

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • MARCH 2002

# LIAHONA



# LIAHONA



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## THE FRIEND COVER

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**APPRECIATES TITHING SETTLEMENT ARTICLE**

I was baptized a member of the Church  
in 1986, and *A Liahona* (Portuguese) has  
been a part of my life since then. It has  
helped me at those moments when I have  
found myself spiritually weak. I have been  
able to feel its power in missionary work,  
during visits as a home teacher, and with  
my friends who have not yet had the  
opportunity to know the true gospel.

I am especially grateful for the publica-  
tion of the article "The Significance of  
Tithing Settlement" in the December 2000  
issue. This article has helped me hold suc-  
cessful tithing settlement interviews in my  
calling as bishop.

*Amarildo Martins,*  
*Parque Dorotéia Ward,*  
*Diadema Brazil Stake*

**HEAVENLY FATHER ANSWERS PRAYERS**

After reading the *Liahona* (Ukrainian), I  
felt the Holy Ghost so strongly that I wanted  
to share my testimony. Sometimes it seems  
that my spiritual trials are insurmountable.  
I'm the only member of the Church in my  
family, and my friends don't like the Church  
and its standards. Unfortunately, I have not  
been able to change their opinion.

I know there are a lot of people like me.  
But I also know that Heavenly Father loves

all of us and wants us to be strong. When  
I'm discouraged, I think about how greatly  
Heavenly Father has blessed me. He always  
hears my prayers and helps me, sometimes  
through friends and relatives, sometimes  
through the *Liahona*. There are many  
wonderful testimonies and stories in this  
magazine. When I read it, my testimony  
grows.

*Yelena Sivoplyas,*  
*Chemihiv Tsentralny Branch,*  
*Ukraine Kyiv Mission*



**MAGAZINE IS A MIRACLE**

Your magazine is a real miracle in my  
home. Every time I bring a new *Liahona*  
(Russian) home, it disappears! The next  
day my father, who is not a member of the  
Church, says he has taken it to work and  
has read everything in it and liked it very  
much. Or my mother, also not a member,  
says she could not stop reading it all  
morning. She was particularly interested  
in the article "Japan: Growing Light in  
the East" in the March 2001 issue. I  
thank you for this miracle. It gives me  
strength to continue working with my  
family.

*Mariya Konovalova,*  
*Kurgan Tsentralny Branch,*  
*Russia Yekaterinburg Mission*

**Personal revelation comes as a testimony of truth and as guidance in spiritual and temporal matters. Latter-day Saints know that the promptings of the Spirit may be received upon all facets of life, including daily, ongoing decisions.**





# COMMUNION WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT



**By President James E. Faust**

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

At a press conference some years ago, President Gordon B. Hinckley was asked the question, “What is the greatest problem that your church has today?” He answered that it is rapid growth.

It has been more than 170 years since The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized. Why does the Church continue to flourish and grow so dramatically? What distinguishes it from all other churches? In response, we might say that there are several characteristics peculiar to our faith. These include the organization itself, with prophets and apostles, who Paul said are the foundation of the Church (see Ephesians 2:20); the Quorums of the Seventy; lay priesthood leadership; the missionary system; the welfare program; temples; the family history effort; and many other distinguishing features.

There is, however, another reason for our growth, one that transcends all others. Of an interview in 1839

between the Prophet Joseph Smith and Martin Van Buren, who was then president of the United States, the following was recorded: “In our interview with the President, he interrogated us wherein we differed in our religion from the other religions of the day. Brother Joseph said we differed in mode of baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. We considered that all other considerations were contained in the gift of the Holy Ghost” (*History of the Church*, 4:42).

One of the reasons the Prophet’s response was so inspired is that the right to enjoy the marvelous gifts of the Holy Ghost is conferred upon every member of the Church soon after baptism. This is in fulfillment of the promise of the Savior: “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever” (John 14:16).

## ENLIGHTENMENT AND UNDERSTANDING

This powerful gift entitles the leaders and all worthy members of the Church to enjoy the gifts and companionship of the Holy Ghost, a member of the Godhead whose function is to inspire, reveal, and teach all things. The result of this endowment is that since the Church was organized, the leadership and members have enjoyed, and now enjoy, continuous revelation and inspiration directing them in what is right and good. Inspiration and revelation are so common, so widespread, so universal among the leaders

and the members that there is a strong spiritual base underlying what is done. This can be found in the gatherings of the Church, both large and small.

Why does the Church grow and flourish? It does so because of divine direction to the leaders and members. This began in our day when God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith early in the spring of 1820. However, we claim that God's inspiration is not limited to the Latter-day Saints. The First Presidency has stated: "The great religious leaders of the world such as Mohammed, Confucius, and the Reformers, as well as philosophers including Socrates, Plato, and others, received a portion of God's light. Moral truths were given to them by God to enlighten whole nations and to bring a higher level of understanding to individuals. . . . We believe that God has given and will give to all peoples sufficient knowledge to help them on their way to eternal salvation" ("Statement of the First Presidency regarding God's Love for All Mankind," 15 February 1978).

We declare in all solemnity, however, that we know salvation in the world to come is dependent upon accepting the gospel of Jesus Christ as taught in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. One factor in salvation is personal revelation. Joseph Smith said: "No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations. The Holy Ghost is a revelator" (*History of the Church*, 6:58).

#### **PERSONAL REVELATION**

Latter-day Saints, having received the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, are entitled to personal inspiration in the small events of life as well as when they are confronted with the giant Goliaths of life. If worthy, we are entitled to receive revelations for ourselves, parents for their children, and members of the Church in their callings. But the right of revelation for others does not extend beyond our own stewardship.

David, the youngest son of Jesse, a mere shepherd boy,

volunteered to fight the giant Goliath. David and all of the army of Israel were insulted by the humiliating taunts of this formidable giant, but David knew that inspiration had brought him to save Israel. King Saul was so impressed with the faith and determination of this young boy that he appointed him to fight Goliath. Goliath made sport of David's youth and lack of armament. David responded that he came in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, and that the whole assembly would learn that the Lord does not save by the sword and the spear, "for the battle is the Lord's" (1 Samuel 17:47). Then David threw a rock from his sling with such force and accuracy that the stone sank deep into the forehead of Goliath. Goliath fell to the earth a dying man, and the Philistines fled in fear.

What has happened to David's living God? It is the greatest insult to reason to suggest that God, who spoke so freely to the prophets of the Old Testament, now stands mute, uncommunicative, and silent.

We may well ask, Does God love us less than those led by the ancient prophets? Do we need His guidance and instruction less? Reason suggests that this cannot be. Does He not care? Has He lost His voice? Has He gone on a permanent vacation? Does He sleep? The unreasonableness of each of these proposals is self-evident.

When the Savior taught in the synagogue at Capernaum, He proclaimed His divinity in no uncertain terms. The Apostle John states:

"From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

"Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

"Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

"And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:66–69).

We acknowledge and testify that the same witness of Christ's divinity as received by Peter is also our sacred knowledge.



**Why does the Church grow and flourish? It does so because of divine direction to the leaders and members. This began in our day when God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith early in the spring of 1820.**

Personal revelation comes as a testimony of truth and as guidance in spiritual and temporal matters. Latter-day Saints know that the promptings of the Spirit may be received upon all facets of life, including daily, ongoing decisions. Without seeking the inspiration of the Almighty God, how could anyone think of making an important decision such as, Who is to be my companion? What is my work to be? Where will I live? How will I live?

Many faithful Latter-day Saints have been warned by the Spirit when they were faced with injury or possible death. Among these was President Wilford Woodruff, who said:

“When I got back to Winter Quarters from the pioneer journey [1847], President [Brigham] Young said to me, ‘Brother Woodruff, I want you to take your wife and children and go to Boston and stay there until you can gather every Saint of God in New England and Canada and send them up to Zion.’

“I did as he told me. It took me two years to gather up everybody, and I brought up the rear with a company (there were about one hundred of them). We arrived at Pittsburgh one day at sundown. We did not want to stay there, so I went to the first steamboat that was going to leave. I saw the captain and engaged passage for us on that steamer. I had only just done so when the spirit said to me, and that, too, very strongly, ‘Don’t go aboard that steamer, nor your company.’ Of course, I went and spoke to the captain, and told him I had made up my mind to wait.

“Well, that ship started, and had only got five miles [eight kilometers] down the river when it took fire, and three hundred persons were burned to death or drowned. If I had not obeyed that spirit, and had gone on that steamer with the rest of the company, you can see what the result would have been” (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, selected by G. Homer Durham [1946], 294–95).

#### HOW TO RECEIVE REVELATION

Some guidelines and rules are necessary if one is to be the recipient of revelation and inspiration. They include (1) to try honestly and sincerely to keep God’s commandments; (2) to be spiritually attuned as a receiver of a divine



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DEREK ISRAELSEN

message; (3) to ask God in humble, fervent prayer; and (4) to seek answers with unwavering faith.

I testify that inspiration can be the spring for every person's hope, guidance, and strength. It is one of the magnified treasures of life. It involves coming to the infinite knowledge of God.

How do revelation and inspiration operate? Each person has a built-in "receiving set" which, when fine-tuned, can be a receiver of divine communication. Said Elihu to Job, "There is a spirit in man: and . . . the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). If needed, it is possible, like Nephi, to be led completely by the Spirit, "not knowing beforehand" what should be done (see 1 Nephi 4:6).

How is inspiration received? Enos stated, "While I was thus struggling in the spirit, behold, the voice of the Lord came into my mind" (Enos 1:10). One does not necessarily hear an audible voice. The spirit of revelation comes by divine confirmation. "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," says the Lord (D&C 8:2).

How was the voice of the Lord heard by Elijah the Tishbite? It was not the "strong wind [which] rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks," nor "after the

**Latter-day Saints, having received the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, are entitled to personal inspiration in the small events of life as well as when they are confronted with the giant Goliaths of life.**

wind an earthquake," nor "after the earthquake a fire." It was "a still small voice" (see 1 Kings 19:11–12).

The inner voice of the Spirit has the capacity to whisper through and pierce all things (see D&C 85:6). The scriptures teach, "It was not a voice of thunder, neither was it a voice of a great tumultuous noise, but behold, it was a still voice of perfect mildness, as if it had been a whisper, and it did pierce even to the very soul" (Helaman 5:30).

Thus the Lord, by revelation, brings inspiration into one's mind as though a voice were speaking. As a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Elder Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) gave this testimony: "I have a believing heart because of a simple testimony that came when I was a child, I think maybe I was around ten—maybe eleven—years of age. I was with my father out on a farm away from our home, trying to spend the day busying myself until father was ready to go home. Over the fence from our place were some tumbledown sheds which had attracted a curious boy, adventurous as I was.



I started to climb through the fence and I heard a voice as clearly as you are hearing mine—‘Don’t go over there!’ calling me by name. I turned to look at father to see if he were talking to me, but he was way up at the other end of the field. There was no person in sight. I realized then, as a child, that there were persons beyond my sight and I had heard a voice. And when I [hear] and read these stories of the Prophet Joseph Smith, I, too, know what it means to hear a voice because I’ve heard from an unseen speaker” (*Divine Revelation*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [15 October 1952], 5).

#### REVELATION IN THE CHURCH TODAY

Although every faithful member of the Church is entitled to receive personal revelation, there is only one man upon the earth who receives revelation for the Church. President Wilford Woodruff (1807–98) said, “The Church of God could not live twenty-four hours without revelation” (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, 61).

A member has written: “Every day men and women come, by revelation, to understand the basic truth that God has restored his gospel and church.

“Every day leaders of the Church are led by revelation to conduct the affairs of the Church, general and local, throughout the world.

“Every day Latter-day Saint missionaries are impressed by the spirit of revelation to bear witness, to know what to say, to know what to do, and to teach by the spirit of revelation.

“Every day the mind and will of the Lord as revealed in the standard works of the Church are illuminated in the minds of Latter-day Saints by the spirit of revelation.

“Every day faith is increased in the hearts of the faithful by evidences of revelation in their lives—in decisions regarding marriage, vocations, home concerns, business ventures, lesson preparations, danger signals—in fact, in all facets of life.

“Every Latter-day Saint may know by the spirit

of revelation that President Joseph Fielding Smith [1876–1972] spoke the truth when he said:

“‘The Lord not only blesses the men who stand at the head and hold the keys of the kingdom, but *he also blesses every faithful individual with the spirit of inspiration*’” (Roy W. Doxey, *Walk with the Lord* [1973], 173–74; emphasis in original).

Who is the prophet of the world today? I testify that the prophet upon the face of the earth today is Gordon B. Hinckley, who serves as the President of the Church. He is the only person who holds all of the keys of the kingdom of God on earth. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is God’s Church upon the earth, and salvation in God’s presence requires acceptance of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ as taught in His Church.

Why has the Church grown so dramatically over more than 170 years? Why does it continue to grow at an ever-increasing pace? It does so in large measure because of divine revelation and inspiration.

I pray that we may so live as to enjoy the companionship of the Holy Ghost, for the Holy Ghost, under the direction of Almighty God, has led this people and their leaders from the Church’s humble beginnings to the great spiritual force it is today. □

#### IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

1. The right to enjoy the marvelous gifts of the Holy Ghost is conferred upon every member of the Church soon after baptism.

2. The gift of the Holy Ghost entitles members to personal inspiration in the small events of life as well as when they are confronted with the giant “Goliaths” of life.

3. Four guidelines for receiving revelation and inspiration from the Holy Ghost are (a) to try honestly and sincerely to keep God’s commandments; (b) to be spiritually attuned as a receiver of a divine message; (c) to ask God in humble, fervent prayer; and (d) to seek answers with unwavering faith.



INSIGHT AND COUNSEL FROM PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY

# Words of the Living

## **A COVENANT PEOPLE**

“You are a covenant people. . . . When you were baptized into this Church, you came under an obligation that will remain with you all of your lives to live as He would have you live. Every week you partake of the sacrament, the emblems of His sacrifice, of His suffering in your behalf, and a reminder of the covenant you make to take upon yourselves the name of Jesus Christ and keep His commandments. And He makes a covenant with you that He will bless you with His Spirit.”<sup>1</sup>

## **ADD TO THE GOOD OF THE WORLD**

“We believe that we are all sons and daughters of God, born with something of a divine birthright, that there is good in us, and that we ought to cultivate and nurture that good and make it evident and add to the general good of the world.”<sup>2</sup>

## **RELIEF SOCIETY**

“This remarkable [Relief Society] organization affords sociality, tremendous service opportunities, enlightenment and education, administering to the wants of those in need, and many other opportunities. [To you women] the Relief Society is your

dear and caring mother. In sickness or in health it will bless your life. It will afford you opportunities for growth and development. It will provide you with the friendship of the best women in the world. It will comfort you in times of sorrow, bless you in times of distress, and give unto you the inimitable joy of association with those of your own kind.”<sup>3</sup>

## **APPRECIATE VARIOUS CULTURES**

“Misunderstanding grows out of ignorance and suspicion. As we learn to know and appreciate those of various cultures, we come to appreciate them.”<sup>4</sup>

## **BE A GOOD LATTER-DAY SAINT**

“It is not a difficult thing to be a good Latter-day Saint. You just have to be good and decent and kind and gracious and friendly and neighborly, and the Lord will accept of your effort and magnify you and bless you and bring blessings upon your home and upon your family and upon your children. . . . Let us be Latter-day Saints. Let us stand a little taller, lift our heads a little higher, and walk as should become members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”<sup>5</sup>

## **BE FOUND WORTHY OF HIS BLESSINGS**

“Get on your knees, every night and every morning. . . . Don’t let anything come into your lives which would take from you the desire to pray. Speak with your Father in Heaven. Speak with love. Express your thanks to Him for His blessings. Ask Him for those things which you hold dear to your heart, and He will hear and answer your prayers. He will open the way before you if you plead with Him and live worthy of His blessings.”<sup>6</sup>

## **FAITHFUL TITHE PAYERS**

“I can’t get over feeling gratitude for the faithful tithe payers of this Church. I know the Lord loves them. I know He loves them so much that He’s willing to open the windows of heaven and shower down blessings upon them. I’ve seen it again and again and again.”<sup>7</sup>

## **HOPE**

“People are not without hope. Everybody ought to recognize that in the most dire circumstances there is an element of hope, that people can recover from what they have done, that they can do better, that they can turn around, that they can

# Prophet

improve and increase their happiness  
by so doing.”<sup>8</sup> □

## NOTES

1. Meeting, Nouméa, New Caledonia,  
17 June 2000.

2. Interview, *Boston Globe*,  
14 August 2000.

3. Devotional, Brigham Young  
University alumni, 12 September 2000.

4. Remarks, National Press Club,  
8 March 2000.

5. Regional conference, Ogden, Utah,  
21 May 2000.

6. Meeting, Pago Pago, American  
Samoa, 17 June 2000.

7. Remarks, rededication of Salt Lake  
10th Ward building, 2 January 2000.

8. Press interview regarding  
*Standing for Something*,  
11 February 2000.



**“Every week you  
partake of the  
sacrament, . . . a  
reminder of the  
covenant you  
make to take  
upon yourselves  
[His] name.”**

# The Law

*The two major purposes of the law of sacrifice are to test and prove us and to assist us in coming unto Christ.*



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

A few years ago, my family and I visited Palmyra, New York; Kirtland, Ohio; and Nauvoo, Illinois. We reviewed the early history of the Church on that trip and were reminded of the overwhelming sacrifices the founders of the Church made to establish the kingdom of God in this last dispensation.

Reflecting upon their humble obedience focused my mind on the eternal nature of the law of sacrifice, a vital part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was practiced in Old Testament, New Testament, and Book of Mormon times. While its practice changed during the New Testament period, the purposes of the law of sacrifice remained in place even after the Atonement of Christ fulfilled the law of Moses.

Usually, the first thing people think of when they hear “law of Moses” is animal sacrifice. The somewhat gruesome nature of blood sacrifice has led some to ask, “How could such an activity have anything to do with the gospel of love?” We can better understand the answer to that question when we understand the two major purposes for the law of sacrifice. These purposes applied to Adam, Abraham, Moses, and the New Testament Apostles, and they apply to us today as we accept and live the law of sacrifice. Its two major purposes are to test and prove us and to assist us in coming unto Christ.



THE LAST JUDGMENT, BY JOHN SCOTT



# of Sacrifice



“I have decreed in my heart, saith the Lord, that *I will prove you in all things, whether you will abide in my covenant, even unto death, that you may be found worthy.*”

“For if ye will not abide in my covenant ye are not worthy of me” (D&C 98:14–15; emphasis added).

The law of sacrifice provides an opportunity for us to prove to the Lord that we love Him more than any other thing. As a result, the course sometimes becomes difficult since this is the process of perfection that prepares us for the celestial kingdom to “dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever” (D&C 76:62).

Next, President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) explained that “the sacred mission of the Church . . . [is] to ‘invite all to come unto Christ’ (D&C 20:59)” (“‘Come unto Christ, and Be Perfected in Him,’” *Ensign*, May 1988, 84; see also Moroni 10:32). In that light, the law of sacrifice has always been a means for God’s children to come unto the Lord Jesus Christ.

How does sacrifice help us come unto Christ? No one will ever accept the Savior without having faith in Him first. Hence, the first principle of the gospel is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Accordingly, the Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44) explained an important relationship between the principle of faith and the principle of sacrifice: “Let us here observe, that a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation; . . . it is through the medium of the sacrifice of all earthly things that men do actually know that they are doing the things that are well pleasing in the sight of God. When a man has offered in sacrifice all that he has for the truth’s sake, not even withholding his life, and believing before God that he has been called to make this sacrifice because he seeks to do his will, he does know, most assuredly, that God does and will accept his sacrifice and offering, and that he has not, nor will not seek his face in vain. Under these circumstances, then, he can obtain the faith necessary for him to lay hold on eternal life” (*Lectures on Faith* [1985], 69).

To summarize: we must know what we do is pleasing before God and understand that this knowledge comes to us through sacrifice and obedience. Those who come unto Christ in this way receive a confidence that whispers peace to their souls and that will eventually enable them to lay hold upon eternal life.

#### WHAT SACRIFICE TEACHES

Sacrifice allows us to learn something about ourselves—what we are willing to offer to the Lord through our obedience.

Brother Truman G. Madsen tells about a visit he made to Israel with President Hugh B. Brown (1883–1975), an Apostle of the Lord who served as Second Counselor and then First Counselor in the First Presidency. In a valley known as Hebron, where tradition has it that the tomb of Father Abraham is located, Brother Madsen asked President Brown, “What are the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?” After a short moment of thought, President Brown answered, “Posterity.”

Brother Madsen writes: “I almost burst out, ‘Why, then, was Abraham commanded to go to Mount Moriah and offer his only hope of posterity?’

“It was clear that [President Brown], nearly ninety, had thought and prayed and wept over that question before. He finally said, ‘Abraham needed to learn something about Abraham’” (*The Highest in Us* [1978], 49).

Now let’s look at another way the law of sacrifice brought people unto Christ. Anciently, blood sacrifices brought the people to Christ through typifying and foreshadowing His life and mission.

Adam was taught that the sacrifice on the altar was “a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father” (Moses 5:7). This teaches us that originally our Father’s children understood the relationship between the sacrifice of their offerings and the sacrifice of the Lamb of God (see D&C 138:12–13).

It is in the Book of Mormon that we find some of the clearest doctrinal teachings about the purpose of the law

of sacrifice as practiced under the law of Moses. Nephi taught that it was done to typify the sacrifice of Christ (see 2 Nephi 11:4). He wrote: “We keep the law of Moses, and look forward with steadfastness unto Christ. . . . For, for this end was the law given” (2 Nephi 25:24–25). In Alma we read: “They did look forward to the coming of Christ, considering that the law of Moses was a type of his coming. . . . The law of Moses did serve to strengthen their faith in Christ” (Alma 25:15–16).

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “Whenever the Lord revealed Himself to men in ancient days, and commanded them to offer sacrifice to Him, . . . it was done that they might look forward in faith to the time of His coming, and rely upon the power of that



indelibly intertwined. . . . As we comply with these and other commandments, something wonderful happens to us. . . . We become more sacred and holy—[more] like our Lord!” (“Lessons from Eve,” *Ensign*, November 1987, 88).

In fact, the word *sacrifice* means literally “to make sacred,” or “to render sacred.”

#### A LAW FROM THE BEGINNING

Our first lessons about the law of sacrifice, as well as other gospel principles, began in our premortal life. We were taught the fulness of the gospel and the plan of salvation (see D&C 138:56). We knew of the Savior’s mission and of His future atoning sacrifice, and we willingly sustained Him as our Savior and our Redeemer.

*The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “Let us here observe, that a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation.”*

atonement for a remission of their sins” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, selected by Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 60–61; see also page 58).

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) once explained to a young man struggling with his testimony that effort and struggle are necessary if we are to be saved through Jesus Christ. He told my friend, “Through sacrifice and service one comes to know the Lord.” As we sacrifice our selfish desires, serve our God and others, we become more like Him.

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught:

“We are still commanded to sacrifice, but not by shedding blood of animals. Our highest sense of sacrifice is achieved as we make ourselves more sacred or holy.

“This we do by our obedience to the commandments of God. Thus, the laws of obedience and sacrifice are

In fact, we learn from Revelation chapter 12 verses 9 and 11 that it is “by the blood of the Lamb” (Christ’s atoning sacrifice) and our testimony that we are able to overcome Satan. President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) explained: “The Lord designed in the beginning to place before man the knowledge of good and evil, and gave him a commandment to cleave to good and abstain from evil. But if he should fail, he would give to him the law of sacrifice and provide a Savior for him, that he might be brought back again into the presence and favor of God and partake of eternal life with him. This was the plan of redemption chosen and instituted by the Almighty before man was placed on the earth” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 98).

Adam and Eve were taught the law of sacrifice and were commanded to practice it by giving offerings. These included two emblems: the firstlings of the flock and the





firstfruits of the field. They obeyed without questioning (see Moses 5:5–6). President David O. McKay (1873–1970) pointed out, “The effect of this [law] was that the best the earth produced, the best specimen in the flock or herd should not be used for self, but for God” (“The Atonement,” *Instructor*, March 1959, 66). At a time in history when it was a struggle to make sure the family had food, those who sought to worship the Lord were asked to sacrifice the best part of their source of life. It was a real test of Adam and Eve’s faith, and they obeyed.

Likewise, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the holy prophets from Adam to Moses offered to the Lord sacrifices in a similar way.



the right parentage to officiate in his office. Like Christ, the offerer through obedience willingly sacrificed what was required by the law.

The part of sacrifice that most strongly paralleled the Savior was the offering itself. Notice with me some of these parallels.

First, like Christ, the animal was chosen and anointed by the laying on of hands. (The Hebrew title *Messiah* and the Greek title *Christ* both mean “the Anointed One.”)

Second, the animal was to have its life’s blood spilt. Third, it had to be without blemish—totally free from physical flaws—complete, whole, and perfect. Fourth, the sacrifice had to be clean and worthy. Fifth, the sacrifice had to be domesticated; that is, not wild but tame and

*After the Savior’s ultimate sacrifice, the ordinance of the sacrament replaced the ordinance of sacrifice. In a sense, the sacrifice changed from the offering to the offerer.*

#### THE LAW OF MOSES

Because of the rebellious nature of the children of Israel in the days of Moses, the practice of the law of sacrifice was changed; it became a strict law requiring daily observance of performances and ordinances. During the time of Moses there was an expansion in the number and variety of offerings under the law of sacrifice. The Mosaic sacrifices consisted of five major offerings that fell into two primary categories—obligatory and voluntary. The difference between the obligatory and the voluntary offerings might be compared to the difference between the law of tithing and the law of fast offerings.

One thing remained the same in all of these offerings: everything about Mosaic sacrifice focused on Christ. Like Christ, the priest acted as the mediator between the people and their God. Like Christ, the priest had to have



of help to man (see Leviticus 1:2–3, 10; 22:21). Sixth and seventh, for the original sacrifice practiced by Adam and the most common sacrifice in the law of Moses, the animal had to be a firstborn and a male (see Exodus 12:5; Leviticus 1:3; 22:18–25). Eighth, the sacrifice of grain had to be ground into flour and made into breadstuffs, which reminds us of our Lord’s title the Bread of Life (see John 6:48). Ninth, the firstfruits that were offered remind us that Christ was the firstfruits of the Resurrection (see 1 Corinthians 15:20). (See also Bible Dictionary, “Sacrifices”; Daniel H. Ludlow, editor, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 volumes [1992], 3:1248–49.)

#### FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW

The law of sacrifice with its system of offerings given to Moses was still being practiced in New Testament



*Jesus told His Nephite Apostles that He would no longer accept burnt offerings but that His disciples should offer “a broken heart and a contrite spirit.” Instead of the Lord requiring our animals or grain, now He wants us to give up all that is ungodly.*

times. Jesus Christ of the New Testament was Jehovah of the Old Testament—He who gave the law of Moses in the first place, prescribing elements of the law that specifically pointed to His future atoning sacrifice. He was, then, the one with authority to fulfill that law, and His final words—“It is finished” (John 19:30)—indicate that this had been done.

Amulek explained the fulfillment of the law this way:

“Therefore, it is expedient that there should be a great and last sacrifice, and then shall there be . . . a stop to the shedding of blood; then shall the law of Moses be fulfilled. . . .

“And behold, this is the whole meaning of the law, every whit pointing to that great and last sacrifice; and that great and last sacrifice will be the Son of God, yea, infinite and eternal” (Alma 34:13–14).

Now, here is a very important truth: We should understand that the law of Moses is not the same thing as the law of sacrifice. While the law of Moses was fulfilled, the principles of the law of sacrifice continue to be part of the doctrine of the Church. The primary purpose of the law of sacrifice still is to test us and assist us in coming unto Christ. After the Savior’s ultimate sacrifice, two adjustments were made in the practice of this law. First, the ordinance of the sacrament replaced the ordinance of sacrifice; and second, this change moved the focus of the sacrifice from a person’s animal to the person himself. In a sense, the sacrifice changed from the *offering* to the *offerer*.

As we contemplate the replacing of animal sacrifice with the sacrament, we cannot help but notice a strong relationship between the two. Both sacrifice and sacrament:

■ Are affected by a person's attitude and worthiness (see Amos 5:6–7, 9–10, 21–22; 3 Nephi 18:27–29; Moroni 7:6–7).

■ Are designed to be performed by priests officiating in the Aaronic Priesthood (see D&C 13:1; 20:46).

■ Focus on Christ (see Luke 22:19–20; Alma 34:13–14).

■ Use emblems that represent Christ's flesh and blood (see Luke 22:19–20; Moses 5:6–7).

■ Provide a means whereby one can make and renew covenants with God (see Leviticus 22:21; D&C 20:77, 79).

■ Are performed regularly on the Sabbath as well as on other special occasions (see Leviticus 23:15; D&C 59:9–13).

■ Are associated with meals that symbolically represent the Atonement (see Leviticus 7:16–18; Matthew 26:26).

■ Are the only saving ordinances in which members participate for themselves more than once.

■ Provide an important step in the process of repentance (see Leviticus 19:22; 3 Nephi 18:11; Moses 5:7–8).

President Joseph F. Smith said that the purpose of the sacrament “is that we may keep in mind continually the Son of God who has redeemed us, from eternal death, and brought us to life again through the power of the Gospel. Before the coming of Christ to the earth, this was borne in mind . . . by another ordinance [blood sacrifice], which was a type of the great sacrifice that should take place in the meridian of time” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith*, 102).

### THE SACRIFICE OF OURSELVES

After His mortal ministry, Christ elevated the law of sacrifice to a new level. In describing how the law would continue, Jesus told His Nephite Apostles that He would no longer accept burnt offerings but that His disciples should offer “a broken heart and a contrite spirit” (3 Nephi 9:19–20; see also D&C 59:8, 12). Instead of the Lord requiring our animals or grain, now

He wants us to give up all that is ungodly. This higher practice of the law of sacrifice reaches into the inner soul of a person. Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “Real, personal sacrifice never was placing an animal on the altar. Instead, it is a willingness to put the animal in us upon the altar and letting it be consumed!” (“Deny Yourselves of All Ungodliness,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 68).

How is it we show the Lord that we have symbolically put ourselves upon today's sacrificial altar? We show Him by living the first great commandment: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Matthew 22:37). When we overcome our own selfish desires and put God first in our lives and covenant to serve Him regardless of the cost, we are then living the law of sacrifice.

One of the best ways to be sure we are keeping the first great commandment is to keep the second great commandment. The Master Himself taught that “inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40). King Benjamin taught that “when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17). The degree of our love for the Lord and for our fellowman can be measured by what we are willing to sacrifice for them. Sacrifice is a demonstration of pure love.

Sometimes the most effective way to teach a principle is to give an example of its use in practice. Let me share two examples with which I am personally acquainted, knowing as I do that many other Church members could share such significant stories of sacrifice by members of their own families.

My great-grandfather, Henry Ballard, joined the Church in England, came to America, and suffered great privation while making his way west to Utah. Likewise, my great-grandmother, Margaret McNeil Ballard, endured much hardship crossing the plains as an 11-year-old girl. As I traveled along the pioneer trail with my

family a few years ago, I found myself wondering how my faithful great-grandparents ever survived that trek and how it was possible for them to do what they did throughout their lives. Surely they came to know God and His Holy Son as they willingly gave all that they had to serve Them. Henry Ballard served faithfully as bishop of the Logan Second Ward for just a few months less than 40 years. His devoted wife Margaret served as Relief Society president for 30 years.

Our commitment to the kingdom should match that of our faithful ancestors even though our sacrifices are different. Today in the Church we can find many examples to help us understand that sacrifice for the gospel is still essential and that coming unto Christ requires as much commitment and devotion now as it ever has.

Not long ago, for example, I was assigned to preside over a regional conference in La Paz, Bolivia. Some members came from small towns and villages far away, showing great sacrifice and commitment to attend the meetings. Prior to the priesthood leadership training session, I greeted the brethren as they gathered. I noticed that one older brother's shirt was a different color from the middle of his chest down; the upper portion was white, while the lower part was brownish red. He and three of his companions, all Melchizedek Priesthood holders, had traveled for many hours, walking most of the way and fording two rivers where the brownish red water came up to their chests. They had flagged down a truck and stood in the back of it for the last two hours of their journey.

Their sacrifice and their attitude about it made me feel extremely humble. One of these faithful men said to me: "Elder Ballard, you are one of the Lord's Apostles. My brethren and I would do whatever was required to be taught by you."

Do we have a similar attitude when we are asked to attend stake and ward or branch and district leadership meetings?

#### **THE BLESSINGS OF SACRIFICE**

We sing, "Sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven" ("Praise to the Man," *Hymns*, number 27). This is a true principle. Let me illustrate with a personal experience.

I was named bishop of a suburban Salt Lake City ward in 1958, in the days when local members paid 50 percent of the cost of constructing a building. One of the most important leadership experiences in my life came several weeks before the dedication of our building. Our ward of young families, struggling to make ends meet, still needed to raise U.S. \$30,000. I fasted and prayed to know what I should say to them regarding this obligation. We already had pressed them very hard.

As the brethren gathered for priesthood meeting, I was impressed to read to them the testimony that Elder Melvin J. Ballard, my grandfather, bore when he was ordained to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on 7 January 1919. I quote a small portion recounting his experience in 1917 when he had sought the Lord pleadingly in a situation where there were no precedents for guidance:

"That night I received a wonderful manifestation and impression which has never left me. I was carried to this place—into this room. I saw myself here with you. I was told there was another privilege that was to be mine; and I was led into a room where I was informed I was to meet someone. As I entered the room I saw, seated on a raised platform, the most glorious being I have ever conceived of, and was taken forward to be introduced to Him. As I approached He smiled, called my name, and stretched out His hands toward me. . . . He put His arms around me and kissed me, as He took me into His bosom, and He blessed me until my whole being was thrilled. As He finished I fell at His feet, and there saw the marks of the nails; and as I kissed them, with deep joy swelling through my whole being, I felt that I was in heaven indeed. The feeling that came to my heart then was: Oh! If I could live worthy . . . so that in the end when I have





*One older brother's shirt was brownish red from the middle of his chest down. He and three of his companions had traveled for many hours to attend regional conference, walking most of the way and fording two rivers where the water came up to their chests.*

finished I could go into His presence and receive the feeling that I *then* had in His presence, I would give everything that I am and ever hope to be!" (Melvin R. Ballard, *Melvin J. Ballard: Crusader for Righteousness* [1966], 66).

The Spirit of the Lord touched the hearts of the faithful brethren in my ward's priesthood meeting that day. We all knew that with greater faith in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, we could reach our goal. During that same day, family after family came to my office with money, making personal sacrifices that were far beyond what I, the bishop, would ever have asked of them. By eight o'clock Sunday evening, the ward clerk had written receipts for a little more than \$30,000.

Sacrifice truly brought forth the blessings of heaven to the members of our ward. Never have I lived among a people who were more united, more caring, more

concerned for one another than those members. In our greatest sacrifice, we became bonded together in the true spirit of the gospel of love and service.

Sacrifice is still necessary if we are to develop faith strong enough to lay hold on eternal life. I believe we should increase our spiritual devotion and service to the Lord and others in order to demonstrate our love for Him and our Heavenly Father.

#### **THE TEST OF ABUNDANCE**

Now as we contemplate the law of sacrifice in our lives, let us contemplate the environment in which we live. The blessings that have come to us in our times are monumental. We have need to guard carefully against ingratitude. The Lord said, "And in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all

things” (D&C 59:21). The spirit of the law of sacrifice promotes gratitude.

We are living in a period of great prosperity that may, when history is written, prove to be as devastating to our souls as the effects of physical persecutions were upon the bodies of our pioneer ancestors. President Brigham Young (1801–77) warned: “Poverty, persecution and oppression we have endured; many of us have suffered the loss of all things in a worldly point of view. Give us prosperity and see if we would bear it, and be willing to serve God. See if we would be as willing to sacrifice millions as we were to sacrifice what we had when in comparative poverty” (*Deseret News Weekly*, 26 October 1870, 443).



*If I have a fear, it is that the principle of sacrifice may be slipping away from us. If being a member of this Church becomes too easy, testimonies will become shallow, and the roots of testimony will not go down into the soil of faith as they did with our pioneer forefathers.*

We would do well to remember the prosperity cycle found in the Book of Mormon when those persons blessed for their righteousness became wealthy and then forgot the Lord. Let us not forget the Lord in our day of prosperity. Let us maintain the spirit of the law of sacrifice and always thank Him for what we have, even if it is not as much as some others have.

Listen to the language of the scriptures as they describe the level of sacrifice the Lord requires of us: “Offer your whole souls as an offering unto [God]” (Omni 1:26; see also Mosiah 2:24). “Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” (Romans 12:1). The Lord Himself has said that we should keep our “covenants by sacrifice—yea, every sacrifice which I, the Lord, shall command” (D&C 97:8). The sacrifice the Lord asks of us is to wholly rid ourselves of the “natural man” (Mosiah 3:19) and all the ungodliness associated

with it. When we completely surrender ourselves to the Lord, then He will cause a mighty change in us and we will become a new person, justified, sanctified, and born again with His image in our countenances (see Mosiah 5:2; Alma 5:14; Moses 6:59–60).

As in all things, our Lord and Savior manifested the supreme example of sacrifice. His divine mission was culminated as He gave His life for our redemption. Through His personal sacrifice, He provided a way for us to have our sins forgiven and return to the presence of our Father.

I stand as a special witness today of this most singular event of all time. I testify of the far-reaching effects of this most holy of all offerings. In a future day of another life when

our finite reasoning will be expanded, we will more fully understand the penetrating powers of the Atonement and feel moved even more with gratitude, admiration, worship, and love toward our Savior in ways not possible in this present state.

If I have a fear, it is that the principle of sacrifice may be slipping away from us. This principle is a law of God. We are obliged to understand it and practice it. If being a member of this Church becomes too easy, testimonies will become shallow, and the roots of testimony will not go down into the soil of faith as they did with our pioneer forefathers. May God grant each of us an understanding of the law of sacrifice and a conviction that it is necessary today. It is vitally important that we understand this law and live it. □

*From an address given to Church Educational System educators at Brigham Young University on 13 August 1996.*

# Forgiving My Brother

By Diosafior Temblor

**W**hen I was 11 years old, my brother and I had a fight, and I refused to forgive him. For three long years, he worked to win my forgiveness, but I kept snubbing him and ignoring his efforts. I always felt guilty—as though I were carrying the heaviest load of my life. But I was selfish, and I had too much pride to admit I was wrong. I don't know how my brother was so patient with me.

Now I am 14. Recently I was given the opportunity to prepare to go to the Manila Philippines Temple to be baptized for the dead. I realized I had to do something to fix the situation with my brother. I wanted to repent and be friends with my brother again, but I didn't know how. Every night I thought about how to tell him I was sorry, but I was too shy to talk to him about it. For several nights, I struggled with what to do. Finally, after praying about it, I decided to write him a letter. I put the letter in his room before leaving to attend the temple.

I felt lighter than ever before. My heavy burden was gone, and I was filled with joy. More important than that, I felt worthy to enter the house of the Lord. I realized that if I had listened to the promptings of the Holy Ghost, I would have forgiven my brother long before. And I prayed that my brother and the Lord would forgive me for holding the grudge so long.

I am grateful for the power of forgiveness and that the Atonement of Jesus Christ can help our family be happy once again. □

*Diosafior Temblor is a member of the Dumaguete Second Branch, Dumaguete Philippines District.*



# The Currant Bush

"Thank you, Mr. Gardener, for loving me enough to cut me down."

By Elder Hugh B. Brown (1883–1975)

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



**Hugh B. Brown was born in Granger, Utah, and grew up in Alberta, Canada.**

**From 1961 to 1970, he served as a counselor in the First Presidency to David O. McKay, ninth President of the Church. He was a powerful speaker and teacher with a great love for and understanding of the youth of the Church.**

**Y**ou sometimes wonder whether the Lord really knows what He ought to do with you. You sometimes wonder if you know better than He does about what you ought to do and ought to become. I am wondering if I may tell you a story. It has to do with an incident in my life when God showed me that He knew best.

I was living up in Canada. I had purchased a farm. It was run-down. I went out one morning and saw a currant bush. It had grown up over six feet (two meters) high. It was going all to wood. There were no blossoms and no currants. I was raised on a fruit farm in Salt Lake before we went to Canada, and I knew what ought to happen to that currant bush. So I got some pruning shears and clipped it back until there was nothing left but stumps. It was just coming daylight, and I thought I saw on top of each of these little stumps what appeared to be a tear, and I thought the currant bush was crying. I was kind of simpleminded (and I haven't entirely gotten over it), and I looked at it and smiled and said, "What are you crying about?" You know, I thought I heard that currant bush say this:

"How could you do this to me? I was making such wonderful growth. I was almost as big as the shade tree and the fruit tree that are inside the fence, and now you have cut me down. Every plant in the garden will look

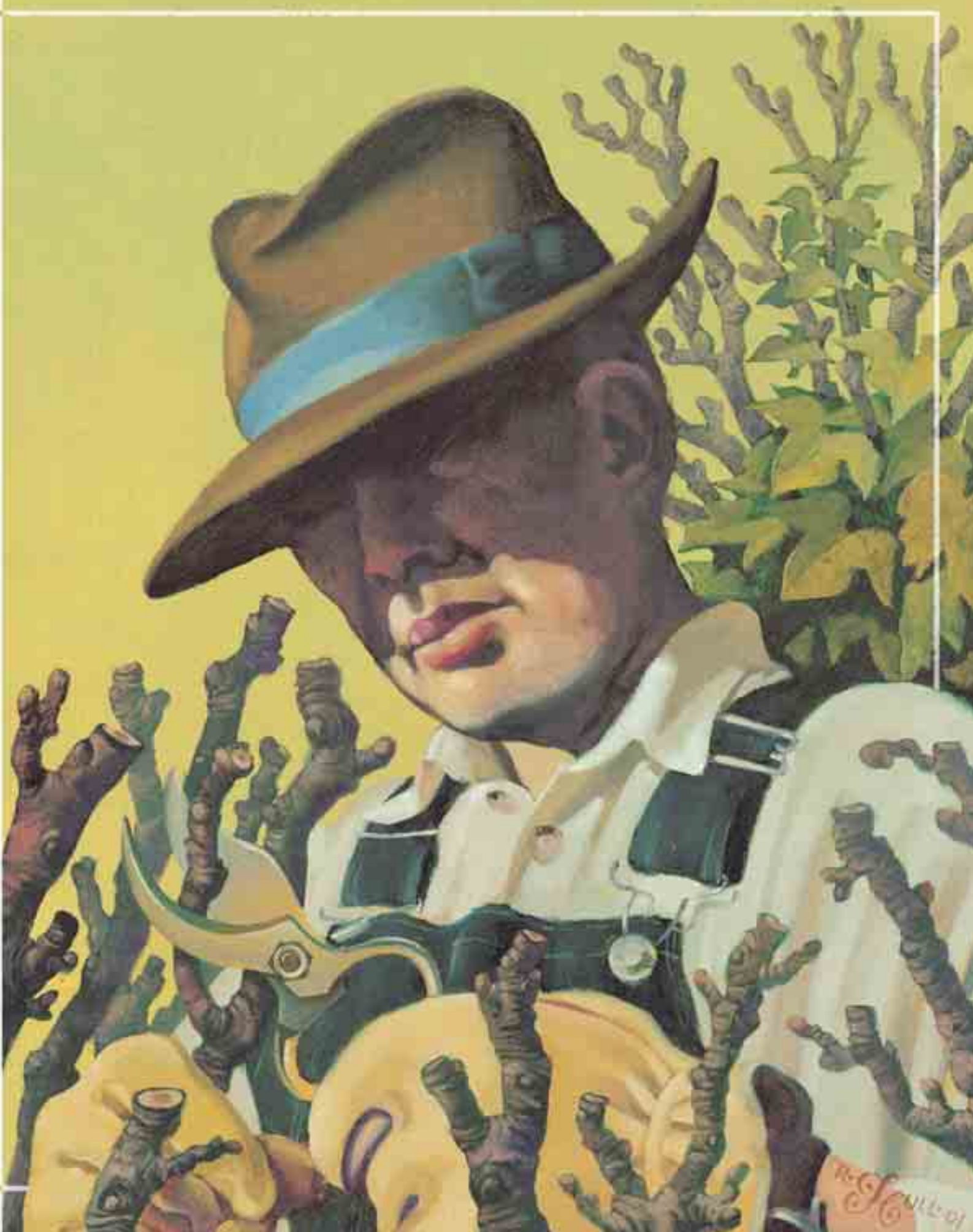
down on me because I didn't make what I should have made. How could you do this to me? I thought you were the gardener here."

That's what I thought I heard the currant bush say, and I thought it so much that I answered. I said, "Look, little currant bush, I am the gardener here, and I know what I want you to be. I didn't intend you to be a fruit tree or a shade tree. I want you to be a currant bush, and someday, little currant bush, when you are laden with fruit, you are going to say, 'Thank you, Mr. Gardener, for loving me enough to cut me down. Thank you, Mr. Gardener.'"

Years passed, and I found myself in England. I was in command of a cavalry unit in the Canadian army. I held the rank of field officer in the British Canadian army. I was proud of my position. And there was an opportunity for me to become a general. I had taken all the examinations. I had the seniority. The one man between me and the office of general in the British army became a casualty, and I received a telegram from London. It said: "Be in my office tomorrow morning at 10:00," signed by General Turner.

I went up to London. I walked smartly into the office of the general, and I saluted him smartly, and he gave me the same kind of a salute a senior officer usually gives—a sort of "Get out of the way, worm!" He said, "Sit down,





M. J. Sullivan



**The promotion Hugh B. Brown deserved was denied. Heartbroken, he asked the Lord why and seemed to hear his own voice reply, "I am the gardener here." Later he saw how much greater his blessings were because he had allowed the Lord to shape his life.**

Brown." Then he said, "I'm sorry I cannot make the appointment. You are entitled to it. You have passed all the examinations. You have the seniority. You've been a good officer, but I can't make the appointment. You are to return to Canada and become a training officer and a transport officer." That for which I had been hoping and praying for 10 years suddenly slipped out of my fingers.

Then he went into the other room to answer the telephone, and on his desk, I saw my personal history sheet. Right across the bottom of it was written, "THIS MAN IS A MORMON." We were not very well liked in those days. When I saw that, I knew why I had not been appointed. He came back and said, "That's all, Brown." I saluted him again, but not quite as smartly, and went out.

I got on the train and started back to my town, 120 miles (190 kilometers) away, with a broken heart, with bitterness in my soul. And every click of the wheels on the rails seemed to say, "You are a failure." When I got to my tent, I was so bitter that I threw my cap on the cot. I clenched my fists, and I shook them at heaven. I said, "How could you do this to me, God? I have done everything I could do to measure up. There is nothing that I could have done—that I should have done—that I haven't done. How could you do this to me?" I was as bitter as gall.

And then I heard a voice, and I recognized the tone of this voice. It was my own voice, and the voice said, "I am the gardener here. I know what I want you to do." The bitterness went out of my soul, and I fell on my knees by the cot to ask forgiveness for my ungratefulness and my bitterness. While kneeling there I heard a song being sung in an adjoining tent. A number of Mormon boys met regularly every Tuesday night. I usually met with them. We would sit on the floor and have Mutual. As I was kneeling there, praying for forgiveness, I heard their singing:

*But if, by a still, small voice he calls  
To paths that I do not know,  
I'll answer, dear Lord, with my hand in thine:  
I'll go where you want me to go.  
(Hymns, number 270)*

I arose from my knees a humble man. And now, almost 50 years later, I look up to Him and say, "Thank you, Mr. Gardener, for cutting me down, for loving me enough to hurt me." I see now that it was wise that I should not become a general at that time, because if I had I would have been senior officer of all western Canada, with a lifelong, handsome salary, a place to live, and a pension, but I would have raised my six daughters and two sons in army barracks. They would no doubt have married out of the Church, and I think I would not have amounted to anything. I haven't amounted to very much as it is, but I have done better than I would have done if the Lord had let me go the way I wanted to go.

Many of you are going to have very difficult experiences: disappointment, heartbreak, bereavement, defeat. You are going to be tested and tried. I just want you to know that if you don't get what you think you ought to get, remember, God is the gardener here. He knows what He wants you to be. Submit yourselves to His will. Be worthy of His blessings, and you will get His blessings. □

*Previously published in the January 1973 New Era.*

# INCREASING OUR TESTIMONIES OF JESUS CHRIST THROUGH SCRIPTURE STUDY

**R**ead the following with the sisters you visit, and discuss the questions, the scriptures, and the teachings from our Church leaders. Share your experiences and testimony, and invite those you teach to do the same.

## **PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY**

“I promise you that if you will read . . . scripture, there will come into your heart an understanding and a warmth. . . . Read . . . the Gospel of John. . . . Let the Lord speak for himself to you, and his words will come with a quiet conviction that will make the words of his critics meaningless. Read also the testament of the New World, the Book of Mormon, brought forth as a witness ‘that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations.’ (Book of Mormon title page.)” (in Conference Report, April 1966, 87).

## **2 NEPHI 33:4**

“I know that the Lord God will consecrate my prayers for the gain of my people. And the words which I have written in weakness will be made strong unto them; for it persuadeth them to do good; it maketh known unto them of their fathers; and it speaketh of Jesus, and persuadeth them to believe in him, and to endure to the end.”

## **JACOB 4:6**

“We search the prophets, . . . and having all these witnesses we obtain a hope, and our faith becometh unshaken, insomuch that we truly can command in the name of Jesus and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea.”

## **THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH (1805–44)**

“You remember the testimony which I bore in the name of the Lord Jesus. . . . I pray that the Lord may enable you to treasure these things in your mind, for I know that His Spirit will bear testimony to all who seek diligently after knowledge from Him. I hope you will search the Scriptures to see whether these things are not also consistent with those things which the ancient Prophets and Apostles have written” (*Teachings of*

*the Prophet Joseph Smith*, selected by Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 29).

## **HELANMAN 15:7–8**

“As many of them as are brought to the knowledge of the truth . . . and are led to believe the holy scriptures, yea, the prophecies of the holy prophets, which are written, which leadeth them to faith on the Lord, and unto repentance, which faith and repentance bringeth a change of heart unto them—therefore, as many as have come to this, ye know of yourselves are firm and steadfast in the faith.”

## **ELDER NEAL A. MAXWELL OF THE QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES**

“The igniting in our youth of a love for the holy scriptures is to ignite a fire that will probably never be extinguished. After all, our youth can take their scriptures and their understanding thereof with them long after parents, bishops, and advisers, of necessity, are left behind” (“‘Unto the Rising Generation,’” *Ensign*, April 1985, 10).

■ How can scripture study strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ?

■ How can we promote an increased desire for regular scripture study in ourselves, our families, and the youth or children we may be called to teach? □







# STAY ON THE

... And make sure you carry your own light.

By Elder Glenn L. Pace of the Seventy

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD HULL

**W**hen I was young I was overly dependent on my older sister. For example, I was a fussy eater, and when we went to visit our grandparents I was constantly faced with being offered food I didn't like. To minimize my embarrassment, when the plate was passed to me, I would turn to my sister and ask, "Collene, do I like this?"

If it was familiar and she knew I didn't like it, she would say, "No, he doesn't like that."

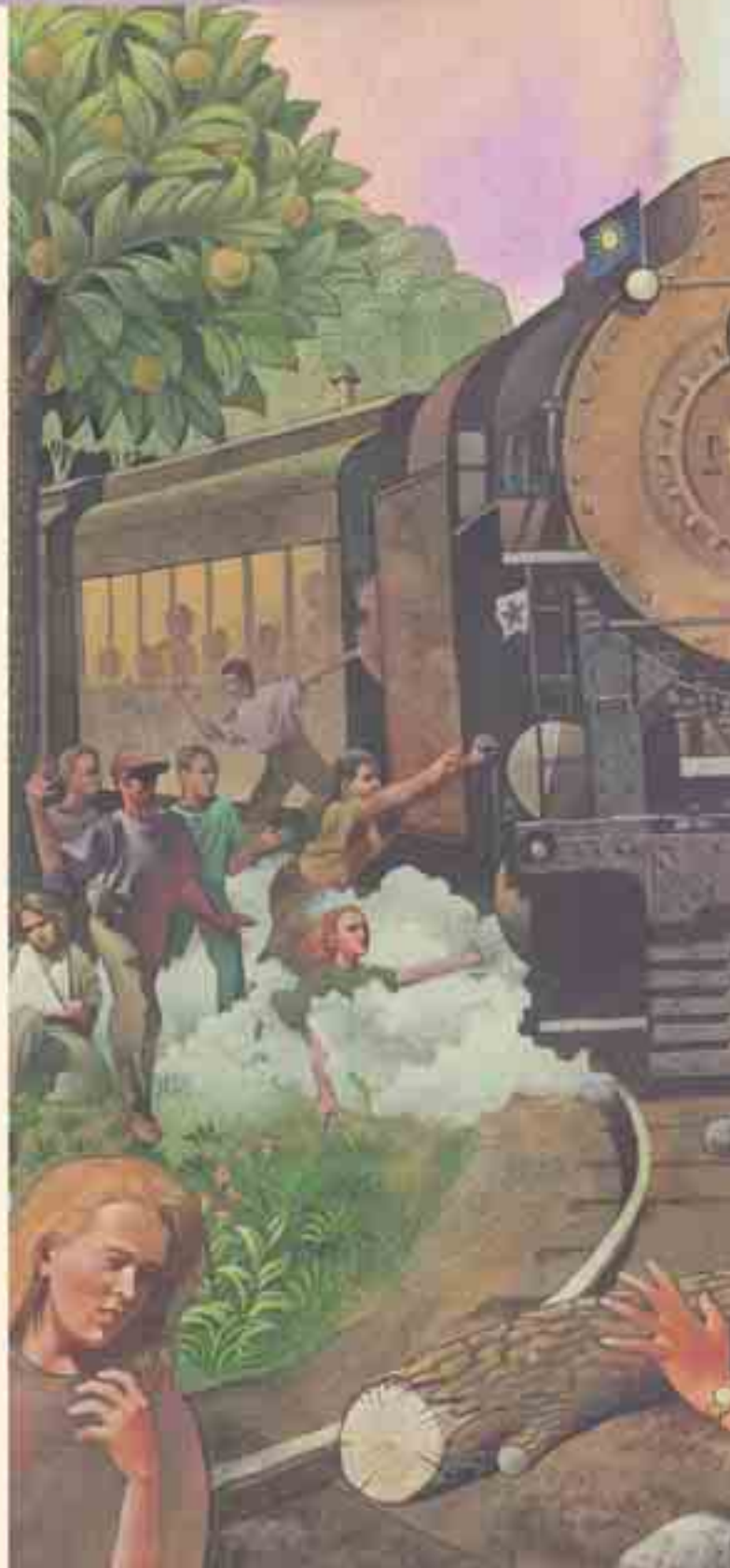
I could then say to Grandma, "She's right. I don't like it."

If it was something we hadn't eaten before, she would say, "Just a minute," and taste it, and then tell me if I liked it or not. If she said I didn't like it, no amount of coaxing could get me to eat it.

I know it is past time for me to rely on my own taste buds and stop denying myself healthy food just because my sister told me I didn't like it.

On a much more serious note, I believe the time has come for all of us to feast on the fruit of our own testimony as opposed to the testimony of another person. The testimony of which I speak is much deeper than knowing the Church is true. We need to progress to the point of knowing we are true to the Church. We also need to increase our capacity to receive personal revelation. It is one thing to receive a witness that Joseph Smith saw Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. It is quite another to have spiritual self-confidence in your ability to receive the revelation to which you are entitled.

Many of us take the blessings of the gospel for granted. It is as if we are passengers on the train of the Church, which has been moving forward gradually and methodically. Sometimes we have looked out the window and thought, "That looks kind of fun out there. This train is so restrictive." So we have jumped off and gone and played in the woods for a while. Sooner or





# T R A I N



later, we find it isn't as much fun as Satan makes it appear or we get critically injured, so we work our way back to the tracks and see the train ahead. With a determined sprint we catch up to it, breathlessly wipe the perspiration from our forehead, and thank the Lord for repentance.

While on the train, we can see the world and some of our own members outside laughing and having a great time. They taunt us and coax us to get off. Some throw logs and rocks on the tracks to try and derail it. Other members run alongside the tracks, and while they may never go play in the woods, they just can't seem to get on the train. Others try to run ahead and too often take the wrong turn.

I would propose that the luxury of getting on and off the train as we please is fading. The speed of the train is increasing. The woods are getting much too dangerous, and the fog and darkness are moving in.

Although our detractors might as well "stretch forth [their] puny arm[s] to stop the Missouri river in its decreed course, or to turn it up stream" (D&C 121:33) as try to derail this train, they are occasionally successful in coaxing individuals off. With all the prophecies we have seen fulfilled, what great event are we awaiting prior to saying, "Count me in"? What more do we need to see or experience before we get on the train and stay on it until we reach our destination? It is time for a spiritual revival. It is time to dig down deep within ourselves and rekindle our own light.

I make a special appeal to the youth. You will remain much safer and infinitely happier if you will place your energy into current obedience rather than saving it for future repentance. When we are obedient, we establish a base from which the challenges of the future can be addressed. □

*From an October 1992 general conference address.*

# STRENGTH *during*

The Lord can reassure that He is near and that He will lead us through the darkest days of our lives.



**By Elder L. Lionel Kendrick**  
Of the Seventy

Life is not always easy to live, but the opportunity to do so is a blessing beyond comprehension. In the process of living we will face struggles, many of which will cause us to suffer and to experience pain. Many people will suffer in personal struggles, while others will suffer as they watch their loved ones in pain.

To gain strength in our struggles, we must have a positive perspective of the principles in the plan of salvation. We must realize that we have a personal Savior whom we can trust and turn to in our times of need. We must also learn and live the principles that the Lord has given to receive the strength needed during our struggles.

## **POSITIVE PERSPECTIVE**

This earth is the place to prove ourselves worthy and to prepare to return to the presence of the Lord. He explained, “And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them” (Abraham 3:25).

The Lord explained the purpose for which we must be tested during this earthly experience: “My people must be tried in all things, that they may be prepared to receive the glory that I have for them” (D&C 136:31).

Part of the plan is “that there is an opposition in all

things” (2 Nephi 2:11). We are given the agency to choose between these opposites in the proving process (see 2 Nephi 2:27; D&C 29:35). In our pre-earth life, we understood and sustained the plan of salvation with the principles of opposition and agency. We knew we would have experiences in this life that would cause us to struggle and sometimes to suffer.

Some of our struggles involve making decisions, while others are a result of the decisions we have made. Some of our struggles result from choices others make that affect our lives. We cannot always control everything that happens to us in this life, but we *can* control how we respond. Many struggles come as problems and pressures that sometimes cause pain. Others come as temptations, trials, and tribulations.

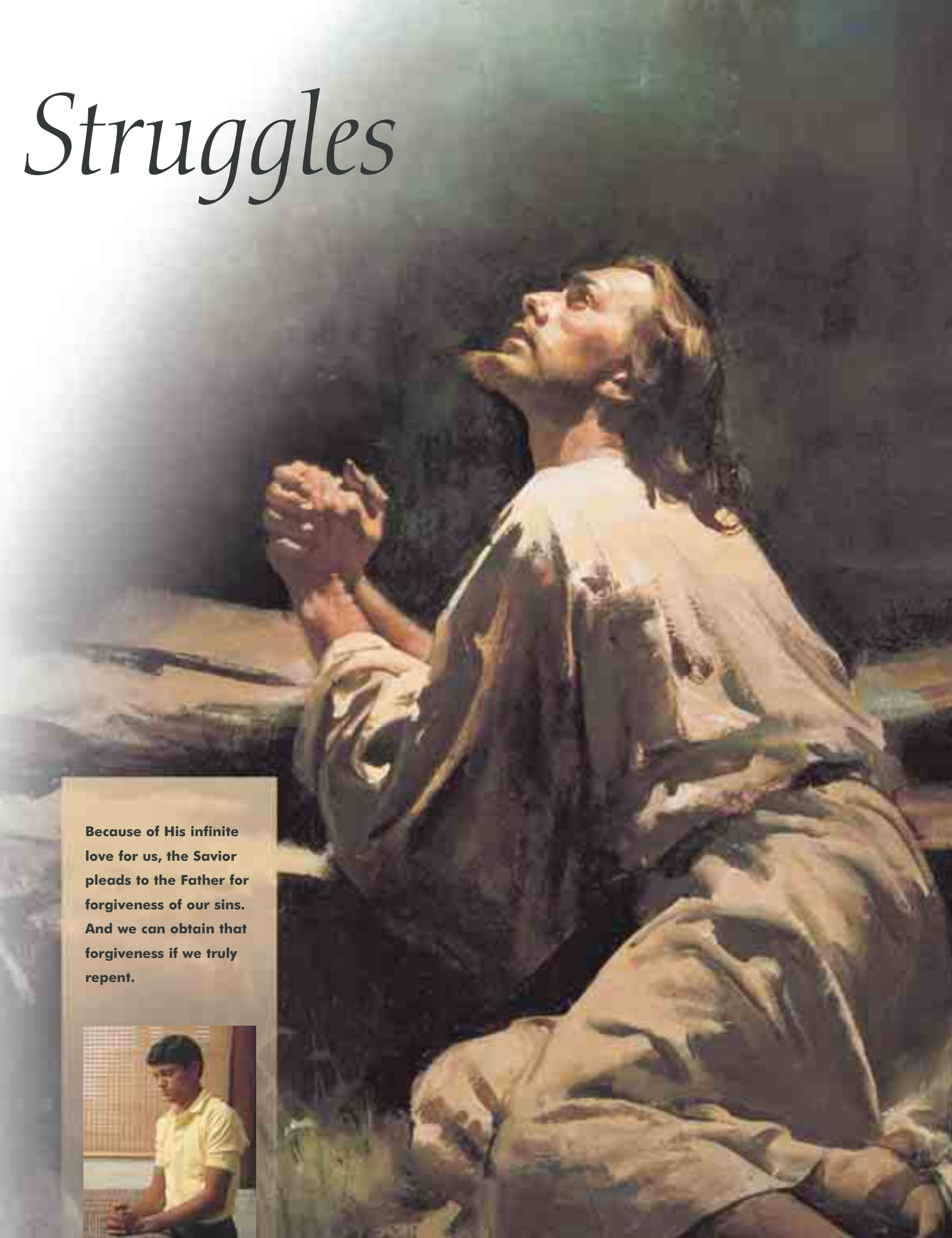
Yet struggles are a part of the sacred sanctification process. There are no soft or slothful ways to become sanctified to the point that we are prepared to live in the presence of the Savior. And there can be blessings in the burdens we bear. As a result of these struggles, our character becomes more Christlike.

Even though these experiences may cause pain, suffering, and sorrow, we have this absolute assurance: “No pain suffered by man or woman upon the earth will be without its compensating effects if it be suffered in resignation and if it be met with patience” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, edited by Edward L. Kimball [1982], 168).

The Savior gave comfort and counsel to the Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44) while he was suffering in Liberty Jail, explaining the beneficial effects and blessings that come if we bear our burdens well: “All these things shall

# Struggles

Because of His infinite love for us, the Savior pleads to the Father for forgiveness of our sins. And we can obtain that forgiveness if we truly repent.





give thee experience, and shall be for thy good” (D&C 122:7). He continued:

“My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

“And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes” (D&C 121:7–8).

People respond to struggles in different ways. Some feel defeated and beaten down by the burdens they are called to bear. Many begin to blame others for their difficulties and defeats, and they fail to follow the counsel of the Lord. It is a natural tendency to seek the easy road on life’s journey and to become discouraged, filled with doubt, and even depressed when facing life’s struggles.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell, then an Assistant to the Twelve, distinguished the difference in responses to difficulties: “The winds of tribulation, which blow out some men’s candles of commitment, only fan the fires of faith of [others]” (“Why Not Now?” *Ensign*, November 1974, 12).

If we follow the revealed eternal principles, we will gain strength during our struggles and will be blessed as we bear our burdens and deal with difficulties and overcome obstacles in our lives. If we are to gain the strength that we need, we must come to know the Savior and follow His counsel.

#### **A PERSONAL SAVIOR**

The Savior has assured us of His personal acquaintance, His awareness of our needs, and His presence in our times of need. He counseled, “I say unto you that mine eyes are upon you. I am in your midst and ye cannot see me” (D&C 38:7). Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained, “The Savior is in our midst, sometimes personally, frequently through his servants, and always by his Spirit” (*The Lord’s Way* [1991], 14).

The Savior knows all things past, present, and future. Jacob taught, “For he knoweth all things, and there is not anything save he knows it” (2 Nephi 9:20). He knows the

things that we stand in need of even before we ask (see 3 Nephi 13:8).

He also knows our thoughts and the intents of our hearts and sees into the innermost parts of our eternal spirits (see Alma 18:32). He taught, “I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them” (Ezekiel 11:5).

He knows the temptations we face. The Savior was tempted beyond any temptation we could ever face. The scriptures say, “He suffered temptations but gave no heed unto them” (D&C 20:22). He stands ready to deliver us in our times of temptation. Paul wrote, “For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour [help] them that are tempted” (Hebrews 2:18). Peter proclaimed, “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations” (2 Peter 2:9).

The Savior “knoweth the weakness of man” (D&C 62:1). In spite of our weakness, He loves us in an incomprehensible manner and offers us great hope: “I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them” (Ether 12:27).

In addition to knowing our thoughts and intents, temptations and weaknesses, He knows all that we do in this life. He said, “Behold, mine eyes see and know all their works” (D&C 121:24; see also 2 Nephi 27:27). “I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works” (Revelation 2:19).

The Lord stands ready to help us in the days of our difficulty:

“Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

“Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name it shall be given unto you, that is expedient for you” (D&C 88:63–64).

He stands ready to comfort and counsel us in our



season of struggles and suffering. Jacob taught, “Look unto God with firmness of mind, and pray unto him with exceeding faith, and he will console you in your afflictions” (Jacob 3:1).

The Lord gives us a spirit of hope and a feeling of comfort and confidence that we can overcome the obstacles we face. He has shown the way to gain strength during our struggles. With His assistance, we have the ability to succeed. Listen to His words of counsel and comfort: “Fear not, little children, for you are mine, and I have overcome the world . . . ; and none of them that my Father hath given me shall be lost” (D&C 50:41–42).

Again, with a feeling of love, He reassures us that He is near and that He will lead us through the darkest days of our lives. His strength will sustain us during our struggles even when we feel weak: “Wherefore, I am in your midst, and I am the good shepherd, and the stone of Israel. He that buildeth upon this rock shall never fall” (D&C 50:44).

Because of His infinite love for us, He pleads to the Father for forgiveness of our sins and gives us this counsel of cheer: “Lift up your hearts and be glad, for I am in your midst, and am your advocate with the Father” (D&C 29:5; see also D&C 45:3; 62:1; 110:4).

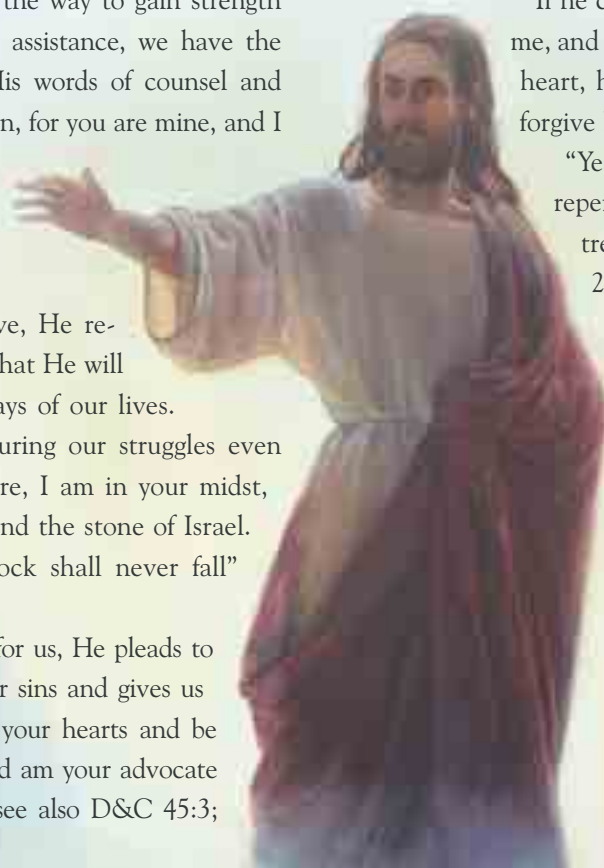
If our struggle is with sin, we must remember that He stands ready to forgive us if we truly repent. Too often we forget that He is a loving, caring, and merciful God. Some may feel that there is no hope because they have failed too many times. The Lord has counseled that there is great hope for sinners if they truly repent:

“If he confess his sins before thee and me, and repenteth in the sincerity of his heart, him shall ye forgive, and I will forgive him also.

“Yea, and as often as my people repent will I forgive them their trespasses against me” (Mosiah 26:29–30).

We must approach the Lord as Enos of old did. He said: “And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and

**The Savior “suffered [Satan’s] temptations but gave no heed unto them.” He knows the temptations we face and stands ready to deliver us.**



supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens” (Enos 1:4).

It may take this intensity of prayer to receive a remission of some sins. Serious sins must be confessed to a bishop, who is a common judge in Israel.

The results of true repentance and remission of sins are feelings of peace, hope, joy, and a clearness of conscience (see Mosiah 4:3). Alma described the feeling with these words:

“I could remember my pains no more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more.

“And oh, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!” (Alma 36:19–20).

Mormon taught the process that occurs when we receive a remission

of our sins: “And the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come” (Moroni 8:26).

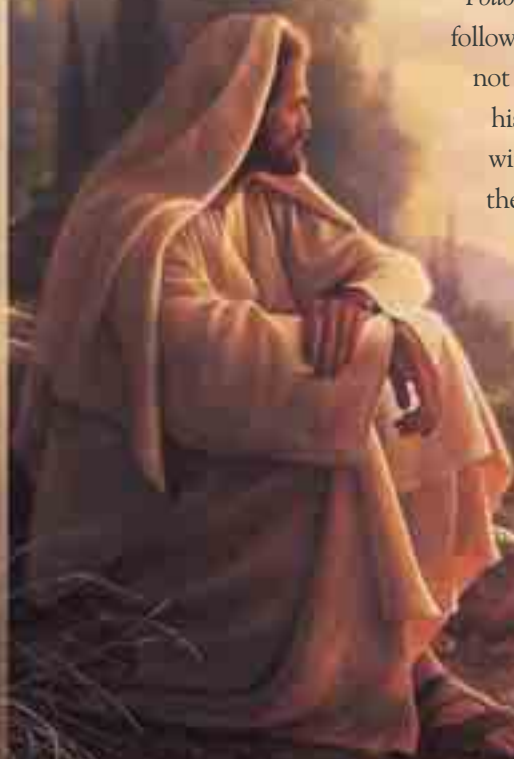
### STRENGTH TO CHANGE

If the Lord is to help us gain strength during our struggles, we must do the things He has counseled us to do. This involves turning to Him and applying certain principles of the gospel.

*Trust in Him.* Trust involves humility, a willing and submissive spirit to rely on Him and His revealed counsel. The Lord counsels, “Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not” (D&C 6:36). Strength comes when we seek His will, not our will. He tenderly tells us to “be . . . humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers” (D&C 112:10). He is the way, and only through Him will we succeed.

*Follow His counsel.* Great strength comes from following the counsel of the Lord. Jacob said, “Seek not to counsel the Lord, but to take counsel from his hand” (Jacob 4:10). Alma taught, “Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good” (Alma 37:37).

**The scriptures are replete with powerful promises to those who follow the Lord’s counsel. We should ponder these powerful promises and develop faith and trust in the Lord.**



The Lord gives counsel in the answers to our prayers. He counsels us as we search the scriptures for answers to our concerns. Nephi wrote, “Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:3).

The Lord gives counsel through His chosen servants (see D&C 1:38). Inspired counsel may also come from loved ones. When we are struggling, we do not always see and think clearly. This is the reason we should listen to counsel.

It takes courage to respond to the counsel that we receive. The Lord has warned us that when we think we are above His counsel and that of His servants and those who care, we will “fall and incur the vengeance of a just God” (D&C 3:4).

*Ponder His promises.* The scriptures are replete with powerful promises to those who follow His counsel. We should ponder these powerful promises and develop faith and trust in the Lord. His promises are sure.

Through King Limhi we receive a great promise of strength: “If ye will turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart, and put your trust in him, and serve him with all diligence of mind, if ye do this, he will, according to his own will and pleasure, deliver you out of bondage” (Mosiah 7:33).

The Savior gives us other marvelous promises that should strengthen us during our struggles:

“Wherefore, be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you” (D&C 68:6).

“And inasmuch as ye are humble and faithful and call upon my name, behold, I will give you the victory.

“I give unto you a promise, that you shall be delivered this once out of your bondage” (D&C 104:82–83).

The Lord has revealed other powerful principles to gain inner strength. If we apply these principles, we will be blessed with power and peace of mind.

*Take responsibility for our choices.* To admit and accept responsibility for our choices and their consequences is a

critical, initial step in the process of change. The Lord explained that “because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong” (Ether 12:37; see also D&C 135:5). In the grand plan the Lord ordained “that every man may act . . . according to the moral agency which I have given unto him, that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment” (D&C 101:78).

When we place blame for our actions on others or circumstances that we find ourselves in, we can never gain the strength to change. Some have a tendency to rationalize their behavior or to make excuses. These approaches are deceptive devices that are used to relieve guilt and gain temporary escape from the feelings of failure to make proper choices in life. They weaken our character and prolong our suffering and stress.

*Cultivate faith.* Faith gives us power to make necessary changes in our lives (see 2 Nephi 1:10). If we do not have sufficient faith, we cannot change or be healed of our infirmities (see 3 Nephi 17:8). Our weaknesses can never become strong without full faith. It takes faith to get answers to our prayers (see D&C 10:47). Moroni taught, “Behold, I say unto you that whoso believeth in Christ, doubting nothing, whatsoever he shall ask the Father in the name of Christ it shall be granted him” (Mormon 9:21).

We must never underestimate the power of the Lord even when we feel powerless. Nephi reminds us of the infinite power of the Lord with these words: “Yea, and how is it that ye have forgotten that the Lord is able to do all things according to his will, for the children of men, if it so be that they exercise faith in him? Wherefore, let us be faithful to him” (1 Nephi 7:12).

He is indeed a God of miracles (see 2 Nephi 27:23). Moroni cautions, “For if there be no faith among the children of men God can do no miracle among them” (Ether 12:12). The Lord cautions us concerning faith, “Remember that without faith you can do nothing” (D&C 8:10).

*Develop righteous desires.* Our motivation to change comes from the desires of our hearts. Without a deep,

divine desire to repent, there will be no change. Alma taught this powerful principle when he said, “I know that he granteth unto men according to their desire” (Alma 29:4).

*Deepen our commitment.* Without commitment, our desires tend to diminish and die. Commitment gives us strength and power to make the appropriate changes we desire. This commitment should be like that of Nephi of old. When given a difficult assignment, he responded with a Christlike commitment to succeed: “I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them [to] accomplish the thing which he commandeth them” (1 Nephi 3:7; see also 1 Nephi 3:15).

*Fast and pray.* The Lord has commanded us “that [we] shall continue in prayer and fasting from this time forth” (D&C 88:76). Great power is received as we fast and pray concerning our struggles and our spiritual welfare.

When we fast we should do so with a purpose, with prayer, and “with an eye single to the glory of God” (D&C 4:5). We should strive for mastery of self, have pure thoughts, and ponder spiritual things. We can gain strength through scripture study during the fast. We should listen to the promptings of the Spirit as we seek for solutions.

We should petition the Lord in prayer for strength and deliverance from the bondage of our behaviors (see Alma 58:10; Jacob 3:1). We should pray for strength to resist temptations. The Lord warns and counsels us to “pray always, lest you enter into temptation and lose your reward” (D&C 31:12; see also D&C 61:39; 10:5). We should pray to seek forgiveness and to express our love and gratitude to Heavenly Father.

As a result of our sincere repentance, prayers, and fasting, we will receive forgiveness. We can feel the fruits of the Spirit as joy (see D&C 59:13). We can become sanctified (see Helaman 3:35) and inherit eternal life (see Omni 1:26).

Fasting and prayer will help us control our thoughts, feelings, passions, and appetites. We can bring these and our bodies under subjection of our spirits. We will experience added spirituality, strength, power, humility, and testimony. We will be able to get answers to our prayers and enjoy feelings of peace and comfort. We will enjoy the companionship of the Spirit. We will experience an increase of love. Ill feelings will be removed from our souls. We will have added power to resist temptations and to overcome weaknesses. We will become free from undue worry. Our faith and hope will be increased. Feelings of doubt and discouragement will be dispelled.

*Remember priesthood blessings.* When we are struggling, we may seek a priesthood blessing. For the blessing to be effective, we must be humble and teachable. We must be willing to submit our will to the will of the Lord as spoken to us in the blessing. This blessing can be a great source of counsel from the Lord. Our minds can be enlightened and our knowledge and understanding quickened. He has given a powerful promise concerning that which will be spoken by the priesthood holder who is giving the blessing: “And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost . . . shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God” (D&C 68:4).

We must have full faith and complete confidence in the counsel we receive. We must have the courage to follow it. If we do so, we will receive added power to succeed in our struggles.

*Ponder our patriarchal blessings.* Our patriarchal blessings are another source of increased strength during our struggles. President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) said of the Savior: “He knows in advance every strategy the enemy will use against you. . . . He knows your weaknesses and He knows your strengths. By personal revelation you may discover some of your strengths through a careful and prayerful study of your patriarchal blessing” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [1988], 214).



President James E. Faust, while serving as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught, “Our [patriarchal] blessings can encourage us when we are discouraged, strengthen us when we are fearful, comfort us when we sorrow, give us courage when we are filled with anxiety, lift us up when we are weak in spirit” (“Patriarchal Blessings,” *New Era*, November 1982, 6).

### CONCLUDING COUNSEL

If our struggles are with sin, we should ponder the passionate plea of Alma:

“And now, my brethren, I wish from the inmost part of my heart, yea, with great anxiety even unto pain, that ye would hearken unto my words, and cast off your sins, and not procrastinate the day of your repentance;

“But that ye would humble yourselves before the Lord, and call on his holy name, and watch and pray continually, that ye may not be tempted above that which ye can bear, and thus be led by the Holy Spirit, becoming humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love and all long-suffering;

“Having faith on the Lord; having a hope that ye shall receive eternal life; having

the love of God always in your hearts” (Alma 13:27–29).

The words of the Savior are appropriate counsel on struggles that are not the result of sin: “Search diligently, pray always, and be believing, and all things shall work together for your good, if ye walk uprightly and remember the covenant wherewith ye have covenanted one with another” (D&C 90:24).

All of the counsel in the scriptures and from the Brethren are words of hope. They reflect the love the Savior has for us and His desire that we succeed. There are no other ways to gain strength in our times of need. If we follow His counsel, we will find infinite strength during our struggles. □

**Like those who were blessed by the Savior in ancient times, we can seek a priesthood blessing today. This blessing can be a great source of counsel from the Lord.**



# “PREPARED TO RECEIVE THE GLORY”

Life is not always easy . . . ,” explains Elder L. Lionel Kendrick of the Seventy. “In the process of living we will face struggles, many of which will cause us to suffer and to experience pain” (see this issue, page 28). 🍀 Why must this be so? “My people must be tried in all things,” says the Lord, “that they may be prepared to receive the glory that I have for them” (D&C 136:31). Without trials we cannot be prepared for the



great blessings the Lord wishes to give us. “Struggles,” continues Elder Kendrick, “are a part of the sacred sanctification process. There are no soft or slothful ways to become sanctified to the point that we are prepared to live in the presence of the Savior.” 🍀 The following accounts demonstrate how individuals have endured or overcome challenges and have become stronger and more sanctified as a result of the struggle.

## The Power of Faith

By Maribel Herrera Chacón

Several years ago my daughter, who was only seven years old, had a large swollen bump on the front of her neck. The pediatrician who was treating Jeanette explained that she had a goiter and that it was growing internally and externally and was quite serious. He sent her to the hospital for some tests and said she would probably have to have an operation.

Our family immediately began to

fast and pray for Jeanette’s recovery. We prayed that everything would turn out all right. Jeannette had great faith and would often say, “Mama, I know that God is going to heal me and they won’t have to operate.”

The days went by, and the time came to take her to the children’s hospital in San José, the capital of Costa Rica. Before we went, my husband and my two brothers gave her a priesthood blessing. During the

blessing, Jeannette felt within herself that a great miracle was being worked. She felt a sweet and tender hand pass over her throat. “Mama,” she said later, “I know I’m fine. They’re not going to put me in the hospital or operate on me.”

**The doctors examined my daughter, and then our pediatrician said, “She’s fine. There’s not a thing wrong with her.”**





While we were in the hospital waiting room, I asked Jeannette how she felt.

“Just fine,” she told me, and she said again that there was not anything wrong with her.

My husband and I prayed constantly and tried to exercise faith that all would be well. We also understood that it might not be the Lord’s will for Jeanette to be healed; we prayed for the courage and faith to accept that answer as well.

Eventually the doctor called my daughter into his office and began to examine her. Then, very surprised, he said, “I’m sorry, but you will have to wait here for a moment. I have some concerns, and I need to call some of my colleagues.”

He left and returned with five other pediatricians. I was so nervous I was shaking, but my daughter was happy and calm. The doctors examined her, and then our pediatrician said, “She’s fine. There’s not a thing wrong with her. I don’t know what happened, but she’s fine. Go home and don’t worry about her.”

My daughter is 14 years old now, and she is very healthy and active and has a strong testimony. My own testimony has been strengthened because of her example. We are grateful that Heavenly Father heard and answered our prayers. And while the doctors may have been confused by these events, we understand what

happened and are grateful for the Lord’s healing blessings in our lives.

*Maribel Herrera Chacón is a member of the San Carlos Branch, Naranjo Costa Rica District.*

## The Rowing Team

By Humberto Eiti Kawai

So what about our rowing team—is it history?” the upperclassman was passionate as he put the question, obviously a rhetorical one, to the first-year students. “No way! It’s a tradition!”

I was one of those new students beginning medical school at the University of São Paulo, which had long been famous for its victories in rowing competitions. Team members had asked our professor for a few minutes to recruit for the team. We would be replacing those who had graduated.

As a result of the enthusiastic pitch, about 30 of us decided to try out. None of us had any rowing experience. We were all out of shape, as our coach constantly reminded us. He had been in the military and made no effort to hide his disgust at our sorry physical condition. He had lots of jokes, too, about the irony of poor muscle tone in students of medicine.

Training was grueling—held at 5:00 A.M., six days a week. We had to set our alarms for 4:15 to catch the bus to the training area. The less disciplined did not show up for long.

Those of us who stayed noted that the coach gave all his attention to the team veterans. Meanwhile, we recruits were ordered to run around the campus perimeter.

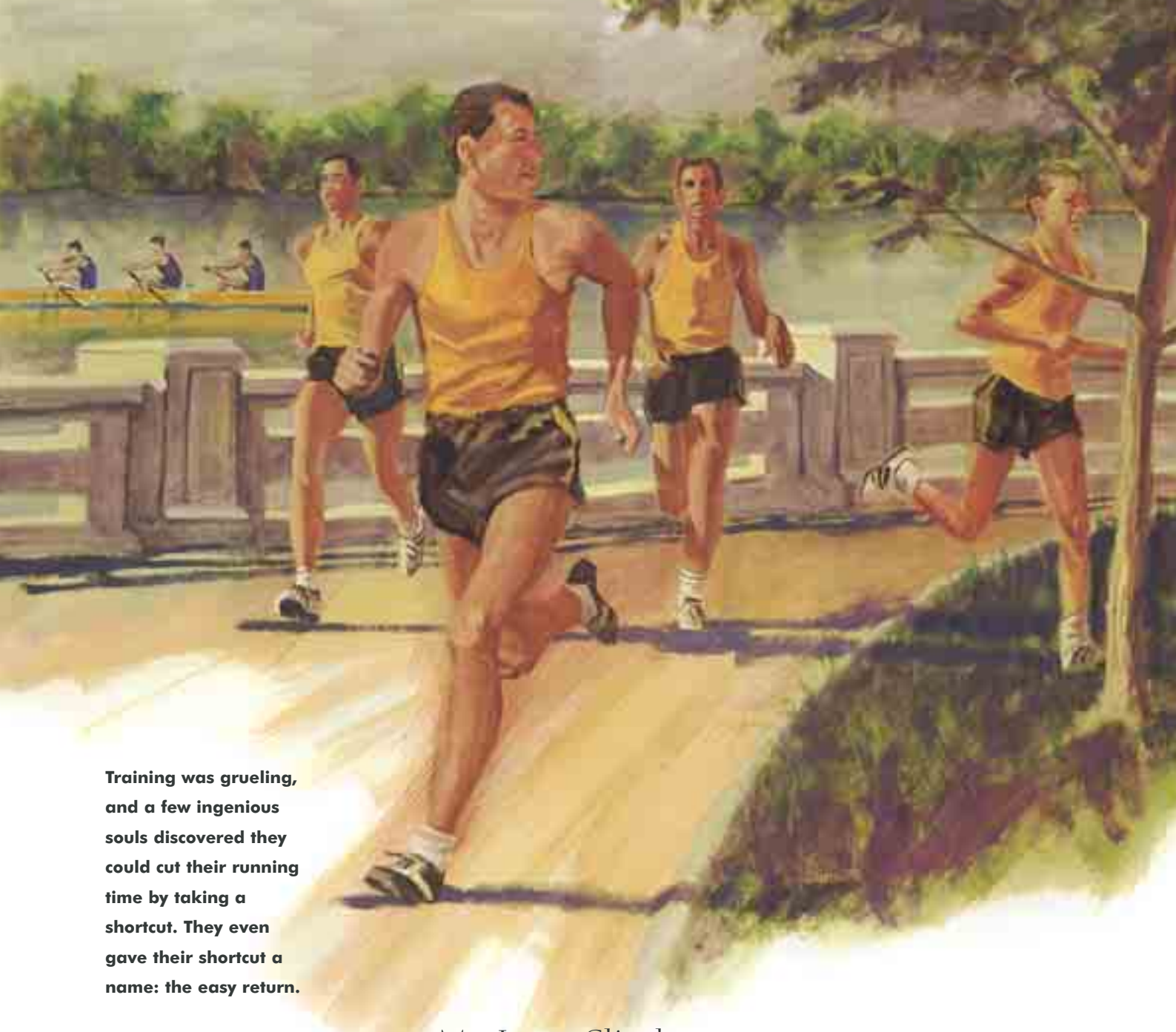
The University of São Paulo campus covers a large area, so the run was about 6 miles (10 kilometers) and required enormous effort from men in our condition. We were exhausted when we finished, and the coach ordered us to the showers without comment.

This routine continued for several weeks. In time, a few ingenious souls discovered that they could cut their running time by taking a shortcut. Instead of making a full circle around campus, they detoured through the woods. Of course, they thought themselves very clever when they beat us to the showers. They even gave their shortcut a name: the easy return.

In time, the coach announced that he was ready to name those who would join the official team. To their surprise, not one of the men who took the easy return was selected. I still don’t know how the coach knew.

Each of us has a race to run in life. The course may become difficult at times, but we have a Coach who knows us well. He has promised us, “He that is faithful and endureth shall overcome the world” (D&C 63:47). Some people may seem to profit by breaking the





**Training was grueling, and a few ingenious souls discovered they could cut their running time by taking a shortcut. They even gave their shortcut a name: the easy return.**

rules, but in reality, no effort to keep the commandments will go unrewarded.

I always feel grateful when I think back to the rowing team. I still have the gold medal I was awarded for our victories. But more importantly, I have the determination I developed then never to take the easy return.

*Humberto Eiti Kawai is a member of the Vila Mariana Ward, São Paulo Brazil Ipiranga Stake.*

## My Long Climb Home

By Mavis Grace Jones

I joined the Church in England in 1965, but the hostile reaction of my father and other pressures eventually led me to become less active.

Those were painful and unhappy times. On the outside it seemed easy to stay away, and I suppose I started to break the Word of Wisdom to fool myself that I didn't care. Eventually I convinced myself Heavenly Father no

longer loved or cared about me, and I felt completely rejected and alone.

Members still visited me occasionally, but it didn't help. I both resented and envied them.

Then one evening a pair of senior sister missionaries dropped by. I was determined to give them a hard time so they wouldn't make a return visit, but something inside me warmed to them. They had come as friends, not to preach to me or make me feel guilty.

They returned again and again to work in my garden and to strip paint from an old chest and help restore it—but above all to be friends to me. I began to be able to feel the Savior’s love through them as they filled my home with their obvious joy in living the gospel. They gained my trust, something that was so difficult for me to give.

All too soon their missions came to an end and they returned home. I later visited them in the United States. Rebellion against the Church was still within my heart, however, so I would not attend any Church meetings during the trip. In

fact, I took great delight in drinking coffee in front of my two friends, trying hard to show them I was

“untouchable.” I soon found out I was far from untouchable.

On the Saturday before Easter, we visited a memorial park in Glendale, California, and were deeply moved by the paintings and other art having to do with the Savior. It seemed that the Atonement was suddenly becoming real to me. A week later I was in southern Utah on the Sunday of general conference. During a moment alone, I switched on the television to a talk given by President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency. As I listened to that great man, I could not contain the tears of guilt and shame.

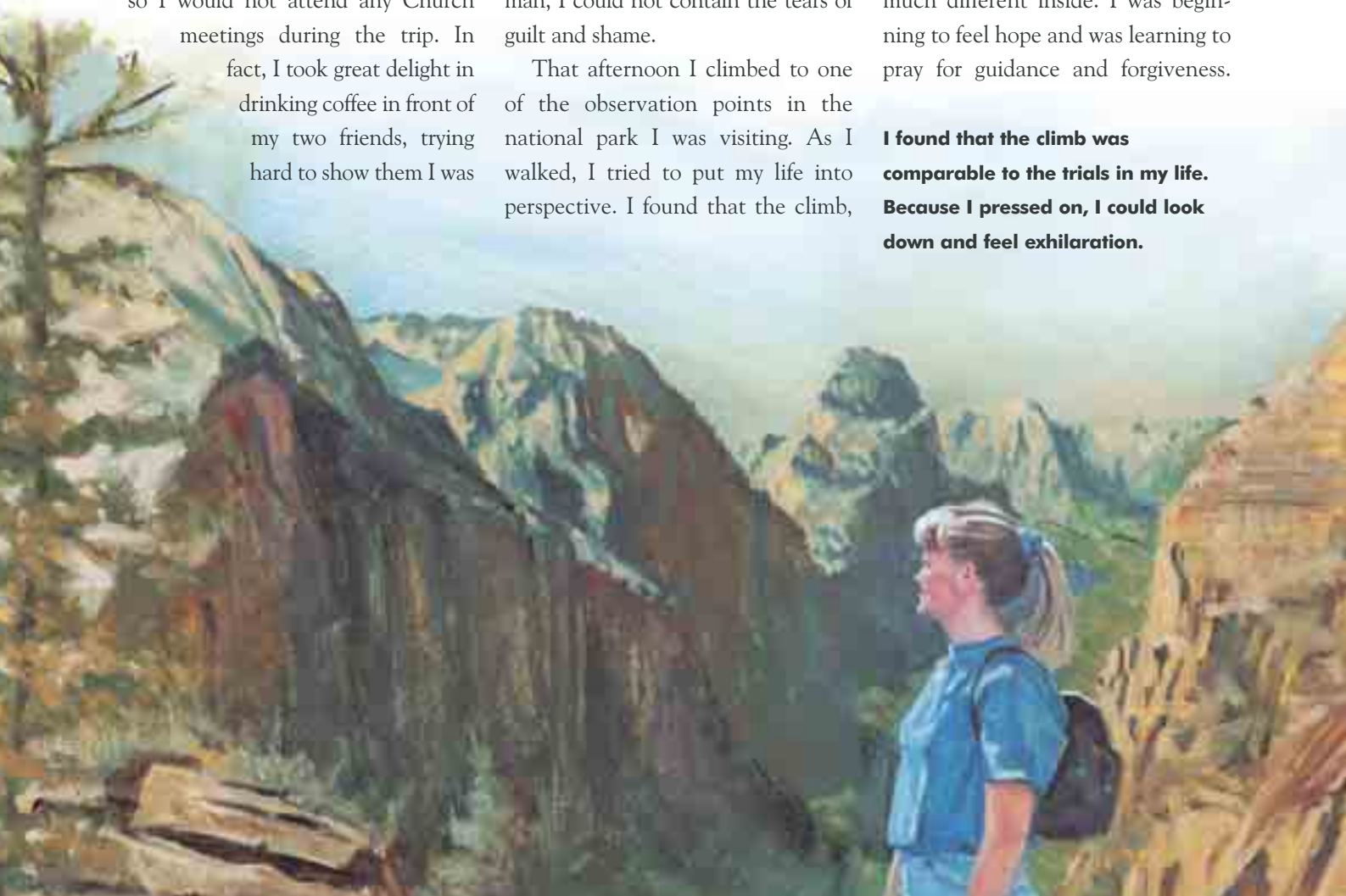
That afternoon I climbed to one of the observation points in the national park I was visiting. As I walked, I tried to put my life into perspective. I found that the climb,

which was very difficult and strenuous in places, was comparable to the trials in my life. Because I pressed on and reached the end of the climb, I could look down at the beauty of creation and feel exhilaration.

The spirit of rebellion was not completely gone from my heart, but I was starting to feel the hostility melting away. I began to experience feelings of love—new, beautiful, and strange to me. I also began to learn that I could be loved. I knew I needed to change my life, to truly repent.

When I returned home I felt much different inside. I was beginning to feel hope and was learning to pray for guidance and forgiveness.

**I found that the climb was comparable to the trials in my life. Because I pressed on, I could look down and feel exhilaration.**



True repentance didn't take place overnight; it took many months before I felt I had been forgiven. I made a decision to start attending church again, the most difficult part of which was finding the courage to actually walk to the doors and go in.

I become overwhelmed as I think of the meaning of the Savior's Atonement: "Oh, it is wonderful that he should care for me enough to die for me!" ("I Stand All Amazed," *Hymns*, number 193). It is also wonderful that two sister missionaries came into my life when they did and shared with me their love and example. I was filled with joy to have one of them be my escort when I finally attended the temple to receive my endowment.

Following years of wandering, I had come home at last.

*Mavis Grace Jones is a member of the Bristol First Ward, Bristol England Stake.*

## "I Found Them!"

**By Madeleine Kurtz**

While serving a full-time mission in the Philippines, my husband, Robert, and I traveled to Cagayan de Oro to set up a Family History Center in the Cagayan de Oro East Stake Center and to do some training. We also invited members from the Malaybalay district to join us. Non-Filipinos are not allowed to go into some parts of the region, and Malaybalay was an area

where we could not go. For almost a year, the Malaybalay district had had the equipment for a Family History Center; all they needed was some training to be able to set it up.

We contacted the Malaybalay district president, Leandro Miole, and asked him if he and the Saints in Malaybalay could come to the Cagayan de Oro East Stake Center for our seminar. President Miole responded that they would be happy to come, even though it meant a drive of more than two hours on mountain roads. My husband wrote a letter to President Miole confirming the date, place, and time of our training session.

On the day of the seminar as I was doing my portion of the training, a man walked in and started talking with my husband. The man drew a letter from his pocket and opened it for my husband to read. I could see the conversation was quite serious.

At the end of our training session, my husband informed me that the man was President Miole from the Malaybalay district and that he and 10 members of his district had been waiting at the Cagayan de Oro Stake Center since 8:00 A.M. President Miole had shown my husband the letter stating the details of the training. To my husband's chagrin, he realized he had forgotten to identify the place as the *east* stake center. We felt bad that these faithful Saints

had waited hours for training that had never come, and we happily agreed to go to the Cagayan de Oro Stake Center to conduct the training session.

The Saints were happy to see us when we arrived. We opened with a prayer and a hymn, then launched into the training.

As I began demonstrating how to use the microfilm reader, I noticed that a film had been left in the reader. So instead of using the film I had brought for the demonstration, I used the film already in the reader. As my husband turned the crank and I showed where to look on the film for names, I heard someone crying softly. Looking up, I realized President Miole was in tears. I quickly asked if I had said something to distress him.

Through his tears he quietly said, "I found them!" Pointing to the names on the screen of the microfilm reader, he told us he had searched and prayed to find these names—the names of his ancestors—for more than three years. And now, there they were—on a microfilm reader he should not have been looking at, in a building he should not have been in.

That day we were reminded that "by small and simple things are great things brought to pass" (Alma 37:6). □

*Madeleine Kurtz is a member of the Fort Macleod Second Ward, Fort Macleod Alberta [Canada] Stake.*



# Faith in JESUS CHRIST

**W**e come into this mortal existence to fulfill several purposes. Among the most important are to obtain a physical body and to accept and follow Jesus Christ by faith. Everyone who enters mortal life receives a body. But unfortunately, not everyone accepts and follows the Lord Jesus Christ by faith. Developing the necessary faith is up to each of us. Some may think, *I believe Jesus Christ is the Savior, but I'm not sure I understand what it means to have faith in Him.*

The Apostle Paul taught that “faith is the substance [or assurance] of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1; see Joseph Smith Translation, Hebrews 11:1). Perhaps a true story can clarify this definition.

Several years ago a young mother experienced problems early in her pregnancy. Fearing she would lose her baby, she asked her husband to give her a priesthood blessing. The husband knew he should express the Lord’s desires in the blessing rather than his own wishes, so he knelt in

fervent prayer to seek the Lord’s will. After some time, the distinct spiritual assurance came to this young father that the baby should live.

A blessing was given, but the problems with the pregnancy did not disappear. In fact, the baby was born three months early. The first night of the baby’s life, as medical professionals made repeated and seemingly fruitless attempts to get oxygen from the baby’s underdeveloped lungs into his bloodstream, the young father watched—and pondered the spiritual assurance he had received earlier. He prayed again and received another distinct impression that the baby would survive. Even when the doctor told him things looked hopeless, the father said to himself, “I know what the Spirit has told me. I will trust the Lord.”

Before long, the doctors applied a procedure they considered the last resort. When it worked, the father was not surprised. Many difficult months followed, and the medical professionals were often pessimistic about the baby’s chances of becoming healthy and living a normal

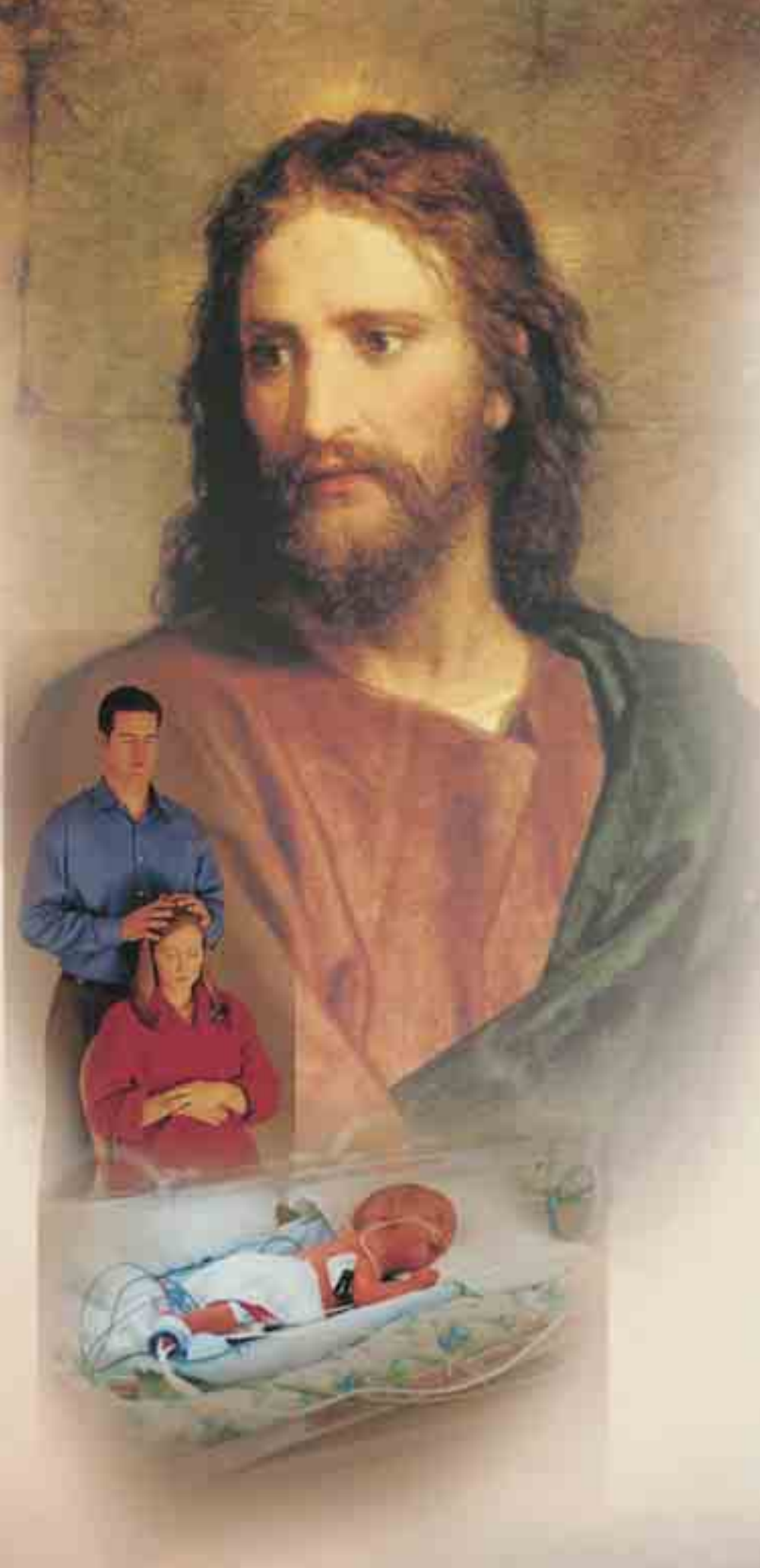
life. But today he is a healthy, active 12-year-old and has recently been ordained a deacon.

The young father had faith that his son would be well because he received a divine *assurance* that it would be so. He could not *see* into the future and view a healthy 12-year-old passing the sacrament—that would be a sure knowledge. But he knew what the Spirit had told him, and that was *evidence* enough.

When we act on such assurances from the Lord, we are exercising faith and, in turn, our faith grows stronger. We can then receive greater assurances from the Lord and exercise even greater faith in Him. Jacob explained that because he and other prophets of God who preceded him received “many revelations and the spirit of prophecy,” their faith became “unshaken, insomuch that [they could] command in the name of Jesus and the very trees [obeyed them], or the mountains, or the waves of the sea” (Jacob 4:6).

The principle is the same for us. When we receive commandments or counsel from the Lord through His





prophet or through our Church leaders or our parents, we can obtain a testimony through the Holy Ghost that the instruction is indeed from the Lord. Then, if we act in faith on that assurance, we allow the Lord to bless us and others.

Heavenly Father might not ask us to move mountains, but He may ask:

“Do you have enough faith to receive answers to your prayers?

“Do you have enough faith to pay tithing?

“Do you have enough faith to date only those who can take you to the temple, trusting that I will provide someone with whom you can start an eternal family?”

But perhaps the most important questions He can ask us are about our willingness to accept the Lord Jesus Christ in our lives and allow Him to help change us:

“Do you have enough faith in the Lord to plead for forgiveness of your sins and a change of heart?

“Do you have sufficient faith to keep the commandments and walk as I have asked?” □



# Taking the Next Step

It may take wheels to do it, but David Eves is moving forward to make his dreams a reality—including serving a mission.

By Jane Forsgren

David Eves discovered life can change quite quickly when, on 20 September 1997, he and his friends were riding an off-road vehicle in southern Utah.

“We hit a bump and lost control,” explains David. “I remember flying through the air, then waking up in excruciating pain. When I saw my friends looking down at me and I told them I couldn’t feel my legs, I knew I would never be the same.”

David was flown to a hospital in Salt Lake City and underwent eight hours of surgery. He spent the next three months fighting for his life.

David, a member of the La Verkin Second Ward, La Verkin Utah Stake, had been a sports star, but now he faced new challenges. He couldn’t keep food down or speak, and he was in extreme pain. His weight dropped from 170 to 100 pounds (78 to 45 kilograms) in two months.

The days and nights were long and hard to endure. “I wanted to get off the painkillers, but the pain was unbearable,” David recalls. “I asked my dad to read to me from the Book of Mormon, and as he did a miracle happened. The spirit of

that book brought so much peace, I was able to rest.”

But David was not improving. Jill Eves became alarmed at her son’s severe weight loss. She prayed for inspiration and felt impressed to call a specialist. The new doctor repaired a hole in David’s esophagus. Two weeks later, David came



home from the hospital.

David’s father, Raymond, had taught him two important secrets to obtaining goals: give it your all and never quit. David was used to giving his all, so it was no surprise when he was back at school the Monday after he left the hospital.

“I was in a body cast and neck brace,” David says. “I had absolute faith I would get better but soon realized I was completely unlike the other 800 kids in my school. After that first hard week, though, I knew

I could do anything I wanted; I just had to find a different way.”

A few months later his brother suggested David run for student body president. David again gave it his all, and he went from sports star to school leader. “That year was awesome,” he says. “It was the perfect preparation for my mission.”

David worked hard in physical therapy because he was determined to serve a mission. Some of his friends said serving a mission wasn’t necessary since he was in a wheelchair, but David didn’t agree. “I knew the Lord wanted me to serve,” he says, “so I decided I would do everything in my power to make it possible.”

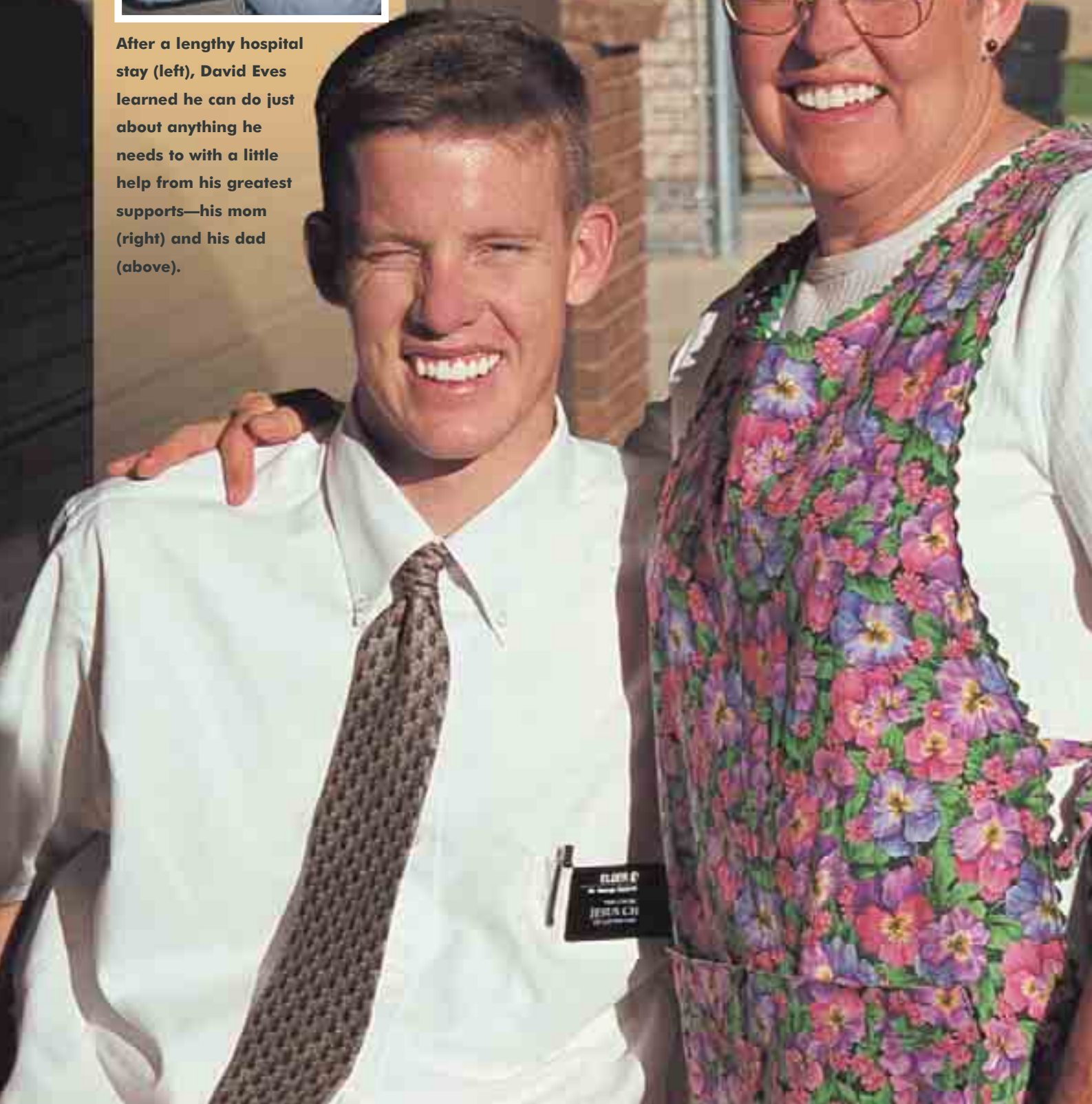
Soon he could shower and dress himself, drive his car, and take his wheelchair just about anywhere. In fact, after his doctor said it was impossible, David even learned to put on a brace and walk with crutches by moving his shoulders to push his body forward. For someone with no sense of balance or ability to feel the ground under him, this was an incredible feat.

After high school graduation David couldn’t wait to turn 19 and





After a lengthy hospital stay (left), David Eves learned he can do just about anything he needs to with a little help from his greatest supports—his mom (right) and his dad (above).





**Elder Eves spent mornings at Deseret Industries tutoring trainees working to gain and improve job skills.**

## Full-Time Mission Alternatives

If you are a young man or woman who is unable to serve a full-time proselyting mission for medical reasons—and you are able to function independently—you might have the opportunity to serve a Church-service mission while living at home.

- With your parents' permission, talk with your bishop or branch president about your desire to serve a Church-service mission.

- If your bishop or branch president feels a service mission is appropriate for you, he can search for opportunities for you to use your specific skills. For example, you might be called to serve in a local Family History Center, employment center, service center, or institute of religion. You might be assigned to help with maintenance of Church buildings and grounds or to help local members who need assistance. You might be assigned to help tutor someone on his or her schoolwork or to teach someone to read. Or you might serve in a community service organization.

- Your bishop or branch president—in consultation with you and your parents—will determine the length of your Church-service mission.

- Your stake or district president will extend to you your calling and release. He will help you determine which full-time mission rules apply to you.

- You should stay in regular contact with your priesthood leaders. There should also be regular contact between your priesthood leaders and the people who oversee your work.

- Where possible, you may team teach with the full-time missionaries. □

send in his mission papers. His doctor attached a note verifying he was totally independent.

But it was not to be. Instead of a calling, David's letter informed him he could not serve a full-time proselyting mission.

"I was crushed," says David. "I had worked so hard, and it seemed it was all taken away from me in just a matter of seconds." But David didn't quit. In an interview at Church headquarters, he was assured there was a mission for him.

One week later he was called to serve a welfare mission at the Deseret Industries (D.I.) in St. George, Utah, while living at home with his parents. David was not prepared for such a call. "To tell the truth, I was disappointed again," he says. But he kept thinking of the words to a Primary song: "I will go; I will do" ("Nephi's Courage," *Children's Songbook*, 120–21). He realized the Lord wanted him to serve at Deseret Industries, a Church-owned thrift store and job-training facility. At D.I. David would help those who were working to gain and improve their job skills.

"I look back now and think how foolish I was. I had no clue what a blessing this mission would be," David says.

Not only has David been blessed, but his sense of humor and positive



attitude touched more than 250 people he worked with through D.I.'s self-sufficiency and missionary programs. "Whenever we were having a bad day, we would just come and find Elder Eves," says Debbie Kelly, a trainee. "When we saw how happy and positive he was, even in a wheelchair, we would ask ourselves, 'What are we complaining about?'"

As a missionary, Elder Eves spent mornings tutoring trainees who were working on their high school certificates or an equivalent diploma. "I could not have passed my math section without him," says Brandy, a single mother working to improve her employment skills.

But David's tutoring wasn't just about teaching educational skills. He also taught the missionary discussions to Rita Roberts, another trainee. "He helped me understand the gospel step by step," Rita says. "And I knew I could count on him for anything. He and his family helped me move twice. You couldn't find a better person—not just in the classroom, but anywhere. He's unique."

Besides tutoring staff members, David was responsible for many devotionals at D.I.

"One day it was Elder Eves's turn to give the devotional," says Sister Scott, another welfare missionary at D.I. "Everyone was there but him. In a few minutes, in he came, walking



**Elder Eves spent evenings working with full-time missionaries. One young woman asked Elder Eves to perform her baptism.**

with his braces. There wasn't a dry eye in the room as he talked to us about overcoming adversity and working with your hand in God's to accomplish any goal."

David loved serving at D.I., but his missionary efforts didn't stop there. In the evenings, he team taught with full-time missionaries. These efforts resulted in several conversions, including one young woman who asked him to perform the baptism.

"I figured if she had enough faith to ask me to baptize her, I had enough faith to find a way to do it," remembers Elder Eves. And so on 1 January 2000, Elder Eves sat in his shower chair in the font, said the baptismal prayer, and lowered Robin Rasmussen into the water. No one will ever forget the spirit present that day.

David brings a feeling of hope and peace wherever he is. And his sense of humor puts others at ease. "If others see me joking, they are more comfortable around me," he explains. "When they realize I'm happy because of the

gospel and my many blessings, the whole wheelchair thing disappears and they see me as a person."

And counting blessings is what Elder Eves concentrates on. "The one thing my mission taught me more than anything else is how blessed I am. When I saw the problems some of these people at D.I. deal with, I wondered if I could do what they do. I have a family who loves me, I have the gospel, and I have had the opportunity to serve the Lord on a mission. I couldn't ask for more," he says.

David currently attends college on a full scholarship and exercises on his bike and braces. "I work out in those leg braces every day to keep my legs stretched so that when I do walk again I'll be ready," he says. And he says it with the same confidence with which he bears his testimony.

"I love Doctrine and Covenants 121:7–8: 'My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment; and then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high.' I know Joseph Smith was the prophet of the Restoration and that Jesus Christ is our Savior and loves each of us. Sometimes when we're going through hard times, it seems like we're alone, but we're really not. He's right there with us. And with this knowledge, everything else falls into place." □

# Using the March 2002 *Liahona*

## DISCUSSION IDEAS

■ “Communion with the Holy Spirit,” page 2: Discuss President James E. Faust’s guidelines for receiving revelation and inspiration. How can you and your family benefit most from following these guidelines?

■ “The Law of Sacrifice,” page 10: Elder M. Russell Ballard teaches that “the degree of our love for the Lord and for our fellowman can be measured by what we are willing to sacrifice for them.” As you contemplate the sacrifices you are making for the Lord and others, what do you learn about yourself?

■ “Stay on the Train,” page 26: Discuss Elder Glenn L. Pace’s “special appeal to the youth.” How can you redirect your energy as a result of this counsel?

■ “Even as I Am,” page F16: Elder Spencer J. Condie says that in order “to become like Christ, we must learn to forgive as He did.” What can you do to show forgiveness to someone who has hurt you?

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CRAIG DIMOND

## AN INVITATION TO YOUNG WOMEN

In the general Young Women meeting held in March 2001, Sister Margaret D. Nadauld invited each young woman to bring another young woman into full Church activity. We invite you to tell us about the experiences you have had in accepting this invitation. Please include your name, age, address, telephone number, and ward and stake (or branch and district). Send your article to An Invitation to Young Women, *Liahona*, Floor 24, 50 East North Temple Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3223, USA; or e-mail to CUR-Liahona-IMag@ldschurch.org.

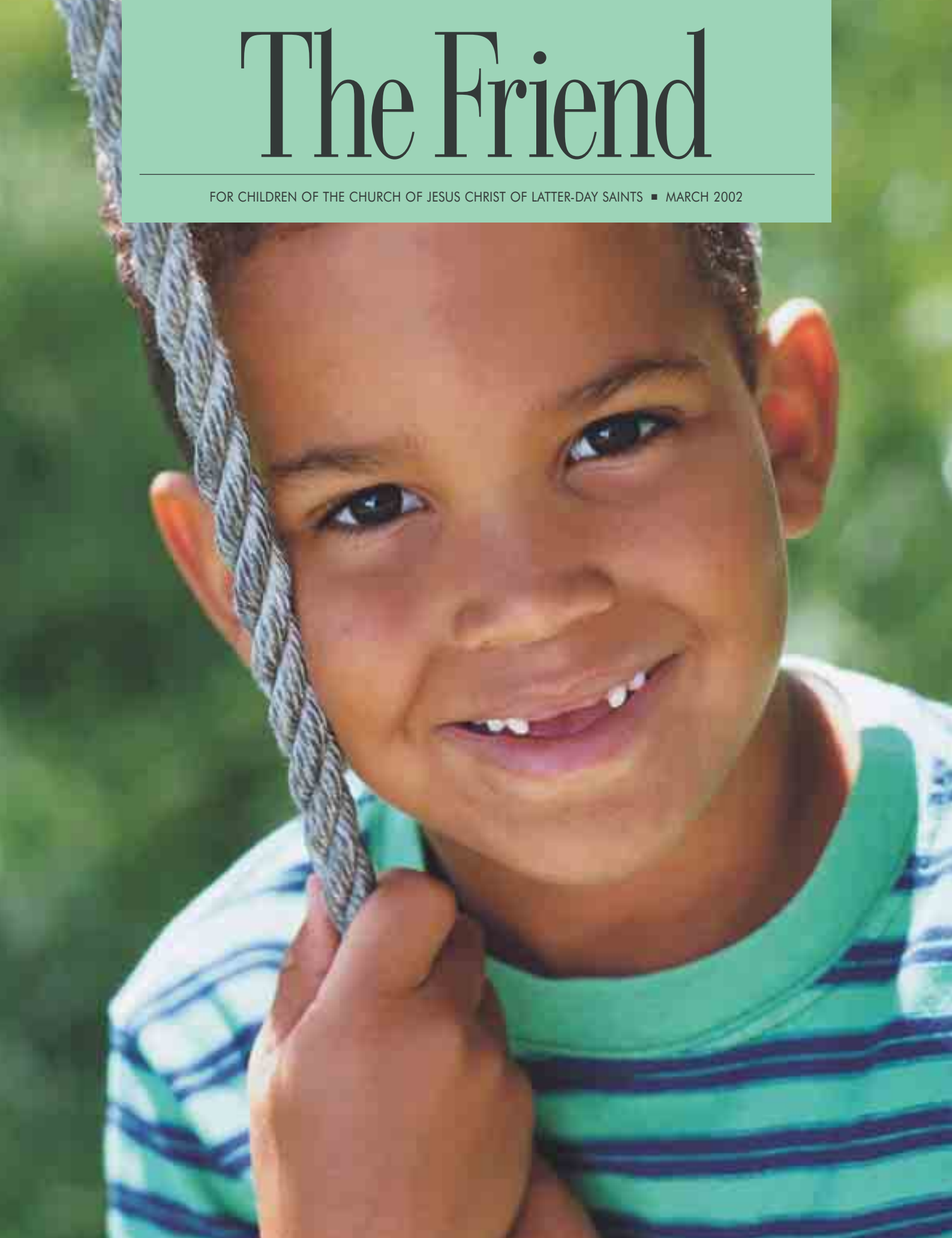
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# The Friend

FOR CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS ■ MARCH 2002





OUR PROPHETS AND APOSTLES SPEAK TO US

# REVERENCE



**By Elder L. Tom Perry**

*Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles*

Several years ago, I had the opportunity of traveling with the President of the Church to attend a series of area conferences. I will never forget the

contrast between two conferences that were held just a few days apart.

The first area conference was held in a large arena, and as we sat on the stand, we noticed continuous movement by the people. We saw individuals throughout the arena leaning over and whispering to family members and friends seated next to them. Giving the members the benefit of the doubt, we thought that maybe the large building helped cause the lack of reverence.

A few days later, we were in another country attending another area conference in an arena much like the first. When we entered the building, however, an immediate hush came over the congregation. As we sat through the two-hour general session, there was

very little movement among the people. Everyone listened intently. Great attention and respect were shown all the speakers, and when the prophet spoke, you could hear a pin drop.

After the meeting was over, I asked the priesthood leaders about what they had done to prepare the people for the conference. They told me their preparation had been simple. They had asked priesthood holders to explain to the members of their families, and also the families they home taught, that at an area conference they would have the privilege of hearing the words of the prophet and the apostles. The priesthood leaders explained that the reverence their people felt for God and His servants was the basis for their reverent behavior at the conference.

Reverence is an attitude toward Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. It is a private feeling. It is something we feel inside our hearts no matter what is going on around us. □

*From an October 1990 general conference address.*





# A Whispering in

By Willard Rosander, as told by Alisa McBride

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARK ROBISON

In 1878 President John Taylor called Saints to settle in the southern part of the state of Colorado in the United States. Early in the 1900s, Pa moved our family to that desolate land.

Our new farm was littered with rocks. Before we could till the ground, we had to clear the rocks away. Ma and I hauled the small rocks away in a wheelbarrow, but there was only one way to remove the boulders—blow them up with dynamite.

When all the small rocks were gone and it was time to start on the big ones, Pa dug under each one as far as he could and placed the dynamite underneath. He carefully set the dynamite in just the right places so the blast would tear the boulders completely apart.

Finally everything was ready for Pa to light the fuse. Mama made sure we children were out of danger.

*Boom!*

The first boulder exploded into hundreds of fragments and a cloud of dust. When the dust settled, the boulder had disappeared. All that was left was a hole in

the ground and many smaller rocks. Now it was my job to pick up the pieces of rock and fill the hole with dirt.

We repeated the process; Pa lit the dynamite and I cleared away the shattered rock. After the third explosion, I was growing tired of picking up rocks and wanted to do the “real” work—lighting the dynamite. I took a few steps toward Pa.

“Willard, stay back!” my mother called. I scowled. At nine, I was the oldest child and believed I was old enough to help.

As I started back to the house, I was filled with a sense of danger. A whispering in my heart warned me that something was wrong.

I didn’t understand. I wasn’t in any danger. I was far away from the blasting. Certain that I had imagined the warning, I concentrated on what Pa was doing. Maybe he would see that I was nearly grown and ready to work alongside him.

The feeling of danger grew.

I recalled the promise my father had made when he confirmed me a member of the Church: “I bless you with the power of discernment. Listen to the Spirit. It will guide you and protect you from harm.”

I tried to ignore the voice, but it wouldn’t be still. I could no longer pretend I didn’t hear the insistent whisper.

*I bless you with the power of discernment.*

The words were as clear now as they had been when Pa pronounced the blessing more than a year earlier. If I wasn’t in danger, maybe the voice was telling me that someone else was. Ma was hanging clothes on the line,



# My Heart





my little sister pulling at her skirt. Then I realized I couldn't see three-year-old Hyrum.

"Hyrum!" I shouted. "Hyrum!" Shading my eyes from the sun, I squinted into the distance. Then I saw him—heading toward the field, his chubby legs going as fast as he could make them.

I ran after him, praying and shouting all at the same time. "Pa!" I screamed, waving my arms to attract his attention.

His back was turned to me, and Pa couldn't see or hear my warning—and he couldn't see Hyrum toddling toward disaster.

I reached Hyrum just as the boulder exploded. Throwing my body over his, I shielded him the best I could. Sharp rock fragments rained down on me, hitting my head, back, and legs.

Hyrum began to squirm. "Heavy," he said. "Get up."

I rolled off. My body screamed with pain, but I didn't care. Gently, I ran my hands over my little brother.

"Are you all right?" I asked.

He wiggled away from me and stood. His chin wobbled and his eyes filled with tears, but he wasn't hurt. "Scared," he said.

"I was scared too," I said as I hugged him.

By then Pa had reached us. Tears tracked through the dirt and grime on his face. His big arms circled us, squeezing tight. "How did you

know your brother was in danger?" he asked me.

I hesitated, not sure how to explain. "A voice told me something was wrong," I said. "I didn't pay attention at first, but it kept poking at me until I had to listen." Then I confessed the part that stung my conscience. "If I had listened the first time, Hyrum wouldn't have wandered away. He would never have been in danger."

Pa laid his big hand on my shoulder. "But you *did* listen. That's the important thing." Pa took a deep breath. "That was a brave thing you did, Willard."

"I prayed, Pa. I was praying so hard the words nearly choked me," I told him.

"So was I. So was I."

Ma and my little sister came running. Laughing and crying at the same time, Ma hugged me and Hyrum. Soon all of us were hugging and crying.

A sweet feeling of peace settled around my heart as I knelt by my bed that night. My prayers took longer than usual as I thanked Heavenly Father for the whisperings of the Spirit in my heart. □





# JESUS TELLS THREE PARABLES

*\*Two of the Savior's parables are printed here.  
Look for the third parable in next month's issue  
of The Friend.*



ILLUSTRATIONS BY PAUL MANN

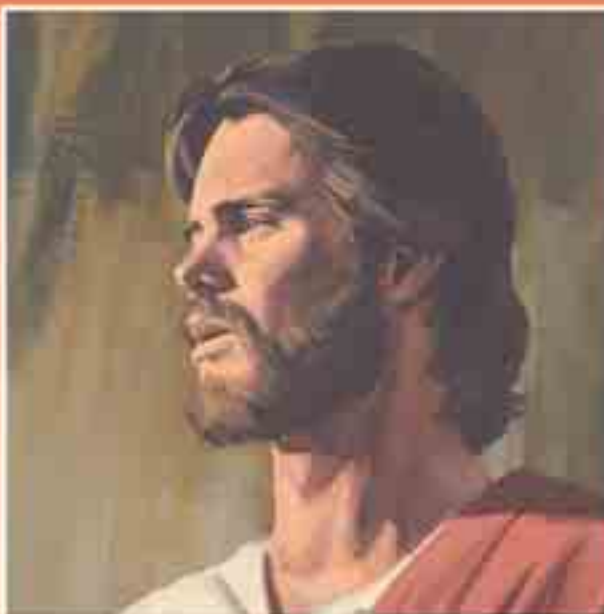
One day Jesus was eating and talking with some sinners. Some Pharisees saw Him.

*Luke 15:1–2*



The Pharisees thought that they were good men and that good men should not talk to sinners. They thought Jesus should not talk to sinners.

*Luke 15:2*



The Savior wanted to teach the Pharisees they were wrong. To help them understand why He was with the sinners, He told them three parables (stories). The first one was about a lost sheep.\*

*Luke 15:3; Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith,  
selected by Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 277*

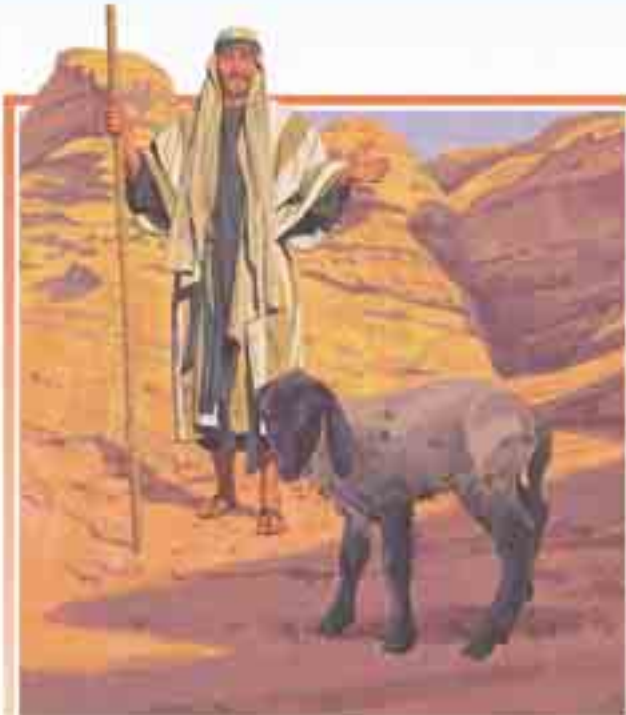
# THE LOST SHEEP

The First Parable



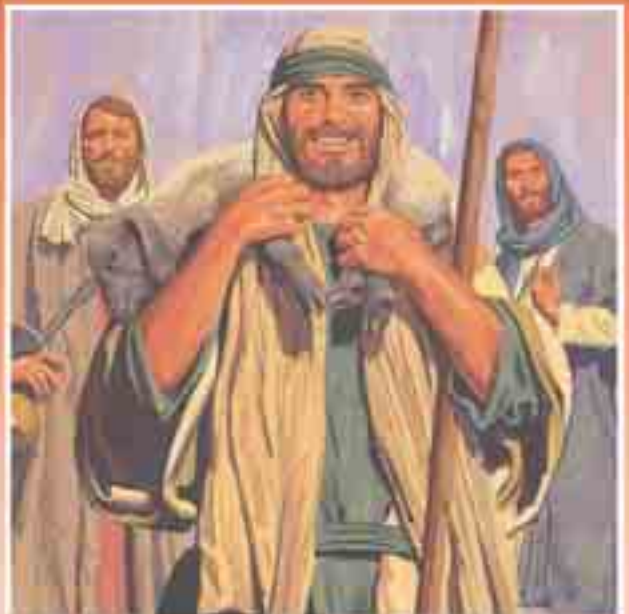
A good shepherd had 100 sheep, and one of them was lost.

*Luke 15:4*



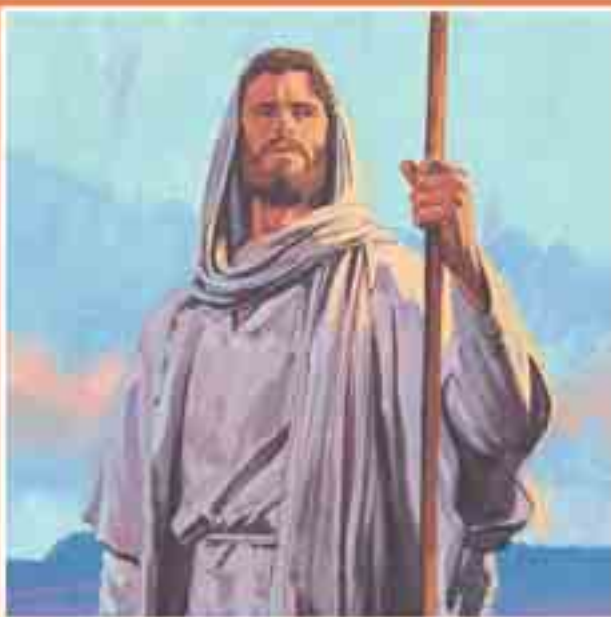
The shepherd left the other 99 sheep to look for the lost one. When he found it, he was very happy.

*Luke 15:4-5*



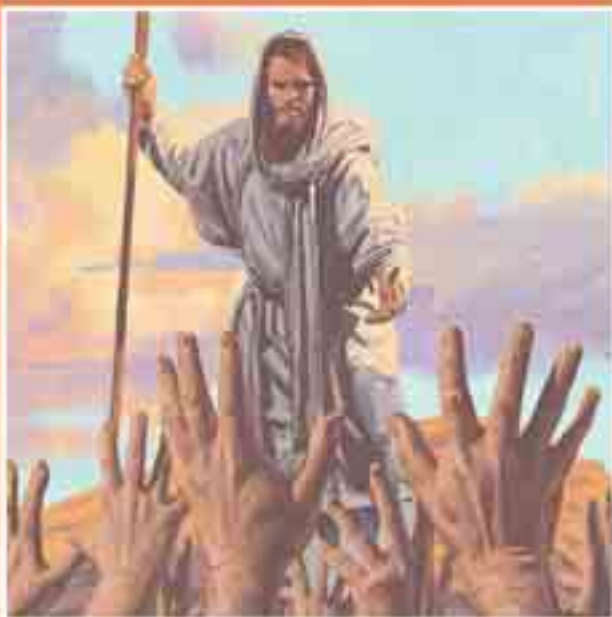
He picked it up, put it on his shoulders, and carried it home. Then he called to all his friends and neighbors to come and be happy with him because he had found the sheep that was lost.

*Luke 15:5-6*



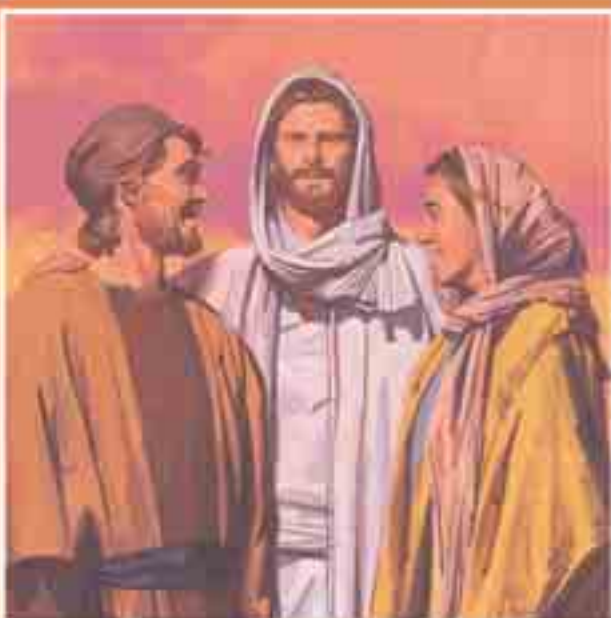
Jesus Christ told the Pharisees what the story meant. He said sinners are like the lost sheep and there will be great joy in heaven if a sinner repents.

*Luke 15:7*



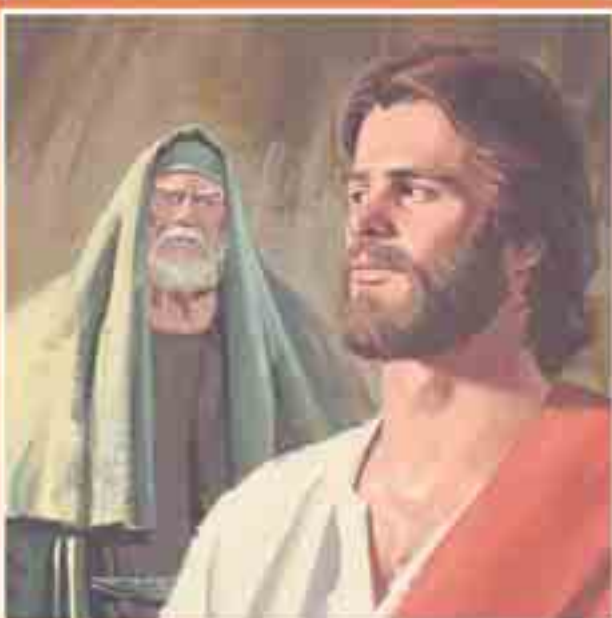
Just as the shepherd wanted to save the lost sheep, Jesus wants to save sinners.

*Mark 2:17*



And just as the shepherd was very happy when he found the lost sheep, Jesus is very happy when sinners repent.

*Luke 15:6–7*



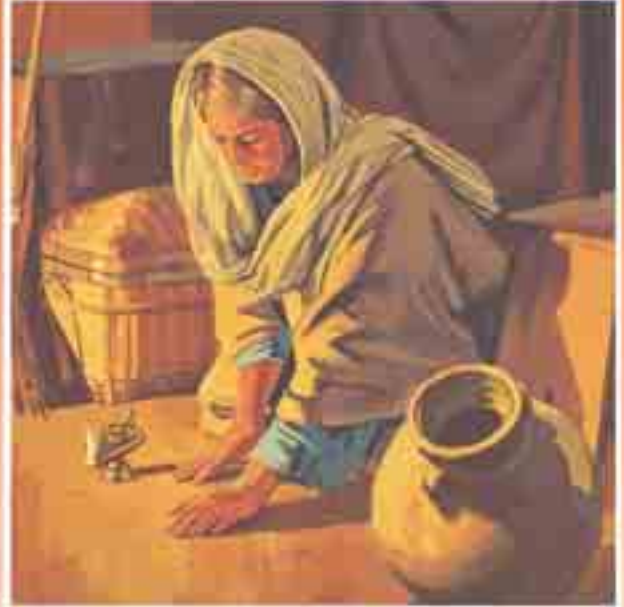
That, He said, was why He was talking with sinners.

*Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 18:11; Mark 2:17*



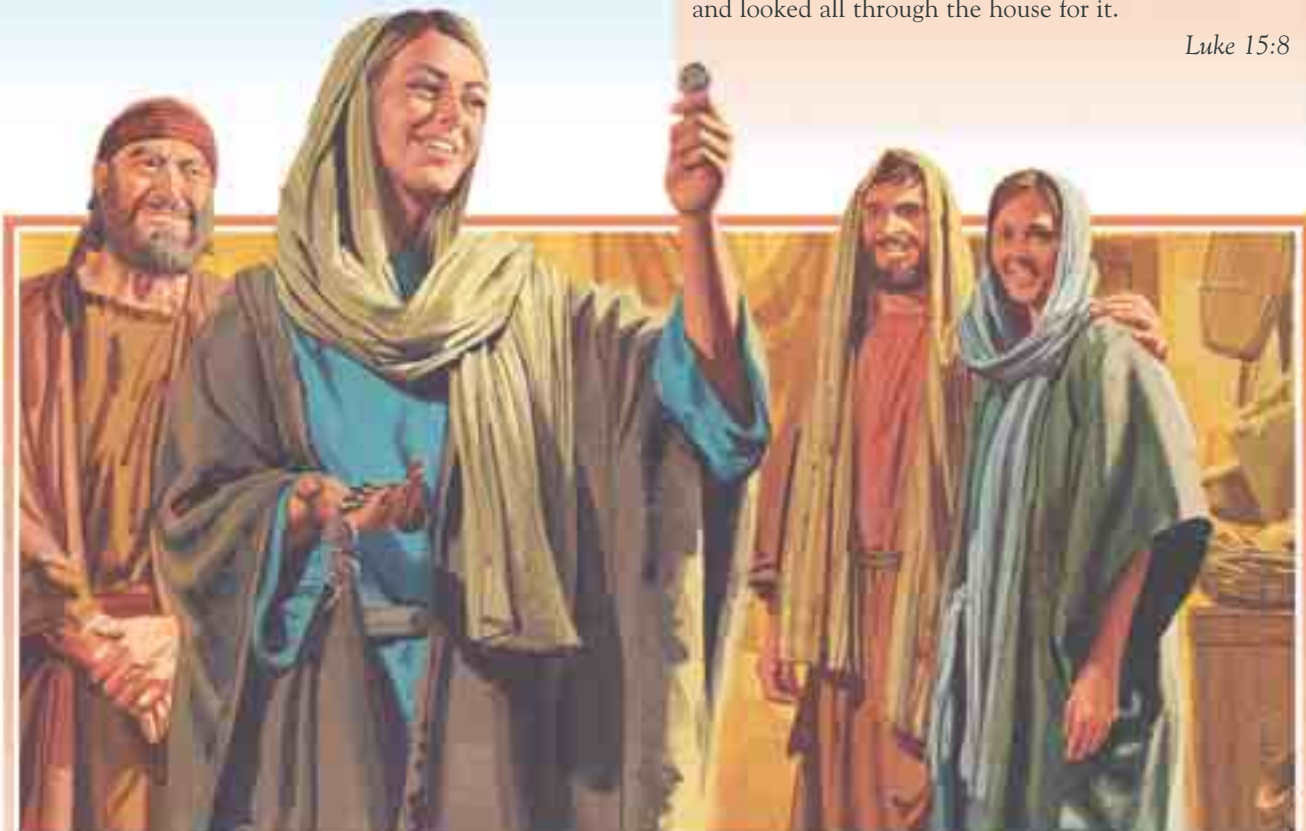
# THE LOST COIN

The Second Parable



A woman had 10 silver coins. She lost one of the coins and looked all through the house for it.

*Luke 15:8*



At last she found the coin. She was so happy she called her friends and neighbors to tell them. They were happy, too, that she had found the lost coin.

*Luke 15:9*





The friends and neighbors in the story are like the angels of God. The angels are very happy when a lost Church member is found and cared for.

*Luke 15:10*



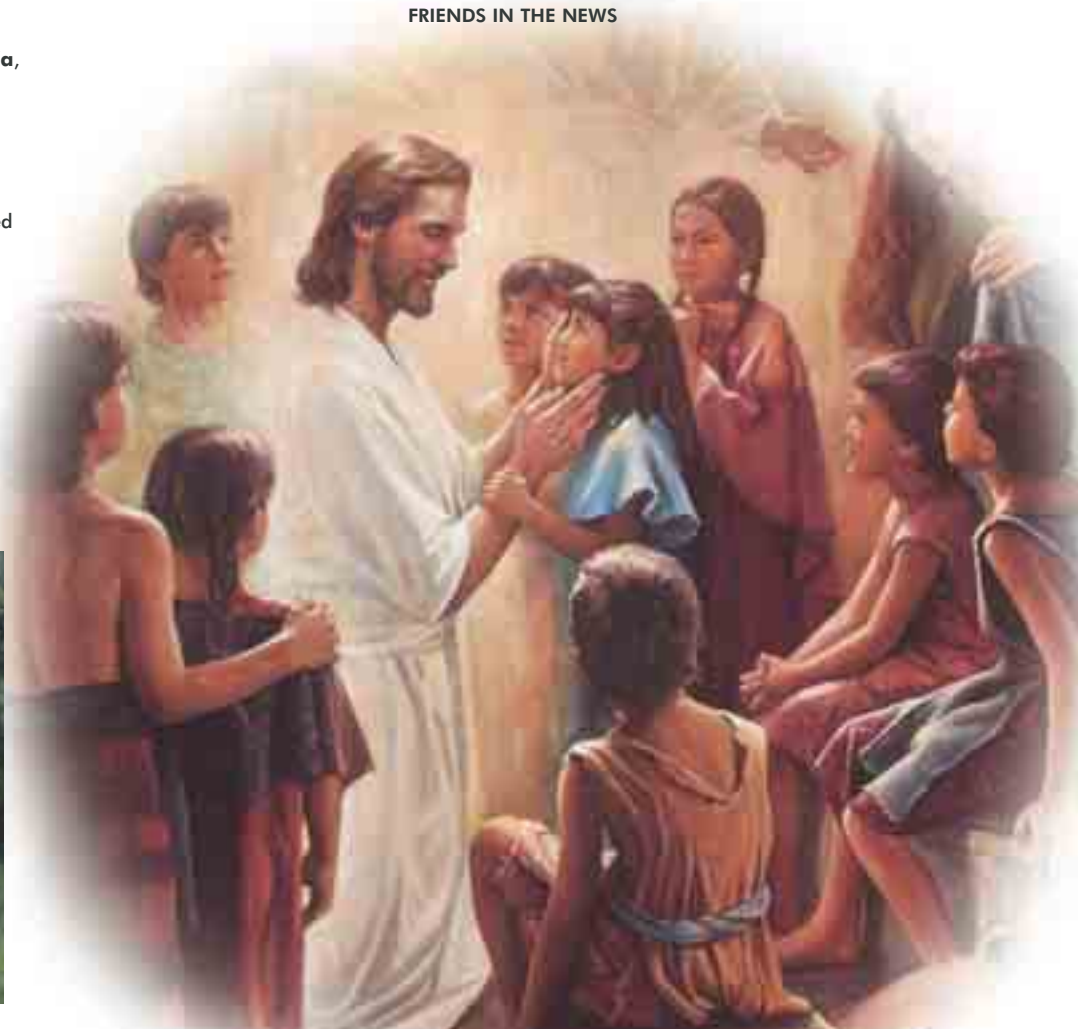
Church members are like the woman in the story, and the lost coin is like a member who has become less active in the Church and is lost. Jesus wants Church members to find the lost brother or sister and to care for and bring him or her back. He is very happy when this happens.

*James E. Talmage, Jesus the Christ, 3rd edition (1916), 455–56*



**Aracely Arredondo García**, age 10, of the Alameda Branch, Los Mochis México Stake, was baptized

by her father 10 days after her eighth birthday. She knew she should be baptized to follow the example set by Jesus Christ.



**Joel Cardona**, age 12, and **Alan Cardona**, age 11, of the Burzaco Ward, Buenos Aires Argentina Adrogué Stake, feel that the most important events in their lives were their baptisms. Now that they have been baptized and confirmed, they can be guided by the Holy Ghost and can prepare for and receive the Aaronic Priesthood.



The children of **Los Pinos Ward, Barquisimeto Venezuela Stake**, showed their faith in Jesus Christ by working hard to prepare for their sacrament meeting presentation. They also spoke about faith as part of their program, and their examples touched the hearts of all who heard them.



**Andres Romeu**, age 8, of the Quilmes First Ward, Quilmes Argentina Stake, is a good student and likes math. He has a

testimony of prayer; he knows it allows him to speak to Heavenly Father.



**Mikael Peltokorpi**, age 8, and **Johanna Peltokorpi**, age 6, of the Borlänge Ward, Stockholm Sweden Stake, like to make others happy.

When they learned about a family in need, they gathered their own belongings to give to them.



**Javier Ibañez**, age 8, of El Dorado Ward, Florencio Varela Argentina Stake, loves to sing in Primary—

especially his favorite song, "I Am a Child of God." He wants to go on a mission just like his brother who recently returned home.



The Primary leaders of the **Lukunga Ward, Kinshasa Democratic Republic of Congo Stake**, planned a special activity for 61 children—including 28 nonmembers. During the summer, they held a day camp where the children learned the Articles of Faith and several other scriptures. The children also prepared and presented plays and skits.



The children in the **Lauenburg Branch, Hamburg Germany Stake**, like to sing and to learn and act out stories from the scriptures. This picture is from a special Primary activity day that the children invited their nonmember friends to attend.



The Primary of the **Sarandi del Yi Branch, Durazno Uruguay Stake**, held a special celebration to remember the founding of the Primary organization more than 120 years ago. The first Primary was held in Farmington, Utah, in August 1878.



# A HOUSE OF GOD

By Vicki F. Matsumori

**“Establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God” (D&C 88:119).**



Before you go to church, you wash, comb your hair, and put on your best clothes.

Why? Because you want to show love and respect for Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ by being clean and looking your best.

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, told of a six-day trip he and other members of his airplane crew made during World War II. It was hot, and they couldn't take a bath or wash their uniforms. When they went to a restaurant, a woman said, “My, what untidy men!”

President Packer said, “I felt as dirty as I was, uncomfortable, and ashamed.”

President Packer was uncomfortable because his clothes were dirty and he was unwashed. But he knows that Heavenly Father is much more concerned that we are clean *inside*. When we repent of our sins and are baptized, we become clean. When we keep the commandments and partake of the sacrament, we renew the promise we made at baptism to follow Jesus Christ. It is like being washed clean again. We can be clean inside because Jesus Christ paid the price for our sins.

President Packer wrote:

*If we could only understand  
All we have heard and seen,  
We'd know there is no greater gift  
Than those two words—“Washed clean!”  
 (“Washed Clean,” Ensign, May 1997, 9–11)*

Before Church members go to the temple, they show their love and respect for Heavenly Father and Jesus

Christ by being clean. When you are old enough, you will feel comfortable going to the temple if you are clean on the outside and the inside.

## Instructions

Glue page 15 to heavy paper. Cut out the temple along the dotted lines. Fold the tabs on the solid lines, and glue the tabs to the inside of the walls to form a box (see illustration). Cut out the scripture reference bricks. They are things you can do to build a life worthy of entering the temple. Each day choose a brick, read the scripture, and glue it to the outside of the temple.

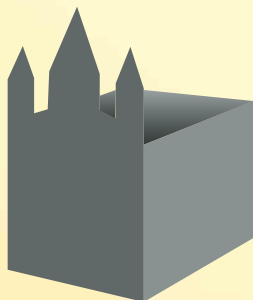
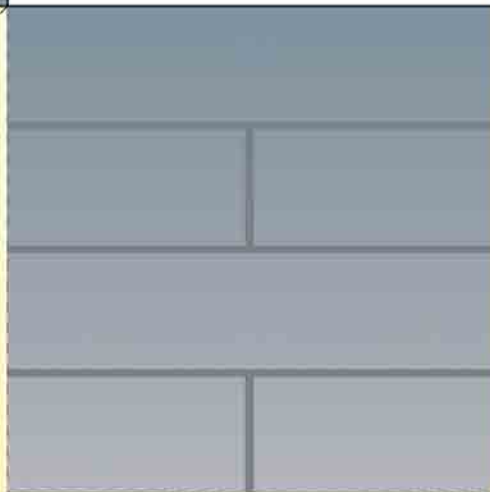
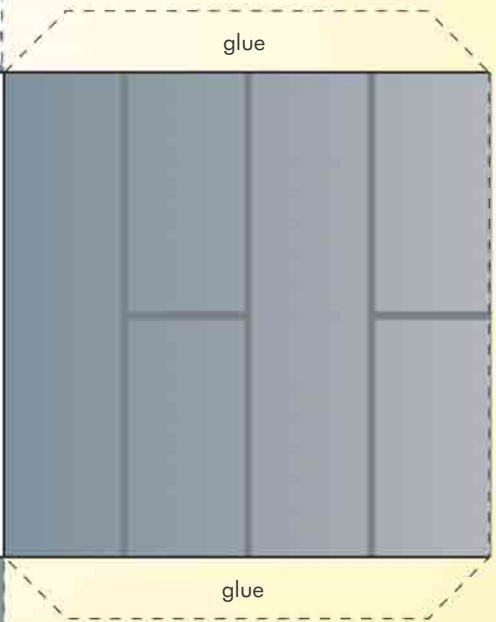
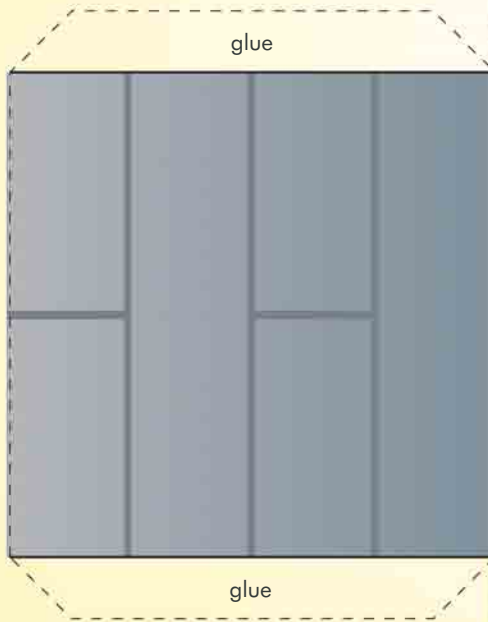
## Sharing Time Ideas

1. Tell the story of Jesus cleansing the temple (see John 2:14–17). Explain that the temple is a house of God. We should treat the temple with respect by living as Jesus Christ did. Have the children suggest words describing how we should behave to follow Jesus. Make a list of these words. Take turns completing the following phrase with words from the list or other appropriate words: “I am going to the temple, and I will be \_\_\_\_\_.” Have the first child fill in the blank with one word. Have the second child repeat the phrase and the first word, then add a second word. Continue adding words until everyone has had a turn. Sing a song or hymn about following Jesus Christ.

2. Have the children turn to Exodus 3:1–5. Explain that Moses came to the mountain of God, and the Lord appeared in a flaming bush. Ask the children what happened to the bush (read verses 2–3). Ask what God said (read verse 4). Ask why God had Moses remove his shoes (read verse 5). Show or talk about temple slippers. Explain that in the temple we put on clean, white shoes to show that we are in a reverent, holy place. When we come to church, we don't wear temple shoes but we behave reverently. Ask the children how they can show reverence in church. Explain that reverence in the temple is shown in a similar manner. Have the children draw pictures of things they can do to show reverence. Present the pictures to a member of the bishopric or branch presidency. □

1 Corinthians 3:16–17 Remember you are a temple of God	
Articles of Faith 1:4 Obey the first principles of the gospel	
Psalm 24:3–4 Have clean hands and a pure heart	
Exodus 20:15 Do not steal	Malachi 3:10 Pay tithing
Matthew 6:14–15 Forgive others	
John 13:34–35 Love one another	
Alma 53:20 Be true at all times	
D&C 21:1, 4 Heed the prophet	

Exodus 20:12 Honor your father and mother	
Exodus 20:7 Do not take the name of God in vain	
D&C 88:63 Draw near to the Lord: seek, ask, knock	
Mosiah 2:22 Keep the commandments	D&C 59:9–10 Keep the Sabbath day holy
D&C 89:7–9 Obey the Word of Wisdom	
1 Nephi 3:7 Do what the Lord commands	
Exodus 20:3 Have no other gods	
3 Nephi 14:12 Be kind	



Illustration



# “EVEN AS I AM”



**By Elder Spencer J. Condie**  
Of the Seventy

While living in Germany, Sister Condie and I became acquainted with a marvelous couple from Switzerland, Brother Georg and Sister Annaroesli Birsfelder, who were serving in the Frankfurt Germany Temple. In February 1991, at the end of their temple shift, Brother and Sister Birsfelder were taking a stroll together down one of the little streets near the temple. Suddenly a car driven by an elderly man swerved around the corner, over the curb, and onto the sidewalk. The car struck Sister Birsfelder and hurled her through the thick plate-glass door of a store. She was rushed to the hospital, where she was treated for a double skull fracture, a concussion, and a severely injured eye.

For seven weeks she lay in a coma, unaware of her surroundings. Georg stayed at her bedside as much as possible, patting her hand gently and speaking to her in tones of love and encouragement. Finally she opened her eyes. Two months after the accident, she began to speak and to eat solid food. Later she was able to stand up and take a few steps and converse once again in English, German, and French. It was a miracle! Our prayers had been answered.

She still experienced considerable pain, and it was apparent that she had permanently lost the sight in her right eye. Three months after the accident, the driver of the car visited her in the hospital. Filled with anxiety

and fear of legal reprisals, he asked, “Do you hate me for what I have done to you?”

He was not prepared for her reply: “Do you know who I am? I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In our religion we learn to love and forgive one another. No,” she said, “I don’t hate you. I love you and forgive you.” The elderly man had a heavy burden lifted that day.\*

Our Savior, at the close of His brief ministry among the Nephites, posed the following soul-searching question: “What manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am” (3 Nephi 27:27).

It is easier to speak of Christlike attributes than to practice them when things go wrong and people do things that hurt us. But if we are to become like Christ, we must learn to forgive as He did. □

*From “The Fall and Infinite Atonement,” Ensign, January 1996, 22–27.*



\*Brother and Sister Birsfelder later served as president and matron of the Bern Switzerland Temple.





*Moses Parting the Red Sea, by Robert T. Barrett*

"And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided" (Exodus 14:21).



When asked why Abraham was commanded to go to Mount Moriah and offer as a sacrifice his only hope for the posterity the Lord had promised, President Hugh B. Brown replied, “Abraham needed to learn something about Abraham.” Sacrifice teaches us what we are willing to offer to the Lord through our obedience. See Elder M. Russell Ballard, “The Law of Sacrifice,” page 10; see also Elder Hugh B. Brown, “The Currant Bush,” page 22.