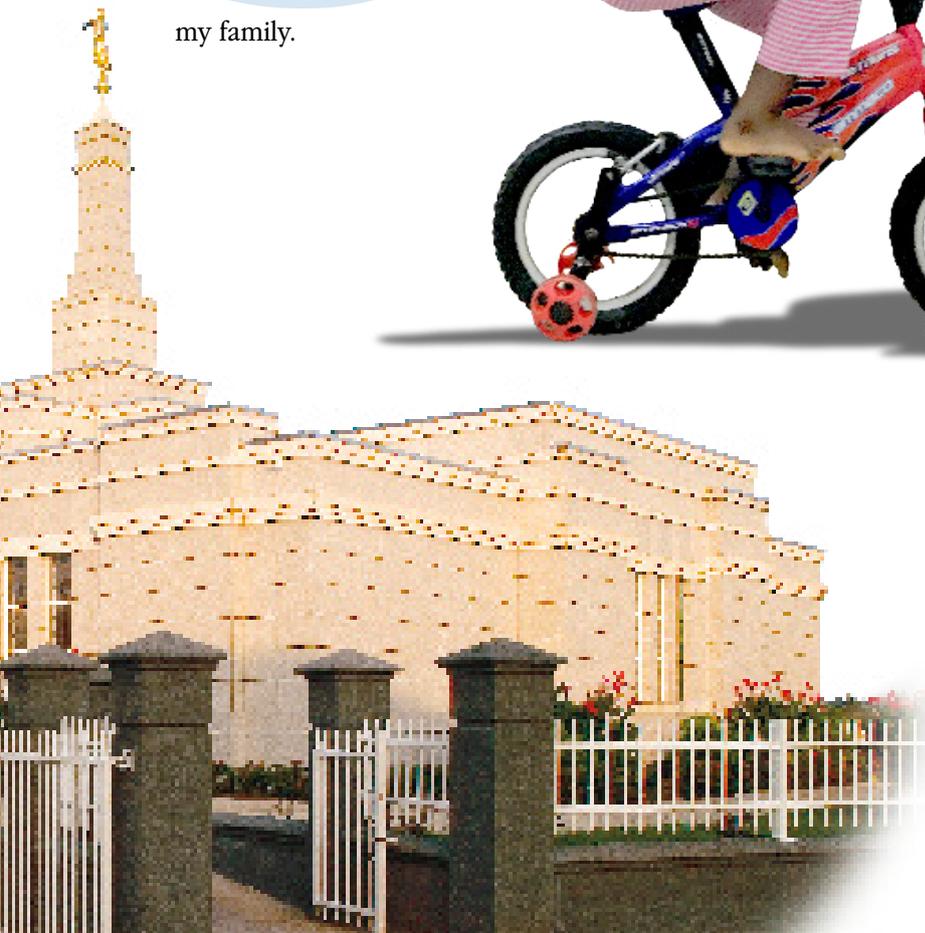
HOW CAN YOU SHINE?

- Read to a brother or sister.
- Ask your mum or dad how you can help.
- Remind your family about family prayer.

SEND US A STAR!

Jesus asked us to "let [our] light shine before men" (Matthew 5:16). How do you let your light shine?

Email us a photo of your star with your story, photo, and parent's permission at liahona@ldschurch.org.



*“Whenever I am good and kind and help someone I see,
I feel so very happy, for then I’m helping me”*
(Children’s Songbook, 197).

Anton watched as the computer screen loaded level six for what seemed like the millionth time. He took a deep breath and started moving through the maze, flying over colorful spikes and through fiery tunnels. He tapped his foot faster as he got closer and closer to the finish line.

“Anton?” It was Mom’s voice. She sounded like she needed something.

“Not now!” he thought. He jumped over another spike and sped deep through another tunnel. “Yes?” he said, not moving his eyes from the screen.

“Would you please get Felix into his pajamas and read him a story? I’ve got to finish cleaning up the kitchen.”

“Um . . . ,” He was so close! He curved through one

last spiky corridor, over another flame, past a chomping monster, and . . . YES! across the finish line!

The computer loaded level seven. It looked harder, but Anton couldn’t wait to try it. He had worked so hard to reach this level. Anton hit the pause button and looked up at Mom, who was holding his little brother, Felix. “Can I have just a few more minutes? I just got to level seven!”

“I really need your help,” Mom said. “You can do one more level after you take care of Felix.”

Felix smiled. “Pwease?” he said in his tiny two-year-old voice.

Anton looked at the computer screen and sighed. “All right.” He’d just have to hurry so he could get back to his game.

He lifted Felix and carried him up the stairs to their room.

Bedtime for Felix

By Heidi Poelman

Based on a true story



“Who’s my favorite baby brother?” he said, poking Felix’s squishy baby tummy. He blew on Felix’s stomach and smiled as Felix squealed with laughter.

Anton dressed Felix in his favorite dinosaur pajamas. Then he lifted Felix into bed and headed for the door. Mom had told him to read Felix a story too, but he had done the important part. Maybe now he could get in *two* more levels before bedtime.

Just then Anton felt a tug on his shirt. He looked down and saw that Felix had climbed out of bed.

“Bear?” Felix asked. He ran to his basket of books and brought back a book with a polar bear on the front.



“Aw, Felix, I’ve got things to do!” Anton said.

Felix held the book above his head, looking up at Anton with his big brown eyes.

Anton couldn’t help but grin. “You won’t take no for an answer, will you?”

Well, OK.”

Anton sat down on Felix’s bed, and Felix climbed up into his lap. Anton opened to the first page and read while Felix leaned against

him. Felix pointed to each animal on the page and practiced saying its name. “Zee-ba . . . famingo . . . wah-wus.”

When it was over, Anton closed the book and tucked Felix’s blanket around him. “Good night, Felix,” he said, kissing Felix on the head and standing to go.

But as he walked toward the door, he heard that little voice again. “Snuggle?”

Anton smiled. “OK. Scoot over. I’ll stay for a bit.”

Anton lay down on the pillow. At least for now, he didn’t really feel like doing anything else. He smiled

when Felix gave a big yawn and closed his eyes. He felt the happiest he’d been all day. His game could wait. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



Tortillas and Amigas

By Lindsay Stevens Tanner and Maryssa Dennis

Based on a true story



“If you want a friend, you must show that you care” (Children’s Songbook, 262).

Adriana was bored. She wanted to play with her twin sister, Diana. But Diana had gone to buy food at the market with Mamá. Adriana sighed. The house felt very empty. She wished she’d gone with them.

Adriana decided to visit her neighbor Margarita. Margarita’s kids were all grown up, and she was like a grandma to Adriana. They always had lots of fun together.

Adriana went outside. The hot sun shone down on her as she walked to Margarita’s house. She poked her head inside the door. “Margarita, are you home?”

“Sí, I am in the kitchen,” Margarita called. Adriana found her sitting at the kitchen table with her head down. She looked up when Adriana came in.

“Hello, Adriana,” said Margarita. She gave a small smile. But it seemed sad.

“Is something wrong?” asked Adriana.

Margarita sighed. “Nothing you need to worry about.”

“How can I help her feel better?” Adriana thought. Margarita always seemed happy when they cooked together. “May I help you make tortillas?”

“I just finished making some,” said Margarita. She lifted a cloth napkin to show a stack of tortillas.

“Then may I help you *eat* tortillas?” Adriana asked with a grin.

Margarita laughed. “Of course. Let me just heat up some beans to go with them.”

Adriana stood by Margarita at the stove and stirred black refried beans in a pot. When the beans were done, she carried them to the table. Margarita brought the tortillas and the cheese.

Adriana took a warm tortilla and spread beans over it. Then she sprinkled the cheese on top. It looked delicious! Adriana couldn’t wait to take a bite. But there was something she wanted to do first.

“May I please say a prayer?” Adriana asked Margarita. “Sure.”

Adriana closed her eyes and folded her arms. “Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for this food. Please bless it to make us healthy and strong. And please help Margarita with whatever she needs. I’m glad she’s my friend. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.”

Adriana opened her eyes. Margarita had a big smile—a real one this time. While they ate, they talked

about school and sports and books. Adriana loved talking with Margarita.

When they finished eating, Adriana gave Margarita a big hug. “Thank you for the snack. I had a great time!”

Margarita hugged Adriana back. “Thank *you*, Adriana. I needed a friend today.”

Adriana beamed. “I’m glad we’re *amigas*.”

“I’m glad we’re friends too,” Margarita said. “Why don’t you take the rest of these tortillas home? I’m so full.”

Adriana skipped all the way back to her house. She felt full too—and not just from the tortillas! She was full of friendship from head to toe. ■

The authors live in Utah, USA.

FRIENDSHIP TORTILLAS

These easy corn tortillas are perfect for making and sharing with friends! Be sure to get an adult’s help.

2 cups masa harina (corn flour)

1 1/2 cups hot water

1. Mix the masa harina and hot water. Knead the dough until soft.
2. Roll the dough into small balls. Place one ball between two sheets of waxed paper.
3. With a plate or skillet, press down on the ball firmly several times.
4. Cook the tortilla in a frying pan over medium heat. When the top side gets darker, flip to cook the other side.
5. Top with beans and cheese, and enjoy!



The Miracle

Tenderly ♩ = 68

Words and music by Shawna Belt Edwards

mp

4/4

First system of piano accompaniment, measures 1-3.

mp

1. Je - sus walked up - on the wa - ter. — He
 2. Je - sus bled and died to save me, — A

Second system of vocal and piano accompaniment, measures 4-6.

7

stilled the storm and calmed the an - gry sea. With His hands He healed the le - per; — He
 price that I could ne - ver pay a - lone. When He rose a - gain, He gave me — The

Third system of vocal and piano accompaniment, measures 7-9.

11

made the lame to walk, the blind to see. He fed a thou - sand peo - ple with a loaf or two of bread, And
 great - est gift the world has e - ver known. Yes, I can be for - giv - en eve - ry time that I re - pent, And

mf

Fourth system of vocal and piano accompaniment, measures 10-12.

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15 when the rul - er's daugh - ter died, He raised her from the dead. _____
 some day He will lift me up to live with Him a - gain. _____

17 Je - sus is a God of mir - a - cles; _____ Noth - ing is at all im -

21 pos - si - ble _____ to Him, But I know this: Of all His mir - a - cles, _____ the most in -

24 cred - i - ble _____ must be The mir - a - cle _____ that res - cues me.

27 me. The mir - a - cle _____ that res - cues you and me. _____

27

Watch a sing-along video for this song at children.lds.org. Click on "Music" and "Sing-Along Videos."



“I testify that Jesus Christ is our Good Shepherd, who loves and cares for us. He knows us and laid down His life for His sheep. He also lives for us and wants us to know Him and exercise faith in Him. I love and adore Him, and I am profoundly grateful for Him.”

By Elder Dale G. Renlund

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

From “*Our Good Shepherd*,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2017, 32.



**By Sister
Cristina B. Franco**
Second Counselor in
the Primary General
Presidency

Heavenly Father Knows You



Every Sunday in a small town in Argentina, a group of people met under a tree to read the scriptures and learn about the gospel. Some of the people were members of the Church. But many of them hadn't been baptized, and they really wanted to be!

They had a problem, though. They lived far away from other towns. No Church leaders had come to visit their town for some time.

Then they heard that some missionaries were in a town about four hours away. They all gave money so one man could buy a bus ticket to the town where the missionaries were. When he got there, he waited at the bus station. He thought that would be the best place to find the missionaries.

After a few hours, he saw two young men. They were the missionaries! He told them about the people in his town. So the missionaries and the mission president planned a trip to meet these people.

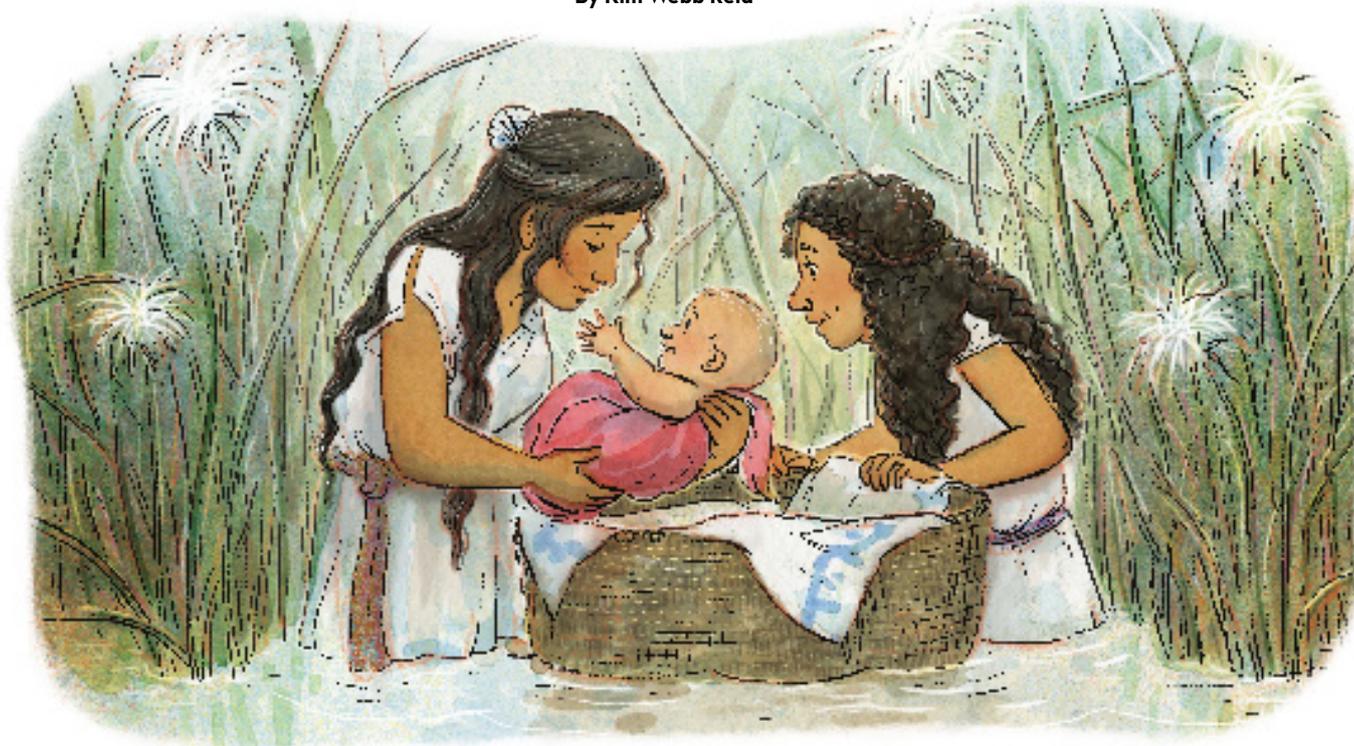
On the day that the mission president and the missionaries came, many people gathered together to meet them. Now those who hadn't been baptized yet could get baptized. After teaching them the lessons, they were ready!

The closest river was very far away, so they pumped water from a well and filled up a portable swimming pool. It took three hours to fill the pool! In all, 27 women, men, and children got baptized that day. They were filled with joy!

Heavenly Father knew that these people wanted to be baptized, and He helped them find the missionaries. Heavenly Father also knows you. He knows where you are and who you are and what you need. He hears and answers your prayers. No matter how lonely you feel, He's always there. You are never alone. You can always turn to Him. ■

Moses Follows God

By Kim Webb Reid



One day an Egyptian princess found a Hebrew baby in a basket. She named him Moses and raised him to become a prince.

When Moses grew up, he didn't like how Egyptians treated the Hebrews, their slaves. When Moses stood up for them, the king of Egypt wanted to kill him. Moses had to run away. Then God told him to go back and free the Hebrew people.



Moses asked Pharaoh, the king, to let the Hebrew people go. Pharaoh said no. God helped Moses curse the land so Pharaoh would change his mind. Flies, lice, and then frogs filled the land. Finally Pharaoh said the slaves could leave.

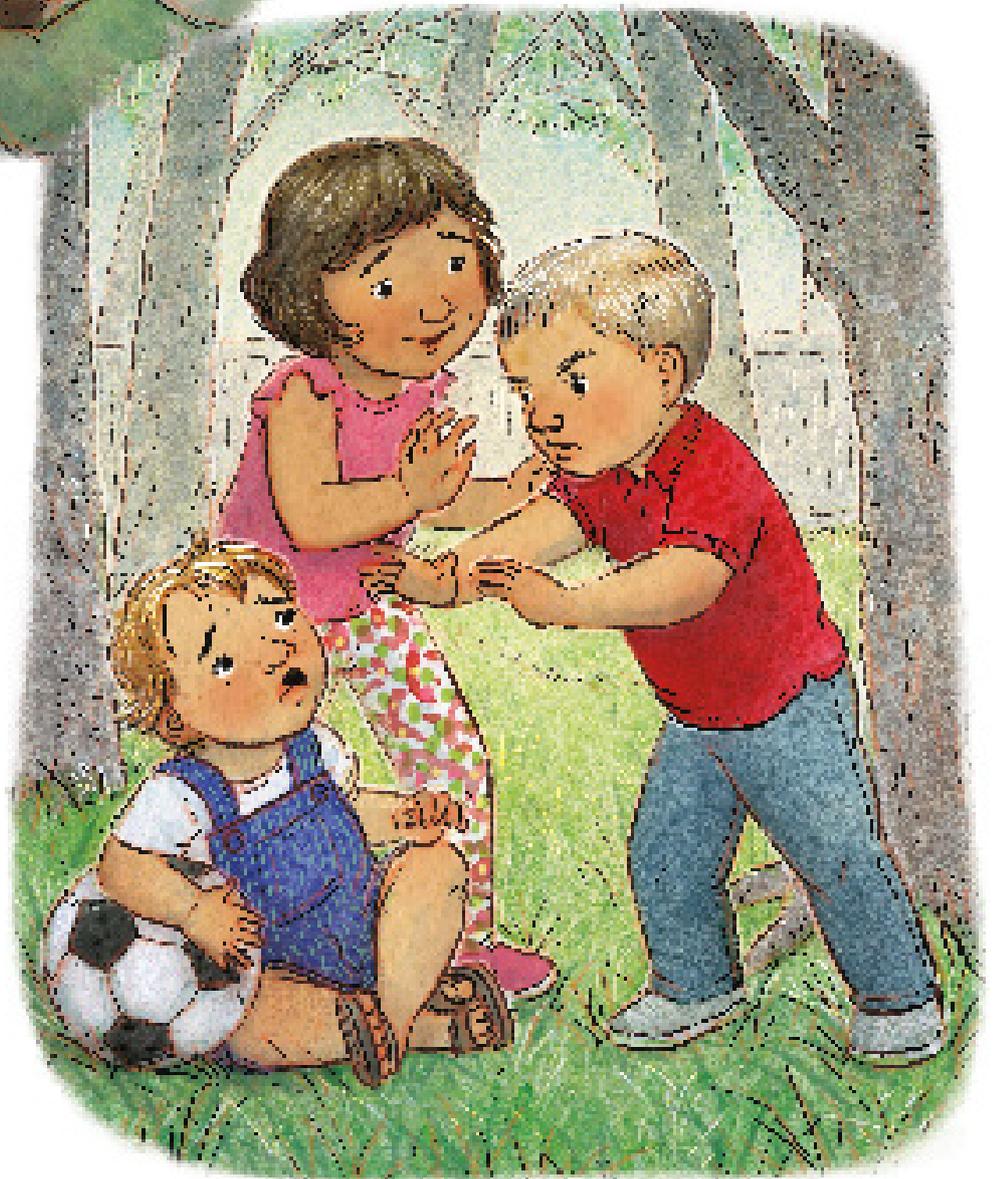


As they were leaving, Pharaoh changed his mind and sent his army after them. When Moses's people came to the Red Sea, God made a dry path through the sea so they could escape.



God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. Moses taught them to the people as they traveled toward the promised land. Finally they were safe and free!

I can be like Moses.
I can follow the commandments. God will help me when I stand up for those who need help. ■



From Exodus 2-34.

I Can Be a Peacemaker



ILLUSTRATION BY APRYL STOTT



**By President
M. Russell Ballard**

Acting President of
the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

OUR SABBATH SANCTUARY

*If we can start thinking of the chapel
as a sanctuary of faith and devotion for
sacrament meeting, we all will be blessed.*

Sacrament meeting is a wonderful and glorious time. When we step into the chapel and prepare to receive the sacrament, we should think of ourselves as being in a sanctuary, a sacred and special place where we can contemplate Christ and His great and glorious mission. We put aside the things of the world and think instead of what is eternal. We need to put aside our cell phones and ponder about Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God.

We have just 70 minutes each week to focus on our love for the Savior. If we can start thinking of the chapel as a sanctuary of faith and devotion for sacrament meeting, we all will be blessed.



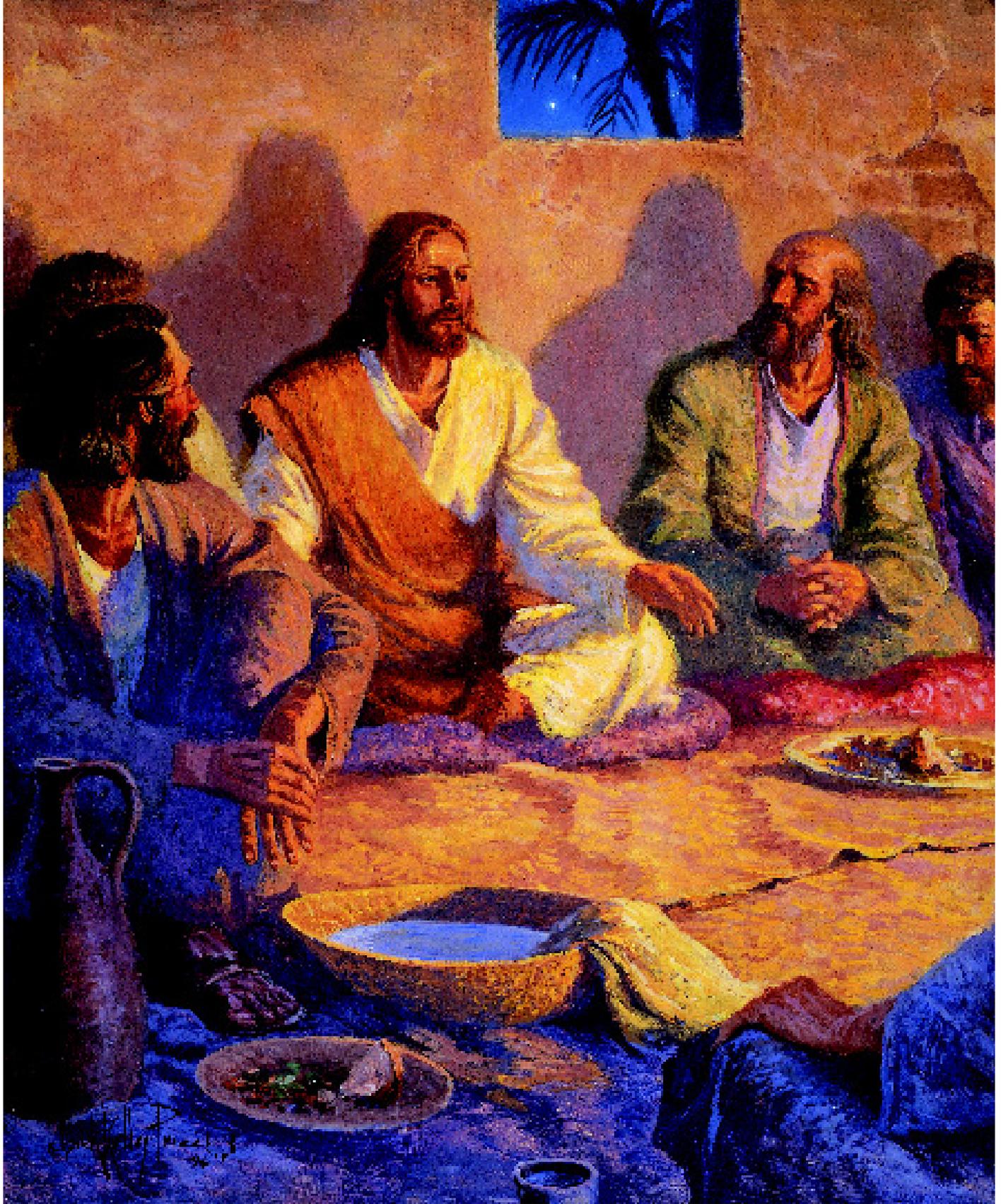
As we build the kingdom of God, I can't think of anything more important than having a well-prepared sacrament meeting where speakers speak of Christ, testify of Christ, and share testimonies from the apostles and prophets in the scriptures and other sources.

As a Church we've been focused on the Sabbath day. We've made progress, but we are not there yet. We'll continue our efforts until every

member and missionary is so spiritually motivated during their Sabbath day worship that each says to his or her neighbors, investigators, and relatives, "Come and see. Come and worship with us." This is where we want to be.

If we could all do this as a Church, those who accept our invitation to "come and see" will feel the power of the message of the restored Church of Jesus Christ. As they worship with us in our sacrament meetings, their hearts will be touched and the light of the gospel will be lit in their hearts and minds. ■

*From "The Chapel: Our Sabbath Sanctuary" at
prophets.lds.org.*

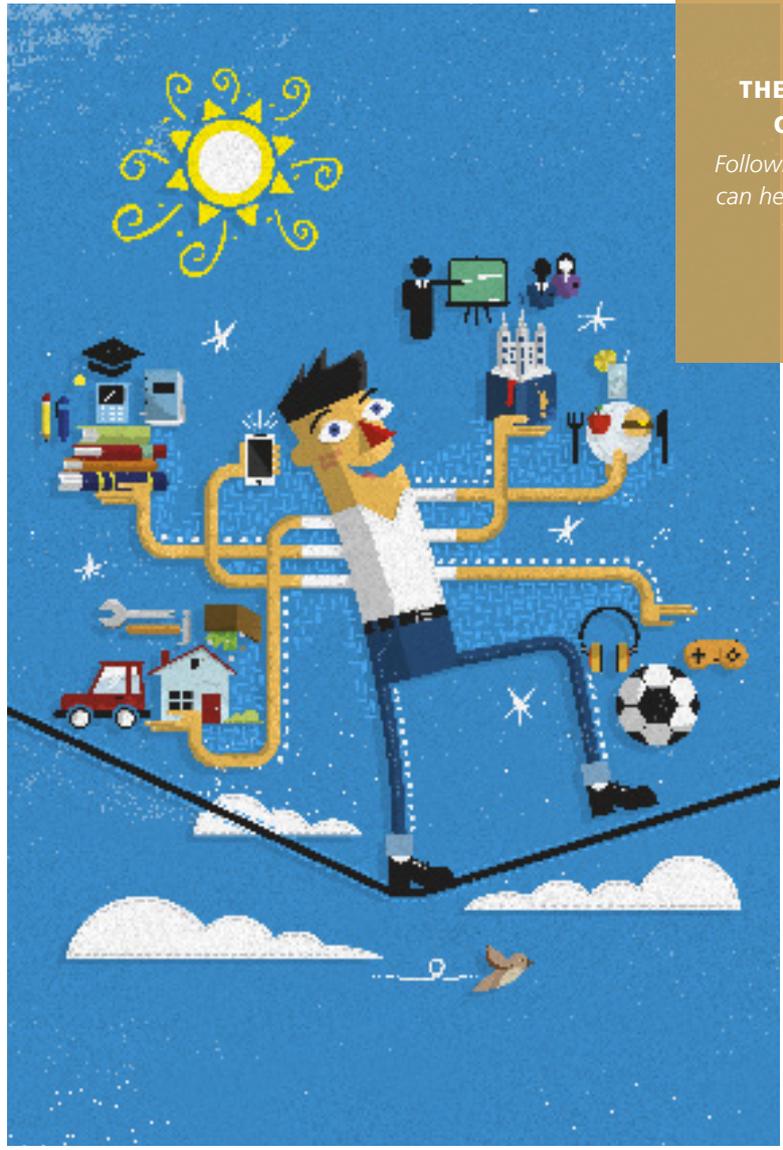


**THE LAST SUPPER,
BY CLARK KELLEY PRICE**

"And when the hour was come, [Jesus] sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. . . .

"And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

"Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:14, 19–20).



YOUNG ADULTS

**THE BALANCING ACT
OF ENDURANCE**

*Following these three principles
can help us not just endure but
"enjoy to the end."*

44

18-YEAR-OLDS
**AFTER THE YOUTH
PROGRAMS, THEN
WHAT?**

50

YOUTH
**HOW TO DEVELOP
YOUR GIFTS**

62



THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS