

Liahona

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Standard for Morality?**

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*“Motherhood is
not a hobby,
it is a calling. . . .
It is not something
to do if you
can squeeze
the time in.
It is what God
gave you time for.”*

Rachel Jankovic, in Neil L.
Andersen, “Children,” *Ensign or
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Family Home Evening Ideas

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



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CRAIG DIMOND

“How to Choose Good Friends,” page 53: Cut out from magazines several pictures of young men and young women and make up a short profile for each picture. For example, you could hold up a picture of a young man and say, “This is Aaron. He isn’t a member of the Church, but he goes to synagogue regularly with his family. He likes to play sports and uses clean language.” Create one profile like this for each picture. Ask your children which of these people would be good friends. Read with them James 2:23 and discuss ways we can become friends with Heavenly Father.

“Jesus Christ Is Our Savior,” page 74: Easter is coming! You may want to do something special this season to recognize blessings from Jesus Christ. Each day at dinner, each family member could take a turn to share blessings he or she received that day. You could remember these blessings by collecting marbles in a jar—one marble for every blessing. You may want to introduce this idea during family home evening by reading a scripture about the life of Jesus Christ; then ask your children to draw a picture of what happens in the scripture. Sing “I’m Trying to Be Like Jesus” (*Children’s Songbook*, 78) or another song about the Savior.

IN YOUR LANGUAGE

The *Liahona* and other Church materials are available in many languages at languages.lds.org.

To connect with the *Liahona* on Facebook and receive inspiring messages, visit facebook.com/liahona.magazine.

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**By President
Henry B. Eyring**

First Counselor in the
First Presidency

Service

AND ETERNAL LIFE

The Savior is our example of unselfish service. His perfect life was devoted to serving Heavenly Father and all of His Father's children. The united purpose of the Father and the Son is to give all of us the gift of immortality and the blessing of eternal life (see Moses 1:39).

To qualify for eternal life, we must be changed through the Atonement of Jesus Christ—born again and cleansed from sin. Little children under the age of eight, however, are without sin and are redeemed through the Atonement (see Mosiah 3:16, 21; Moroni 8:10–12).

For all of us who reach the age of accountability, there is a wonderful plan that allows us to be cleansed from sin and prepared for eternal life. That preparation begins with baptism by priesthood authority and the reception of the Holy Ghost. Then we must always remember the Savior and keep the commandments He has given us.

King Benjamin told his people in the Book of Mormon of the joy that comes from feeling forgiveness from sin through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Then he taught them that to retain a remission of their sins, they must teach their children to serve one another and they must be as generous as they could to meet the temporal and spiritual needs of those around them. (See Mosiah 4:11–16.)

He also taught, “And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17).

Jesus went about teaching His gospel and doing good (see Acts 10:38). He healed the sick. He raised the dead. With His power He fed thousands when they were hungry and without food (see Matthew 14:14–21; John 6:2–13). After His Resurrection He gave food to several of His Apostles as they came ashore at the Sea of Galilee (see John 21:12–13). In the Americas, He healed the sick and blessed the children one by one (see 3 Nephi 17:7–9, 21).

James the Apostle taught us how the desire to serve others springs from our gratitude for what the Lord has done for us:

“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. . . .

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James 1:25, 27).

One of the assurances that you are being purified is an increasing desire to serve others for the Savior. Home teaching and visiting teaching become more of a joy and less of a chore. You find yourself volunteering more often in a local school or helping care for the poor in your community. Even though you may have little money to give to those who have less, you wish you had more so that you could give more (see Mosiah 4:24). You find yourself eager to serve your children and to show them how to serve others.



As your nature changes, you will feel a desire to give greater service without recognition. I know disciples of the Savior who have given great gifts of money and service with a determination that no one but God and their children would know about it. God has recognized their service by blessing them in this life, and He will bless them in the eternal life to come (see Matthew 6:1–4; 3 Nephi 13:1–4).

As you have kept the commandment to serve others (see Matthew 22:39), you have felt a change in your feelings of pride. The Savior corrected His Apostles when they contended about who would be greatest among them. He said:

“Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.

“But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant” (Matthew 23:10–11).

The Savior teaches us how we can learn to serve others. He served perfectly, and we must learn to serve as He learned—line upon line (see D&C 93:12–13). Through the service we give, we can become more like Him.

We will pray with all the energy of our hearts to love our enemies as He loves them (see Matthew 5:43–44; Moroni 7:48). Then we may at last become fitted for eternal life with Him and our Heavenly Father.

I promise that we can come to serve more perfectly as we follow the Savior’s teachings and example. ■

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has encouraged us to pray for opportunities to serve: “In your morning prayer each new day, ask Heavenly Father to guide you to recognize an opportunity to serve one of His precious children. Then go throughout the day . . . looking for someone to help” (“Be Anxiously Engaged,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 31). Consider inviting those you teach to set a goal to pray each morning for opportunities to serve and then to seek them throughout the day.

An Answer to Her Prayer

By Siphilile Khumalo

One night a friend of another faith visited me. I usually study my scriptures alone, and I had taken them out to study that night. I was prompted to invite her to join my scripture study, but I was afraid and began instead to study alone. I knew that I had ignored a prompting of the Spirit. After a few minutes I cautiously asked, "Would you like to study the scriptures with me?" Without hesitation my friend replied, "Yes."

We then read from the Book of Mormon. She asked me some questions, and I could feel the Spirit guide me as I answered. I bore my testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. After I did this, she told me, "I have been crying and fearful all day. I had just prayed to God for help when you asked me to read the scriptures with you. I feel so much better now. Thank you."

The Lord had used me as an instrument to answer a prayer and serve one of His children in need. I know that promptings are divine instructions from a wise, glorious Father. When we put aside our fears, we allow Him to manifest His power through our obedience.

The author lives in Gauteng, South Africa.



Look for Ways to Serve

Children can choose to serve others. Circle the pictures where the child is choosing to follow Jesus Christ by helping someone else.



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



Faith, Family, Relief

The Divine Mission of Jesus Christ: Light of the World

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

As we come to understand that Jesus Christ is the Light of the World, we will increase our faith in Him and become a light to others. Christ testified of His role as “the true light that lighteth every man [and woman] that cometh into the world” (D&C 93:2) and asked that we “hold up [His] light that it may shine unto the world” (3 Nephi 18:24).

Our prophets have also testified of the Light of Christ. President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, said: “Each time you choose to try to live more like the Savior, you will have your testimony strengthened. You will come in time to know for yourself that He is the Light of the World. . . . You will reflect to others the Light of Christ in your life.”¹

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said of our being a light to the world: “We need to protect our families and be at the forefront together with all people



of goodwill in doing everything we can to preserve light, hope, and morality in our communities.”²

From the Scriptures

John 8:12; Doctrine and Covenants 50:24; 115:5

NOTES

1. Henry B. Eyring, “A Living Testimony,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 128.
2. Quentin L. Cook, “Let There Be Light!” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 30.
3. See *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 163–64.
4. See *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 164.

From Our History

Latter-day Saint women today continue to hold up their light.

On the 80th floor of a high-rise in Hong Kong, China, a single sister with physical disabilities—the only Latter-day Saint in her family—created a home that was a haven where she and visitors could feel the influence of the Spirit. She kept her scriptures, her Relief Society manuals, and her hymnbook nearby. She traveled to the temple to perform ordinances for her ancestors.³

In Brazil a righteous mother raised her children in the light of the gospel. Primary songs filled the air in her red brick home, and pictures from the *Liahona* of temples, prophets of God, and the Savior covered the walls. She and her husband sacrificed to be sealed in the temple so their children could be born in the covenant. Her constant prayer was that the Lord would help her bring up her children in the light, truth, and strength of the gospel.⁴

What Can I Do?

1. Discuss what it means to be a light to the world today.
2. Ponder how following the Light of Christ helps you endure trials.

OCTOBER 2013 CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

“What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken; . . . whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38).

As you review the October 2013 general conference, you can use these pages (and Conference Notebooks in future issues) to help you study and apply the recent teachings of the living prophets and apostles and other Church leaders.



Prophetic Words on Marriage

“**M**arriage between a man and a woman is fundamental to the Lord’s doctrine and crucial to God’s eternal plan. Marriage between a man and a woman is God’s pattern for a fulness of life on earth and in heaven. God’s marriage pattern cannot be abused, misunderstood, or misconstrued [see Matthew 19:4–6]. Not if you want true joy. God’s

marriage pattern protects the sacred power of procreation and the joy of true marital intimacy. We know that Adam and Eve were married by God before they ever experienced the joy of uniting as husband and wife.”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Decisions for Eternity,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 108.

Answers for You

Each conference, prophets and apostles give inspired answers to questions Church members may have. Use your November 2013 issue or visit conference.lds.org to find answers to these questions:

- What can I do if a family member has strayed from the gospel? See Henry B. Eyring, “To My Grandchildren.”
- Is there a safe place to raise our children? See Boyd K. Packer, “The Key to Spiritual Protection.”
- Why is the influence of women important? See D. Todd Christofferson, “The Moral Force of Women.”

To read, watch, or listen to general conference addresses, visit conference.lds.org.

DRAWING PARALLELS: GOD'S LOVE

Some of the most important topics are addressed by more than one general conference speaker. Here is what three speakers said about God's love for us:

- "Your Heavenly Father loves you—each of you. That love never changes. . . . It is simply there."¹—President Thomas S. Monson
- "[The Savior] is always near, especially in sacred places and in times of need; and sometimes, when I least expect, I feel almost like He taps me on the shoulder to let me know He loves me."²—Elder Terence M. Vinson of the Seventy
- "I bear witness that no one is a stranger to our Heavenly Father. There is no one whose soul is not precious to Him."³
—Bishop Gérald Caussé, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, "We Never Walk Alone," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 123, 124.
2. Terence M. Vinson, "Drawing Closer to God," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 106.
3. Gérald Caussé, "Ye Are No More Strangers," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 51.



Prophetic Promise

"It's natural to have questions—the acorn of honest inquiry has often sprouted and matured into a great oak of understanding. There are few members of the Church who, at one time or another, have not wrestled with serious or sensitive questions. One of the purposes of the Church is to nurture and

cultivate the seed of faith—even in the sometimes sandy soil of doubt and uncertainty. Faith is to hope for things which are not seen but which are true [see Hebrews 11:1].

"Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters—my dear friends—please, first doubt your doubts before you doubt

WARD AND GENERAL MISSIONARY FUNDS

"I thank you for your generous contributions. The need for help is ongoing, that we might continue to assist those whose desire to serve is great but who do not, by themselves, have the means to do so."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Welcome to Conference," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 4–5.



your faith. We must never allow doubt to hold us prisoner and keep us from the divine love, peace, and gifts that come through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "Come, Join with Us," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 23.

ABRAHAM

“As we follow Abraham’s example, . . . we will find greater happiness and peace and rest, [and] we will find favor with God and with man.”¹ —President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985)

The marshland of Ur in Chaldea was my first home. The Chaldeans, including my father, worshipped idols and offered human sacrifices. But I believed in the one true and living God and prepared for the day when I could receive the priesthood, as my forefathers did.²

One day the Chaldeans bound me as a sacrifice on the altar of the god Elkenah. As they were about to kill me, I prayed to God for deliverance and my bonds were loosed immediately. Then the Lord spoke to me: “I have heard thee, and have come down to deliver thee, and to take thee away . . . into a strange land.”³

The Lord began to bless me immensely: I received the priesthood

through Melchizedek,⁴ and the Lord covenanted with me that I would become the father of many nations and that the gospel would bless all humanity through my posterity. He changed my name from Abram to Abraham, meaning “father of a multitude.”⁵

I brought my family to Canaan, the land the Lord had prepared for us.⁶ The Lord promised me that His covenant regarding my posterity would be fulfilled through a son born by my wife Sarah. Sarah and I had been unable to have children. We wondered how we could have children when we were both so old—I was 100 and Sarah was 90.⁷ But as the Lord promised, we did have a son, Isaac.⁸

Some years later, there came one of the hardest trials of my life. Even though I had witnessed the pain of human sacrifice, the Lord asked me to offer my son Isaac as a sacrifice. My heart grieved, but I trusted the Lord. When I was about to slay Isaac, an angel called to me, saying, “Lay not thine hand upon the lad, . . . for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld . . . thine only son.”⁹ The Lord provided a ram to be sacrificed in Isaac’s place, which Isaac and I then offered to the Lord.¹⁰

Because of my obedience, the Lord reaffirmed His covenant: “I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, . . . and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.”¹¹ ■

NOTES

1. Spencer W. Kimball, “The Example of Abraham,” *Ensign*, June 1975, 7.
2. See Abraham 1:1–8.
3. See Abraham 1:12, 15–16.
4. See Doctrine and Covenants 84:14.
5. See Genesis 17:1–9; Abraham 2:8–11; Bible Dictionary, “Abraham.”
6. See Abraham 2:4, 18–19.
7. See Genesis 17:15–21.
8. See Genesis 21:1–3.
9. Genesis 22:12.
10. See Genesis 22:1–13.
11. Genesis 22:17–18.



SEXUAL PURITY

Parents sometimes feel unsure when opportunities arise for them to teach their children about sexual purity. However, discussions on this topic can invite the Spirit and help prepare children to make and keep sacred covenants.

On pages 50–51 of this issue, Neill F. Marriott, second counselor in the Young Women general presidency, writes, “Heavenly Father provided the powers of procreation within marriage for godly purposes only.” We learn from *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* that those purposes include “expressing love and strengthening emotional and spiritual bonds between husband and wife” ([2010], 21.4.4). The suggestions below can help you teach your children about sexual purity. You can also refer to “Teaching Chastity and Virtue” in the October 2012 *Liahona* for more ideas on how to approach this topic.

Suggestions for Teaching Youth

- Consider reading with your teenage children “We Believe in Being Chaste” by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the May 2013 *Liahona*. Invite them to ask questions about sexual purity. You could also use “Personal Purity” by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the October 2000 *Liahona* to help answer their questions.
- The youth curriculum topic for Sunday lessons this month is the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Consider using the curriculum materials to teach your youth about the repentance required for sexual sins (see lds.org/youth/learn). You could also read and discuss “Why and What Do I Need to Confess to My Bishop?” by Elder C. Scott Grow of the Seventy in the October 2013 *Liahona*.
- If a temple is nearby, consider visiting the temple grounds with your family and discussing why we must remain pure to enter the temple. You could share with them the blessings you have received from temple worship. You may also want to plan a time for your family to do baptisms for the dead.
- You may want to read with your youth “Sexual Purity” in *For the Strength of Youth* ([booklet, 2011], 35–37) and highlight the blessings we receive for staying pure. You could encourage your



SCRIPTURES ON THIS TOPIC

Psalm 24:3–4
 Matthew 5:27–28
 1 Corinthians 6:18–20
 Jacob 2:27–28
 Alma 38:12
 Doctrine and Covenants 46:33;
 121:45

children to write down goals related to sexual purity.

Suggestions for Teaching Children

- You may want to hold a family home evening in which you use pictures of temples to discuss the importance and sacredness of the temple. Then you could explain that our bodies are sacred temples too.
- Read with your children the thirteenth article of faith and talk about the importance of keeping our thoughts clean. Make a list of some books, movies, and songs that will fill your mind with good things. You may want to read, watch, or sing them together. ■

THE BURDEN WAS REMOVED

Name withheld

After being abused as a child, I struggled for years before deciding to tell someone about it.

Recently I sat in a Relief Society lesson where a sister read a quotation regarding the effects of physical and sexual abuse on children. My first thought was, “How sad.” Then I was filled with the Spirit, who bore witness to me of the miracle of the Savior’s Atonement. I had been a victim of sexual abuse at a young age. During that Relief Society lesson, I realized that I no longer felt pain and fear attached to something that had consumed and frightened me for years. It was a miracle. In my heart I thanked the Savior for healing me.

As a child I struggled and felt shame for years before deciding to tell someone that I had been abused. When I was 13, I felt an impression that it was time to talk about it. After a service activity at Mutual, I went to a trusted leader, who spoke with me tenderly and took me to see the bishop the same evening. I was relieved by the bishop’s warm countenance as he invited me into his

office. I remember feeling the weight of years of secrets lift as my bishop listened. I recall his pure tears as he heard my story. I felt the love of Heavenly Father, and I felt reassured that the abuse was not my fault and

that I was still pure and virtuous. This was the beginning of my path to healing, a path that would continue for many years.

There wasn’t just one moment of healing—it was a process of peace,





GETTING HELP

“Healing may begin with a thoughtful bishop or stake president or a wise professional counselor. If you had a broken leg, you wouldn’t decide to fix it yourself. Serious abuse can also benefit from professional help. There are many ways to begin healing, but remember that a full cure comes through the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Master and Redeemer. Have faith that with effort His perfect, eternal, infinite Atonement can heal your suffering from the consequences of abuse.”

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “To Heal the Shattering Consequences of Abuse,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2008, 42; see also page 46 of this issue.

understanding, and answers that came as I studied my scriptures, prayed daily, and became more acquainted with Jesus Christ. As I studied the Savior’s life, I felt increasing love for Him. The Spirit testified truths to me, including my own worth as a daughter of God. As I submitted my heart to the Lord, obeyed His commandments, and sought His will, I was filled with comfort and peace. As I came to know Him, I began to know myself. Eventually, my past didn’t hurt

anymore. The burden was removed. The Savior had healed me.

I have an eternal family now with a wonderful husband and three beautiful daughters. I am blessed to work with youth and to testify that the Atonement of Jesus Christ can heal us from sin, physical pain, and broken hearts. I know this because of the mercy that was extended to me—because I was “encircled about eternally in the arms of his love” (2 Nephi 1:15). ■

HOW DO WE BRING THE LORD’S HEALING INTO OUR LIVES?

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, helped answer this question in his April 2013 general conference talk “The Hope of God’s Light”:

“First, start where you are.

“... We don’t have to wait to cross the finish line to receive God’s blessings. In fact, the heavens begin to part and the blessings of heaven begin to distill upon us with the very first steps we take toward the light. . . .

“Second, turn your heart toward the Lord.

“Lift up your soul in prayer and explain to your

Heavenly Father what you are feeling. Acknowledge your shortcomings. Pour out your heart and express your gratitude. Let Him know of the trials you are facing. Plead with Him in Christ’s name for strength and support. . . .

“Third, walk in the light.

“... [Heavenly Father] sent His Son to this earth to illuminate the way and show us how to safely cross the stumbling blocks placed in our path. He has given us the gospel, which teaches the way of the disciple. It teaches us the things we must know, do, and be to walk in His light, following in the footsteps of His Beloved Son” (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 75–76).

SERVING A STRANGER

By Yong Gil Park

As my departure from Korea came closer, I was worried. Who would take care of my aunt after I left?

My mom never accepted the gospel in her earthly journey, even though I had prayed for her and felt she would accept it someday. She was a strong woman who sacrificed throughout her life to support our family after the Korean War. On the one-year anniversary of my mom's death, my wife and I went to the Los Angeles California Temple to perform her baptism and confirmation. The strong Spirit in the room confirmed to me that my mom gladly accepted the gospel and the ordinances.

Just before my mom passed away, she asked me to take care of her younger sister, who was in a hospital in Korea. My family and I lived in California, USA, so unfortunately there seemed to be no way to fulfill my mom's compassionate last wish. Then my job unexpectedly relocated me to South Korea, and I had to be separated from my family for a year. Although I was concerned about living far from my family, I also anticipated visiting my aunt and my dad, who was in a Korean hospital suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

I asked Heavenly Father for divine help in living away from my family. As I thought about the time I would spend in Korea, I resolved to visit my

dad, my aunt, and the temple weekly as well as to pray for my family daily.

Once I was in Korea, the bishop of my new ward called me to be the Young Men president and the Gospel Doctrine teacher. My ward and the hospitals where my dad and aunt stayed were far from each other, and I had a very demanding job; but Heavenly Father blessed me with strength and stamina to magnify my callings and to keep my resolutions.

Soon after I started visiting my aunt, I discovered she rarely had any visitors. I decided to pick her up and have her stay with me on the weekends at my hotel, which had an extra room. However, I had a problem: should I take her with me to church on Sunday? I thought she would neither be interested in nor understand the meetings, and she would have to wait for hours after church for me to be done with meetings and other duties. But for some reason I felt I should take her.

That Sunday I took her with me, and, as expected, she had to wait for me afterward. After my meetings, I took her back to the hotel to eat. I noticed that she held a bag. I asked her about it, and she said a sister had given her some snacks.

Whenever I had duties after church,

this sister—who did not know my aunt—always offered my aunt snacks. One week during my Sunday School lesson, a familiar voice volunteered to read a scripture. I had never imagined my aunt would volunteer, but a kind sister sitting next to my aunt had prompted her to read for the class. Although my aunt was not good at socializing because of her time isolated in the hospital, all the members kindly greeted and chatted with her.

Every Sunday evening I would take her back to the hospital and promise to pick her up the next weekend, which always brought a happy smile to her face.

One day a friend of mine shared a concern that my aunt might have a hard time when my visits suddenly stopped when I left Korea. As my scheduled departure from Korea came closer, I felt mixed emotions—happy to be soon reunited with my family but distressed and sad about leaving my aunt alone.

Finally, I explained to my aunt that I would not be able to visit her as often. She paused a moment, obviously disappointed. Then she tried to compose herself and asked if I could visit her again in a year. I cried and desperately asked Heavenly Father to help this lady.

On my last Sunday in Korea, the



bishop asked if ward members could pick up my aunt on Sundays to bring her to church. He said that a number of members were willing to visit her on a regular basis—so many that they would have to organize and take turns. I could not believe his offer! This was the unexpected answer to my desperate prayers.

Since the members lived far away from my aunt's hospital, I offered to leave some money for them to cover the travel expenses, but the members refused to take my money. They told me they would take turns visiting once a month, but I found out later that they actually visited every week. One faithful sister picks up my aunt every Friday to attend institute and have lunch. She even took her to a beauty shop for a haircut. Another sister, a single mother of two teenage children,

volunteered to pick her up every Sunday morning. She cooks for my aunt, takes her for a walk, and listens to music with her. Most importantly, she tries to be a friend, and my aunt has finally opened up and comfortably chats with her and other members. Every Sunday evening the bishop picks up my aunt from a member's home after his long day of Church meetings and other duties to take her back to the hospital. Every Thursday he sends a kind email to me to report their heavenly service for my aunt.

I believe that my mom saw the actions of faithful Latter-day Saints serving her younger sister. And now I know, more clearly than ever, why we call our fellow Church members "brothers" and "sisters." ■

The author lives in California, USA.



WELCOME ALL

"Reach out to anyone who appears at the doors of your Church buildings. Welcome them with gratitude and with-

out prejudice. If people you do not know walk into one of your meetings, greet them warmly and invite them to sit with you. Please make the first move to help them feel welcome and loved, rather than waiting for them to come to you.

"After your initial welcome, consider ways you can continue to minister to them."

Bishop Gérald Caussé, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, "Ye Are No More Strangers," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 51.



**By Elder
David A. Bednar**
Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

Faithful Parents AND Wayward Children

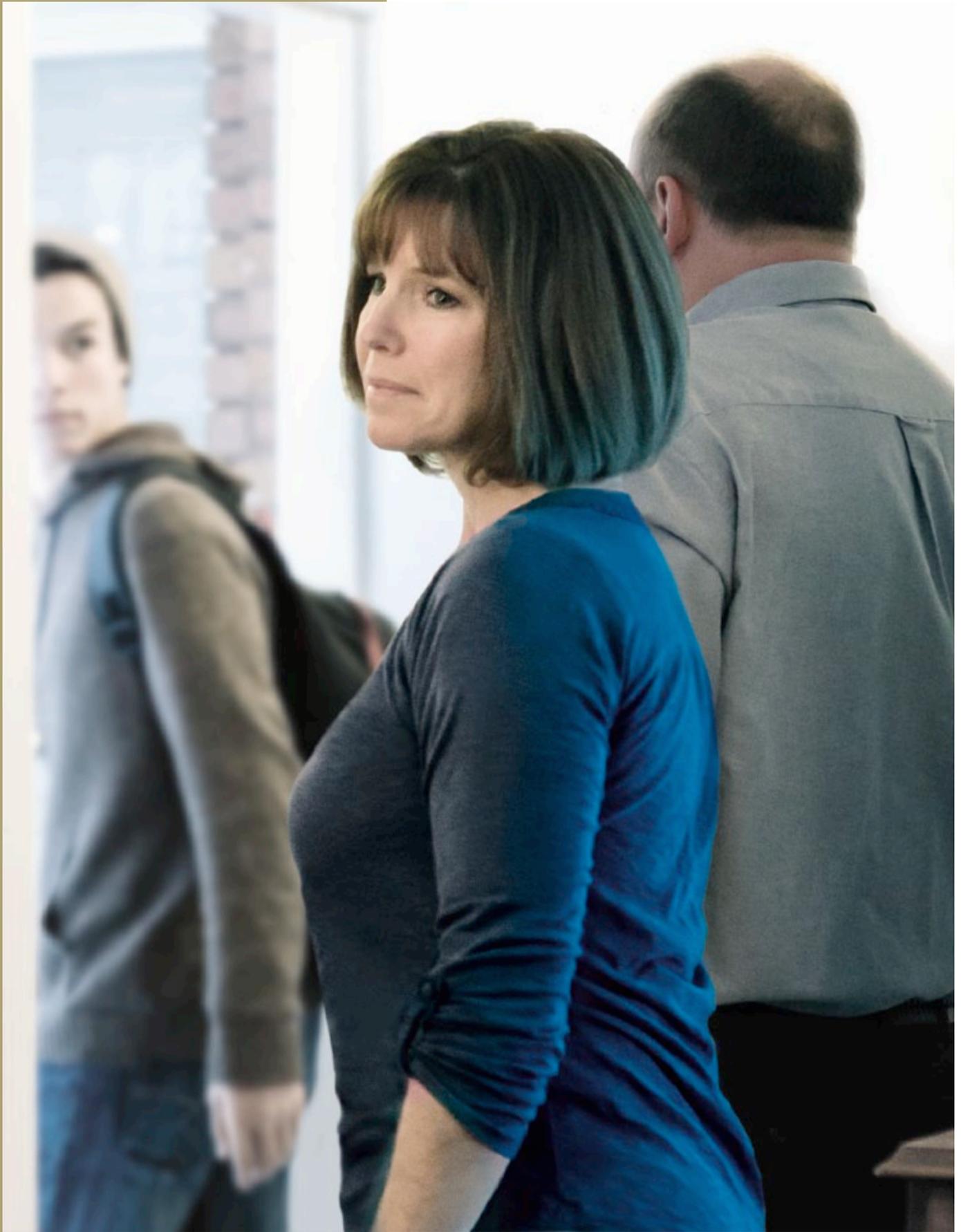
Sustaining Hope
While Overcoming
Misunderstanding

One of the greatest heartaches a valiant parent in Zion can suffer is a child who strays from the gospel path. Questions of “Why?” or “What did I do wrong?” and “How can this child now be helped?” are pondered without ceasing in the minds and hearts of such parents. These men and women pray earnestly, search the scriptures diligently, and listen intently to the counsel of priesthood and auxiliary leaders as they turn to the gospel of Jesus Christ for guidance, strength, and solace.

Statements by General Authorities of the Church describing the influence of faithful parents on wayward children have been and continue to be a source of great familial comfort.¹ The

consolation arises from the hope these messages seem to proffer that parents who honor gospel covenants, obey the Lord’s commandments, and serve faithfully can influence the salvation of their sons and daughters who go astray. However, the interpretation of these statements by some members of the Church has contributed to a measure of doctrinal misunderstanding. The confusion derives from the apparent inconsistency of these interpretations with the doctrine of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and the principles of moral agency and individual accountability for sins and transgressions.

A review of truths emphasized repeatedly in the standard works, of clarifying teachings from modern apostles



and prophets, and of relevant evidence from Church history records can sustain hope while addressing the misunderstanding.

Prophetic Promises about Posterity

The following quotation appears in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith during his service as Church historian and recorder: “When a seal is put upon the father and mother, it secures their posterity, so that they cannot be lost, but will be saved by virtue of the covenant of their father and mother.”²

A similar teaching, apparently based on the statement by the Prophet Joseph, was made by Elder Orson F. Whitney (1855–1931) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1929: “The Prophet Joseph Smith declared—and he never taught more comforting doctrine—that the eternal sealings of faithful parents and the divine promises made to them for valiant service in the Cause of Truth, would save not only themselves, but likewise their posterity. Though some of the sheep may wander, the eye of the Shepherd is upon them, and sooner or later they will feel the tentacles of Divine Providence reaching out after them and drawing them back to the fold. Either in this life or the life to come, they will return. They will have to pay their debt to justice; they will suffer for their sins; and may tread a thorny path; but if it leads them at last, like the penitent Prodigal, to a loving and forgiving father’s heart and home, the painful experience will not have been in vain. Pray for your careless and disobedient children; hold on to them with your faith. Hope on, trust on, till you see the salvation of God.”³

The statements by Joseph Smith and Orson F. Whitney are construed by some members of the Church to mean that wayward children unconditionally receive the blessings of salvation because of and through the faithfulness of parents. However, this interpretation is moderated by the fact that the most complete account of the Prophet’s sermon was not available to Church historians at the time they compiled an amalgamated version of his teachings from the notes of Willard Richards and William Clayton. In

the more complete set of notes recorded by Howard and Martha Coray, Joseph Smith is shown to have qualified his statement to make the promised blessings conditional upon the obedience of the children:

“When a father and mother of a family have [been sealed], their children *who have not transgressed* are secured by the seal wherewith the Parents have been sealed. And this is the Oath of God unto our Father Abraham and this doctrine shall stand forever.”⁴

This clarification is more consistent doctrinally. Except for the additional information contained in the Coray records, the concept of unconditional salvation for disobedient children would contradict many foundational teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, including the second article of faith that “men will be punished for their own sins” (Articles of Faith 1:2).

This understanding also is in accordance with numerous examples in the standard works. For instance, Alma explained to his son Corianton:

“But behold, *ye cannot hide your crimes from God; and except ye repent they will stand as a testimony against you at the last day.*

“Now my son, I would that ye should repent and forsake your sins, and go no more after the lusts of your eyes, but cross yourself in all these things; *for except ye do this ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God.* Oh, remember, and take it upon you, and cross yourself in these things” (Alma 39:8–9; emphasis added).

Samuel the Lamanite declared to the Nephites:

“And this to the intent that whosoever will believe might be saved, and that whosoever will not believe, a righteous judgment might come upon them; and also if they are condemned *they bring upon themselves their own condemnation.*

“And now remember, remember, my brethren, that whosoever perisheth, *perisheth unto himself*; and whosoever doeth iniquity, *doeth it unto himself*; for behold, ye are free; ye are permitted to act for yourselves; for behold, God hath given unto you a knowledge and he hath made you free.

Divine Providence may be considered a type of spiritual power, a heavenly pull or tug that entices a wandering child to return to the fold.



“He hath given unto you that ye might know good from evil, and he hath given unto you that ye might choose life or death; and ye can do good and be restored unto that which is good, or have that which is good restored unto you; or ye can do evil, and have that which is evil restored unto you” (Helaman 14:29–31; emphasis added).

A number of additional scriptures likewise substantiate the principle that men and women are agents blessed with moral agency and are accountable for their own thoughts, words, and deeds.⁵

The Tentacles of Divine Providence

The Church has no records of any additional teachings on this specific topic by the Prophet Joseph Smith. Though many subsequent Church leaders have differed in their emphasis on various aspects of the statements by Joseph Smith, Orson F. Whitney, and others, they agree on the fact

that parents who honor temple covenants are in a position to exert great spiritual influence over time on their children. Faithful members of the Church can find comfort in knowing that they can lay claim to the promises of divine guidance and power, through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and the privileges of the priesthood, in their efforts to help family members receive the blessings of salvation and exaltation.

The “tentacles of Divine Providence” described by Elder Whitney may be considered a type of spiritual power, a heavenly pull or tug that entices a wandering child to return to the fold eventually. Such an influence cannot override the moral agency of a child but nonetheless can invite and beckon. Ultimately, a child must exercise his or her moral agency and respond in faith, repent with full purpose of heart, and act in accordance with the teachings of Christ.

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), former Second Counselor in the First Presidency, provided the most comprehensive explanation of this eternally important concept:

“I believe and accept the comforting statement of Elder Orson F. Whitney:

“The Prophet Joseph Smith declared—and he never taught more comforting doctrine—that the eternal sealings of faithful parents and the divine promises made to them for valiant service in the Cause of Truth, would save not only themselves, but likewise their posterity. Though some of the sheep may wander, the eye of the Shepherd is upon them, and sooner or later they will feel the tentacles of Divine Providence reaching out after them and drawing them back to the fold. Either in this life or the life to come, they will return. They will have to pay their debt to justice; they will suffer for their sins; and may tread a thorny path; but if it leads them at last, like the penitent Prodigal, to a loving and forgiving father’s heart and home, the painful experience will not have been in vain. Pray for your careless and disobedient children; hold on to them with your faith. Hope on, trust on, till you see the salvation of God.”⁶

“A principle in this statement that is often overlooked is that they must fully repent and ‘suffer for their sins’ and

Faithful parents may find strength to endure as they follow the examples of other righteous parents with disobedient children. In the Book of Mormon, Father Lehi consistently and constantly encouraged his wayward sons to turn to the Lord.

‘pay their debt to justice.’ I recognize that now is the time ‘to prepare to meet God’ [Alma 34:32]. If the repentance of the wayward children does not happen in this life, is it still possible for the cords of the sealing to be strong enough for them yet to work out their repentance? In the Doctrine and Covenants we are told, ‘The dead who repent will be redeemed, through obedience to the ordinances of the house of God,

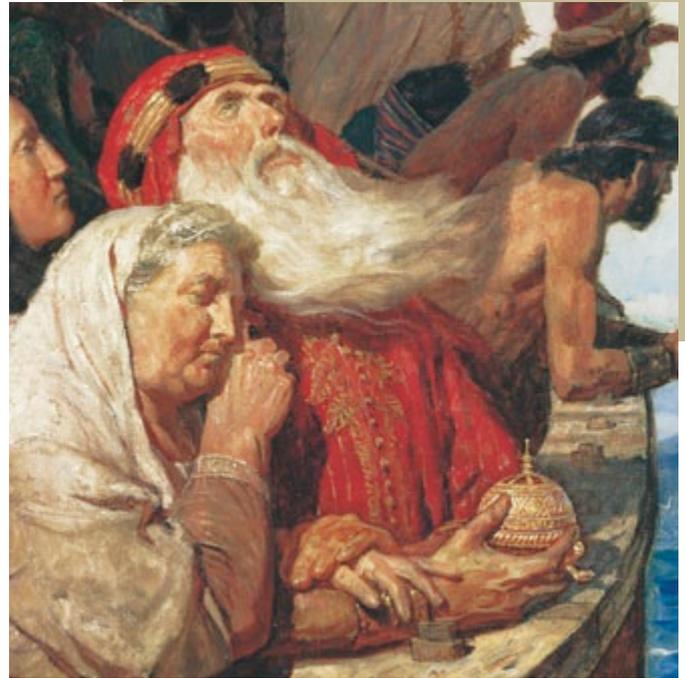
“And after they have paid the penalty of their transgressions, and are washed clean, shall receive a reward according to their works, for they are heirs of salvation’ [D&C 138:58–59].

“We remember that the prodigal son wasted his inheritance, and when it was all gone he came back to his father’s house. There he was welcomed back into the family, but his inheritance was spent. [See Luke 15:11–32.] Mercy will not rob justice, and the sealing power of faithful parents will only claim wayward children upon the condition of their repentance and Christ’s Atonement. Repentant wayward children will enjoy salvation and all the blessings that go with it, but exaltation is much more. It must be fully earned. The question as to who will be exalted must be left to the Lord in His mercy.

“There are very few whose rebellion and evil deeds are so great that they have ‘sinned away the power to repent.’⁷ That judgment must also be left up to the Lord. He tells us, ‘I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men’ [D&C 64:10].

“Perhaps in this life we are not given to fully understand how enduring the sealing cords of righteous parents are to their children. It may very well be that there are more helpful sources at work than we know.⁸ I believe there is a strong familial pull as the influence of beloved ancestors continues with us from the other side of the veil.”⁹

President Faust’s teachings authoritatively summarize the things we do and do not know about righteous parents and wayward children. The influence of parents who honor covenants and obey commandments indeed can have a decisive spiritual impact upon children who stray



DETAIL FROM LEHI AND HIS PEOPLE ARRIVE IN THE PROMISED LAND, BY ARNOLD FRIBERG

by activating the tentacles of divine Providence—in ways that have not been revealed fully and are not understood completely. However, righteous parental influence (1) does not replace in the life of an individual the need for the redeeming and strengthening power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, (2) does not overrule the consequences of the unrighteous exercise of moral agency, and (3) does not negate the responsibility of an individual as an agent “to act . . . and not to be acted upon” (2 Nephi 2:26).

Faithful parents may find strength to endure as they follow the examples of other righteous parents with disobedient children. In the Book of Mormon, Father Lehi consistently and constantly encouraged his wayward sons to turn to the Lord. Lehi “spake unto Laman, saying: O that thou mightest be like unto this river, continually running into the fountain of all righteousness!

“And he also spake unto Lemuel: O that thou mightest

be like unto this valley, firm and steadfast, and immovable in keeping the commandments of the Lord!

“Now this he spake because of the stiffneckedness of Laman and Lemuel; for behold they did murmur in many things against their father” (1 Nephi 2:9–11).

Later, Lehi was about to depart this earth, yet he still invited and enticed his wayward sons to “hearken unto [his] words” (2 Nephi 1:12):

“Awake! and arise from the dust, and hear the words of a trembling parent, whose limbs ye must soon lay down in the cold and silent grave. . . .

“And I desire that ye should remember to observe the statutes and the judgments of the Lord; behold, this hath been the anxiety of my soul from the beginning.

“My heart hath been weighed down with sorrow from time to time, for I have feared, lest for the hardness of your hearts the Lord your God should come out in the fulness of his wrath upon you, that ye be cut off and destroyed forever; . . .

“O my sons, that these things might not come upon you, but that ye might be a choice and a favored people of the Lord. But behold, his will be done; for his ways are righteousness forever” (2 Nephi 1:14, 16–17, 19).

An angel of the Lord appeared to rebellious Alma the Younger and declared, “The Lord hath heard the prayers of his people, and also the prayers of his servant, Alma, who is thy father; for he has prayed with much faith concerning

thee that thou mightest be brought to the knowledge of the truth; therefore, for this purpose have I come to convince thee of the power and authority of God, that the prayers of his servants might be answered according to their faith” (Mosiah 27:14).

This remarkable experience was due in part to the prayers of Alma—whom the angel twice recognized as a servant of God. Thus, faithful parents can invite the power of heaven to influence their children. Nevertheless, those children remain agents unto themselves, and the choice to repent or not ultimately is theirs. Alma the Younger did repent of his sins and was born of the Spirit (see Mosiah 27:24), the outcome all parents of wayward children yearn for with all of their hearts.

As parents are patient and persistent in loving their children and in becoming living examples of disciples of Jesus Christ, they most effectively teach the Father’s plan of happiness. The steadfastness of such parents bears powerful witness of the redeeming and strengthening powers of the Savior’s Atonement and invites wayward children to see with new eyes and to hear with new ears (see Matthew 13:43).

Acting in accordance with the teachings of the Savior invites spiritual power into our lives—power to hear and heed, power to discern, and power to persevere. Devoted discipleship is the best and only answer to every question and challenge. ■

NOTES

1. See Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (1938), 321; Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 5:530; Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 11:215; Lorenzo Snow, in Brian H. Stuy, comp., *Collected Discourses*, 5 vols. (1987–92), 3:364; Joseph Fielding Smith, in *Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (1954–56), 2:90–91, 179, 182–83; Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (1979), 685; Spencer W. Kimball, “Ocean Currents and Family Influences,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, 111–12; Howard W. Hunter, “Parents’ Concern for Children,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, 63; Boyd K. Packer, “Our Moral Environment,” *Ensign*, May 1992, 68; Russell M. Nelson, “Doors of Death,” *Ensign*, May 1992, 73; Gordon B. Hinckley, in “Prophet Returns to ‘Beloved England,’” *Church News*, Sept. 2, 1995, 4; Boyd K. Packer, “Do Not Fear,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 77; Robert D. Hales, “With All the Feeling of a Tender Parent: A Message of Hope to Families,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 88.
2. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (1938), 321.
3. Orson F. Whitney, in Conference Report, Apr. 1929, 110.
4. Joseph Smith, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, comp. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook (1980), 241; emphasis added. See also page 300.
5. These scriptures illustrate the principle that men and women are agents who are blessed with and can exercise moral agency and are accountable to God for their actions. The list is not intended to be exhaustive: 2 Corinthians 5:9–10; Galatians 6:7–9; Mosiah 4:30; 7:30–33; Alma 12:12–14; 33–35; 34:13–17; 42:24–30; Doctrine and Covenants 6:33–34; 101:78; Moses 7:32–33.
6. Orson F. Whitney, in Conference Report, Apr. 1929, 110.
7. Alonzo A. Hinckley, in Conference Report, Oct. 1919, 161.
8. See John K. Carmack, “When Our Children Go Astray,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1997, 7; *Liahona*, Mar. 1999, 28.
9. James E. Faust, “Dear Are the Sheep That Have Wandered,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 62.



Zimbabwe

LAND OF BEAUTY, PEOPLE OF FAITH

Zimbabwe has a thriving community of Latter-day Saints.

The Beauty of Zimbabwe

Considered one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World, Victoria Falls on the Zimbabwean border is neither the widest nor the deepest waterfall in the world—but many claim it to be the largest in sheer volume of water. More than a mile (1.6 km) wide, cascades of water plummet 350 feet (108 m) to crash on rocks below. The roaring falls kick up such a heavy spray that you can't even see the base of the falls during the wet season.

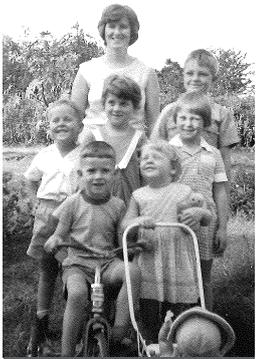
Victoria Falls is only one of many stunningly beautiful sights in Zimbabwe. Located in southeast Africa, Zimbabwe (formerly Southern Rhodesia) lures travelers from all over the world to experience its national parks, wildlife, beauty, and culture.

Whether you want to travel with a wildlife safari or try your hand at white-water rafting down the thundering Zambezi River, Zimbabwe has a lot to offer—including a thriving community of Latter-day Saints.

The Church in Zimbabwe

There are more than 23,000 members of the Church living in Zimbabwe. Membership has grown swiftly in the last 35 years. Prior to 1980 for example, there were just over 1,000 members.

The prophetic declaration issued by President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) on June 8, 1978, that “all worthy male members of the Church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard for race or color” (Official Declaration 2) had a positive impact on the growth of the Church in Zimbabwe.



Primary children in Kwekwe, 1965.

Many Latter-day Saints have helped strengthen the Church in Zimbabwe. Here is a brief look at some of those pioneers.

Modern Day Pioneers in Zimbabwe
Hubert Henry Hodgkiss

Missionaries were sent to Southern Rhodesia for a limited time in the early 1930s. Yet by 1935 all missionaries were pulled from Southern Rhodesia (then part of the South African Mission) and the area was closed because of the shortage of missionaries and

the distance from the mission home in Cape Town, South Africa.

In September of 1950, eight missionaries were sent to reopen Southern Rhodesia. Five months later, the first convert baptism in the area took place.

Born in England in 1926, Hubert Henry Hodgkiss moved to Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, in 1949. He initially learned about the Church from a friend who was investigating the gospel. Hugh had doubts about the restored gospel and set out to prove to his

TIME LINE

1927: Two sons of a member who emigrated from South Africa are the first members baptized in Southern Rhodesia.

1930: President Don M. Dalton of the South African Mission sends the first missionaries to work in the new Rhodesia District.

1935: President Don M. Dalton stops sending missionaries to Southern Rhodesia.



1950: In September, President Evan P. Wright assigns eight missionaries to reopen Southern Rhodesia.

1951: Hugh Hodgkiss is the first convert baptized in Southern Rhodesia.

Latter-day Saints in Harare, Zimbabwe, come together to celebrate a baby blessing in 1985.



friend that the Church was not true. Instead, after searching the gospel closely, Hugh developed a testimony of its truthfulness and decided to be baptized. "I was wrong," he told his friend. "I am joining the Church."¹

Hugh was baptized February 1, 1951, marking the first convert baptism in Southern Rhodesia. He enjoyed being around people and made friends everywhere he went. His friendly nature allowed him to make great contributions to the growth of the Church in the area.

In 1959 Hugh became president of the Salisbury Branch. His counselors were also local members. This was the first time this branch presidency consisted of local members. Before this, full-time missionaries had always filled the responsibilities of the branch presidency.



The Gweru stake young men at an activity in the winter of 2012. The young men and their leaders reaped maize, then enjoyed eating food and playing soccer.

1959: The first known missionary to serve from Southern Rhodesia, Jean Wood, serves in the South Africa Mission.



1964: Northern Rhodesia becomes Zambia, and Southern Rhodesia becomes Rhodesia.

1978: President E. Dale LeBaron organizes the first Rhodesian District Presidency.

1980: Great Britain recognizes Rhodesia's independence; the country's name is changed to Zimbabwe.



1985: On August 24–25 the Johannesburg South Africa Temple is dedicated.

Ernest Sibanda

Ernest Sibanda met two Mormon missionaries on bicycles—Elder Black and Elder Kaelin—in December 1978. They left a Book of Mormon with him. Before their visit, Ernest had already spent many years studying religion. In fact, he had been a teacher for his church for nine years and a pastor for three years.

The night Ernest received his copy of the Book of Mormon he stayed up until 2:00 in the morning reading enthusiastically. He couldn't wait to meet the missionaries the following day. Ernest told them that he had learned more from Joseph Smith about Jesus Christ than all the ministers he had ever met. Ernest was baptized shortly thereafter, followed by his wife and children a few weeks later.

Of his baptism day, he wrote, "I felt very free. I felt released from every evil. I found there was love in me for my family. I found there was love within me for the Church."²

Ernest Sibanda proved to be a great strength to the Church. He served as Sunday School president, branch clerk, and second counselor in a branch presidency. He also fulfilled an assignment from the South Africa mission president to translate hymns from English to Shona.

Edward Dube

In the April 2013 general conference, Edward Dube was called to be a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, making him the first General Authority of the Church from Zimbabwe. This was only the most recent of many firsts for Elder Dube. He was also the first native stake president, first native mission president, and first native Area Seventy from Zimbabwe. Elder Dube has been a true pioneer of righteous leadership.

Before all that, however, there was another first for Elder Dube: his first day attending church. Two years before he went to church for the first time, he was given a Book of Mormon by a Latter-day Saint man for whom



he was working. Elder Dube read the Book of Mormon and felt its influence and power.

In February 1984 Elder Dube accepted an invitation to attend a fast and testimony meeting at a local branch. He felt so nervous when he entered the chapel that he almost immediately turned around and walked back out.

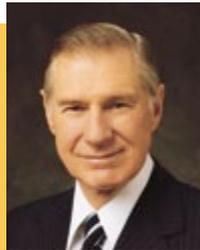
Soon, however, Elder Dube's feelings began to change once the branch president stood and bore testimony of the Book of Mormon. A testimony of the Book of Mormon was one area Elder Dube felt was common ground. He



In 1994 President Beloved Mundera walked with his family over one mile (1.6 km) to church every Sunday, carrying in his wheelbarrow everything his branch needed for the meetings.

1987: The Zimbabwe Harare Mission is organized from the South Africa Johannesburg Mission.

1991: On October 25 Elder James E. Faust (1920–2007) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles dedicates Zimbabwe for the preaching of the gospel.



1994: The Church Educational System hires Edward Dube as country director. He establishes seminary and institute classes throughout Zimbabwe.

1998: President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) visits Zimbabwe and speaks to about 1,500 Latter-day Saints. Several government officials attend.



stood and shared his own thoughts and feelings of the Book of Mormon after several other members bore testimony.

Soon after that first sacrament meeting, Elder Dube began to investigate the Church in earnest. He was baptized several months later. He then served a full-time mission in the Zimbabwe Harare Mission. Elder Dube married Naume Keresia Salizani on December 9, 1989. They have four children.

Elder Dube has seen many ups and downs for the Saints in Zimbabwe as a result of political turmoil. Through it all, he has relied on the Lord for strength and guidance. “I look back on my life and I truly feel grateful,” he said. “The gospel has been everything in my life.”³

“To me, Elder Dube is a Brigham Young or Wilford Woodruff of Zimbabwe,” says President

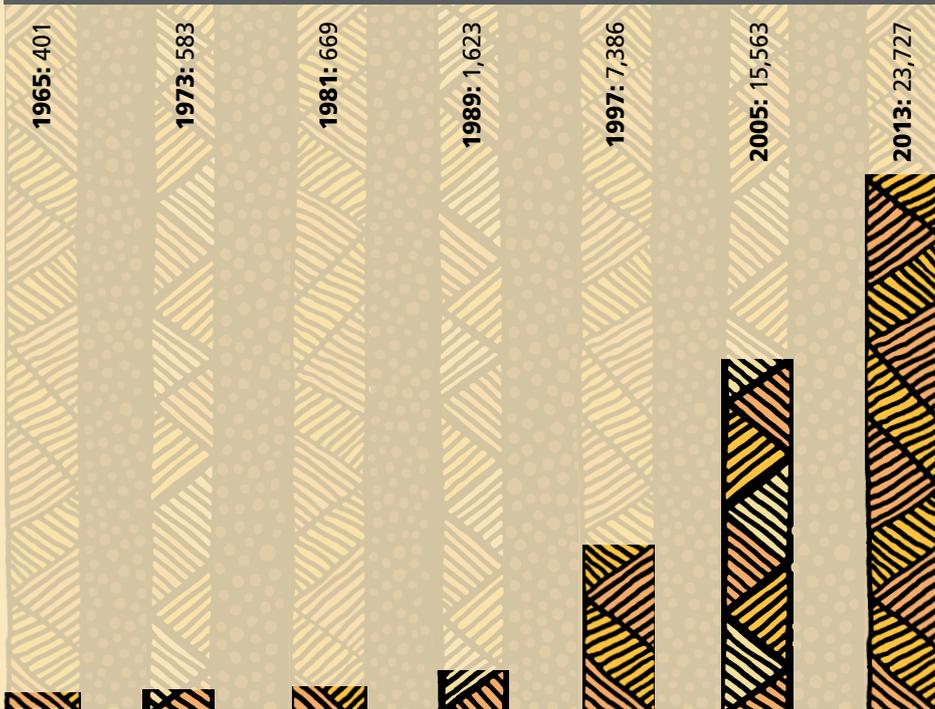
Keith R. Edwards, a former member of the Seventy who currently serves as president of the England Missionary Training Center. President Edwards was mission president of the Zimbabwe Harare Mission from 2000 to 2003 and worked extensively with Elder Dube, who was serving as stake president at the time. “Elder Dube just has a vision of what the gospel is supposed to do and how it is supposed to work.”⁴

Missionary Efforts in Zimbabwe

During his time in Zimbabwe, President Edwards witnessed firsthand the growth of the Church in a land that is embracing the gospel more and more. “The people of Zimbabwe enjoy life,” President Edwards says. “They are happy and, by nature, very spiritual. They’re very easy to teach.”



GROWTH OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN ZIMBABWE



CHURCH STATISTICS IN ZIMBABWE*

Total membership: 23,727

Missions: 1

Wards and branches: 60

Family history centers: 4

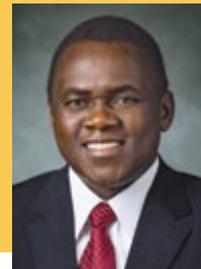
* As of June 2013

1999: Zimbabwe's first stake is organized in Harare. The first full edition of the Book of Mormon is published in Shona, a native language of Zimbabwe.



2007: The triple combination (Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price) is published in Shona.

2009: Edward Dube becomes the first native mission president to serve in Zimbabwe.



2013: Edward Dube is called to the First Quorum of the Seventy, making him the first General Authority from Zimbabwe.

President Edwards explains that the missionary badge—because it has the name of the Savior on it—is one of the easiest ways for missionaries to start gospel conversations with Zimbabweans. Locals often read the name of the Church and perk up. “They say, ‘We’re friends of Jesus Christ too.’ It is an immediate bond,” says President Edwards.

There are more future leaders and pioneers joining the Church all the time in Zimbabwe. “The missionaries are always busy,” President Edwards says. ■

NOTES

1. From Greg Hodgkiss, Hubert Henry Hodgkiss biographical sketch, June 26, 2012, Zimbabwe country case file, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
2. *All are alike unto God*, ed. E. Dale LeBaron (1990), 129.
3. Edward Dube, in R. Scott Lloyd, “New General Authority: Elder Edward Dube,” *Church News*, Apr. 20, 2013, lds-churchnews.com.
4. From an interview with Keith R. Edwards, Apr. 24, 2013.

Kwekwe Ward leaders and missionaries in 2011.





Unshaken

*As we turned to the Lord in the aftermath of the earthquake,
we were reminded of the importance of always remembering Him.*

By Reid Tateoka

Former mission president of the Japan Sendai Mission

Friday, March 11, 2011, 2:46 p.m.; Kōriyama, Japan; Kōriyama chapel, second floor.

Fifteen missionaries in the middle of leadership training begin to practice teaching about Joseph Smith. As the message of hope and peace fills the room, the windows begin to rattle. The noise intensifies. What began as vibrations escalates to booming.

The building jerks side to side, and the movement increases in speed and magnitude until it becomes one continuous jolting motion. Standing and walking are nearly impossible. Some missionaries try to take cover under the tables—until the tables are thrown across the

room. The building, the city, even the whole province reel in commotion as if the earth will burst open. One thought prevails in my mind: “Get the missionaries out of here!”

Our Miraculous Evacuation

As mission president of the Japan Sendai Mission, I had been teaching the missionaries and members for months to “turn to the Lord” (Mosiah 7:33). Now, as I turned to Him for divine guidance, inspiration came quickly: “Open the door—create an escape route.” I knew that I must open the door before the ceiling collapsed, trapping us inside. So I rushed to the door and opened it. “Get out of here!” I shouted.



The March 2011 earthquake and resulting tsunami devastated numerous cities in northern Japan (such as Miyako City, above), killing thousands of people and displacing hundreds of thousands others.

The missionaries staggered along the shifting, rocking, heaving floor toward the open door; then they headed down the stairwell and out of the church. Once outside, we felt safer, although we were not yet safe from the elements. The weather had turned bitter cold, and snow pelted our faces.

Across from the church, headstones in a Buddhist cemetery toppled over; the wall of the cemetery had turned to rubble. A large fissure zigzagged up all 12 stories of an apartment building behind the church. Large chunks of concrete facade had crumbled off the walls of an adjacent elementary school. Windows had blown out, and broken glass littered the ground. On the opposite side of the road, a blue tile roof lay in pieces. I gathered the 15 missionaries in the parking lot of the church, and we gave our Heavenly Father thanks for our protection and asked for His continued help.

Our Thanksgiving Prayers

Panic set in throughout the city. Afraid that they would go without food, people began buying everything in

sight. Bread and milk sold out immediately, and within a few hours no bread could be found in the city. Lines miles long formed at the gas stations.

In contrast to the panic of the people on the streets, the missionaries were remarkably calm. We offered prayers of thanksgiving, and we felt a calm assurance that all would be well.

We could not leave the city—roads were damaged and freeways were closed, and no trains or buses were running. People who had waited hours in long lines to purchase gasoline were turned away. Government inspectors systematically entered each residence, condemning some and approving others for occupancy. So we stayed overnight at evacuation centers with numerous others who, like us, could not return to their homes.

Discipleship amid Distress

The next day, Saturday, we began as usual with scripture study and prayer. That day we especially needed our Heavenly Father's help. After scripture study, I

organized the missionaries into groups. One group went to the church to help clean up and then worked with the branch president to repair members' homes. One group visited the city inspectors to find out whether the missionary apartments were safe to enter. Another group checked to see if trains and buses were running. Several others stood in lines to obtain water while others searched for food. One companionship received a special assignment: find bread for the sacrament on Sunday. I worked throughout the day trying to contact all the missionaries in the mission.

That day we felt our Heavenly Father's guidance in everything we did. The missionaries who stood in the line for water met two men with whom they shared the gospel. The missionaries shared their testimonies of God's love and brought the two men to our testimony meeting in the evening and to church the next day.

The sisters who sought food for us soon learned that God was guiding their footsteps. Unable to find anything

in the stores, they found food in places they usually would not consider, such as down deserted alleys and in small, one-room shops. We had been given our "daily bread" (Matthew 6:11).

At the end of the day we reported back to our Heavenly Father. We had not lost our focus. We were still "disciple[s] of Jesus Christ," who were "called of him to declare his word among his people, that they might have everlasting life" (3 Nephi 5:13).

The Father's Strength, Power, and Peace

That evening we felt a greater need for the strength and power of our Heavenly Father. We needed His Spirit to be with us. So we had a testimony meeting at the chapel. The missionaries thanked the Lord for giving us our daily bread, and they recognized that we had been led, guided, directed, and protected. They knew that many others were not so fortunate and would not see another sunrise. We truly had been "troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we [had been] perplexed, but not in despair; . . . cast down, but not destroyed" (2 Corinthians 4:8–9).

All the missionaries testified of the peace they felt. They testified that God had protected them and calmed their souls. They had faced the possibility of death but did not fear. They did not have the water, food, or heat needed to sustain them long-term, yet they were nourished with living water; they were fed by the word of God; they were warmed by the Spirit. Within our little band of missionaries, not one feared. Each missionary felt God's strengthening power that night and felt closer to God than ever before.

As that day ended, we were grateful to be alive. We thanked the Lord for the help He had extended to us in very literal ways. We made assignments for our worship service the next day and left the chapel to join the dozens of other temporarily homeless people in the evacuation center.



THE PURPOSE OF TRIALS

"Our Heavenly Father, who gives us so much to delight in, also knows that we learn and grow and become stronger as we face and survive the trials through which we must pass. . . . Such difficulties allow us to change for the better, to rebuild our lives in the way our Heavenly Father teaches us, and to become something different from what we were—better than we were, more understanding than we were, more empathetic than we were, with stronger testimonies than we had before."

President Thomas S. Monson, "I Will Not Fail Thee, nor Forsake Thee," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 87.



As if preserving our lives had not been enough, our Heavenly Father made sure that we would be able to “always remember” His Son.

The Sacrament Bread

But two elders were especially solemn. They had been asked to get the bread for the sacrament the next day and had not accomplished their assignment.

As we reached the evacuation center Saturday evening, the city employees welcomed us back. They apologized that they had given us little food (20 crackers) to eat the day before but then beamed as they handed us the next day’s rations: a bottle of water and eight slices of bread.

My elders looked at me as if to say, “How could the Lord bless us any more?”

God, who knows the fall of a sparrow, had reached out again, as if preserving our lives had not been enough. Our Heavenly Father made sure that we would be able to “always remember” His Son (D&C 20:77). We were closer to our Savior than we had ever been in our lives.

The missionaries gave a special prayer that night. They dropped to their knees to thank our Heavenly Father for another miracle in a series of special miracles. They understood the priority that God has placed on our covenant to always remember Jesus Christ, and they were grateful for the mercy and kindness of a loving God who lets us partake of the sacrament each week.

These missionaries now testified, with greater conviction than ever before, that God wants us to always remember His Son, Jesus Christ. ■

The 2011 Tōhoku earthquake took place 70 kilometers (about 45 miles) off the Oshika Peninsula and registered at a 9.0 magnitude, one of the five most powerful earthquakes measured since modern record keeping began in 1900.¹ All of the Sendai missionaries were accounted for within days of the earthquake.

NOTE

1. “Managing post-disaster debris: the Japan experience” (United Nations Environment Programme, June 2012), 5, unep.org/disastersandconflicts.



By Elder
Tad R. Callister
Of the Presidency
of the Seventy



The Lord's Standard of **MORALITY**

Some years ago my father, an attorney, was trying a lawsuit. For his authority, he cited only one case—a California Supreme Court case issued many years before. His opponent cited a number of lower-court decisions of more recent vintage.

The judge said to my father, “Mr. Callister, don’t you have a more recent case than this?” My father looked at the judge and replied, “Your Honor, may I remind you that when the supreme court speaks on a matter, it only needs to speak once.” The

judge nodded with approval. He was reminded that the supreme court trumps all lower-court decisions, however numerous or recent they may be.

So it is with God our Father—He needs to speak only once on the issue of morality, and that one declaration trumps all the opinions of the lower courts, whether uttered by psychologists, counselors, politicians, friends, parents, or would-be moralists of the day.

It is almost unbelievable to think that God has given to His children the power that is most prized and sacred to

Him—the power to create life. Because God gave us this power, He, and He alone, has the right to prescribe how it should be used.

Contrary to much public sentiment, there is nothing negative or restraining about God’s moral standards. Rather, they are positive, uplifting, and liberating. They build relationships of trust, they enhance self-esteem, they foster a clear conscience, and they invite the Spirit of the Lord to bless individual and married lives. They are the proven standards for happy marriages and stable communities.

**Our choice to obey
or disobey God’s
standard of morality
will largely determine our
happiness in life.**

What, then, is the Lord's standard for use of the sacred power of procreation—His standard of morality? In truth, the Lord's standard of morality is not so much a list of do's and don'ts as it is a principle, which can be expressed as follows: The procreative power is to be exercised in the marriage relationship for two key reasons: (1) to bind and strengthen ties between spouses and (2) to bring souls into the world. These uses have the blessing and endorsement of the Lord.

On the other hand, the procreative power is not to be exercised outside the husband-wife relationship. Accordingly, any conscious thoughts or voluntary actions that stimulate or result in the expression of the procreative power outside the marriage relationship are disapproved by the Lord.

I now cite some of the Lord's standards of morality so as to minimize any misunderstanding or ambiguity.

FORNICATION AND ADULTERY

The Lord forbids fornication and adultery despite how the world feels toward these behaviors. These acts constitute the ultimate use of the procreative power with someone of the opposite sex with whom we are not legally married. It is fornication if neither party is married; it is adultery if either or both parties are married.

The Apostle Paul said,

"For this is the will of God, . . . that ye should abstain from fornication" (1 Thessalonians 4:3; emphasis added). He also said, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: *neither fornicators . . . nor adulterers . . .* shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9–10; emphasis added).

Sometimes people do not realize the seriousness of these transgressions or, in some cases, rationalize it away. Corianton did not seem to realize the seriousness of what he had done when he sinned with the harlot Isabel. Alma, his father, put it in perspective: "Know ye not, my son, that these things are an abomination in the sight of the Lord?" (Alma 39:5). Joseph also spoke of this great evil when he was tempted by Potiphar's wife: "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9).

God's moral standards build relationships of trust, enhance self-esteem, foster a clear conscience, and invite the Spirit of the Lord to bless individual and married lives.

INAPPROPRIATE TOUCHING

Inappropriate touching arouses the procreative powers. Accordingly, in the premarital setting it is contrary to God's moral standard to touch the private or sacred parts of another's body, whether or not the person is clothed.¹

SELF-ABUSE

The Lord condemns self-abuse. Self-abuse is the act of stimulating



the procreative power of one's own body. President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said:

“Do not be guilty of tampering or playing with this sacred power of creation. . . .

“ . . . It is not pleasing to the Lord, nor is it pleasing to you. It does not make you feel worthy or clean.”²

SAME-GENDER RELATIONSHIPS

Some would have us believe that the Church's stand against same-gender physical relationships is a temporary policy and not an eternal doctrine. Such a belief would be at odds with the scriptures, with the words of modern prophets, and with the plan of salvation, all of which teach the necessity of eternal marriage between a man and a woman as a condition to exaltation.

A same-gender relationship is inconsistent with God's eternal pattern that husbands and wives not only have children in mortality but also have eternal increase in their exalted condition.

We recognize that everyone is a son or daughter of God and deserves to be treated as such. We all struggle with imperfections, some not of our choosing. But we also believe in an infinite Atonement that has the capacity in this life or the life to come to endow us with every power necessary to convert our weaknesses and imperfections into strengths. The Lord promised us, “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).

Those with same-gender tendencies have a duty to (1) abstain from immoral relationships and (2) do all within their power to avail themselves of the refining, perfecting powers of the Atonement. In the interim, however, those who have same-gender tendencies but do not act on them are worthy to hold Church positions and receive a temple recommend.³

Any conscious thoughts or voluntary action that stimulate or result in the expression of the procreative power outside the marriage relationship are disapproved by the Lord.

TENTACLES OF THE ADVERSARY

Now I share some danger signals that precede some of the sins I have mentioned. In some regards, Satan is like an octopus trying to capture us. If one tentacle does not work, he will try another and another until he finds one that takes hold. Following are some of the tentacles of the evil one designed to cause us to break God's standard of morality.

Pornography

God desires that His children not watch any movie or TV show, go to any website, or view any magazine that is pornographic in any way. Pornography is any picture or narrative that feeds the carnal man within. It is *repulsive* to the Spirit of the Lord.

No one can claim to be fooled by the effects of pornography, believing there is any such thing as an innocent glance.

It is a poisonous, venomous, unforgiving snake that will strike the moment you take your first look and will continue to strike with a full portion of venom with each look thereafter.

If you are afflicted with this malady, you need to do all within your power to overcome it. It may require confession, intense prayer, fasting, immersion in the scriptures, replacing idle time with constructive time, putting strict boundaries on Internet usage, professional counseling, and the like, but you can overcome it. At some point willpower will be an indispensable ingredient—there is not a pill or counseling technique to solve every addiction.

Immodest Dress

Our dress affects not only our thoughts and actions but also the thoughts and actions of others. Accordingly, Paul the Apostle counseled “women [to] adorn themselves in modest apparel” (1 Timothy 2:9).

The dress of a woman has a powerful impact upon the minds and passions of men. If it is too low or too high or too tight, it may prompt improper thoughts, even in the mind of a young man who is striving to be pure.⁴

Men and women can look sharp and be fashionable, yet they can also be modest. Women particularly can dress modestly and in the process contribute to their own self-respect and to the moral purity of men. In the end, most women get the type of man they dress for.

Unclean Thoughts

It has been said, “You can watch the birds fly by; just don’t let them build a nest on your head.” There is nothing wrong with noticing the pretty young lady or handsome young man as they walk by—that is normal. But if those thoughts turn to lust, then the nest is being built.

We cannot avoid seeing every improper billboard or immodestly dressed person, but we can drive out the improper thought once it arises. The sin is not in involuntarily seeing something improper; the sin is in entertaining the thought once it comes. The scriptures tell us, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7).

In essence, our thoughts become the seeds of our actions. We do have the power within us to take control of our lives and our thoughts. Good and evil thoughts cannot coexist in our minds any more than light and dark can exist at the same time and in the same place. At some point we must decide which will be our invited guest.

If we so desire, we can drive out every evil thought and immediately replace it with an uplifting song or poem or scripture. Just as darkness flees at the presence of light, so evil flees at the presence of good.

Secluded Places and Tempting Friends

At certain times and places, no matter how strong we are, we have less resistance. Some of the best of men and women in the worst of circumstances have fallen. It happened to King David as he watched Bathsheba at night-time, at first from a seemingly safe distance (see 2 Samuel 11:2–4). None of us should think we are too powerful or

too immune to succumb. Secluded locations, late nights, and morally loose friends have incredible magnetic fields to draw us into Satan’s clutches.

Rationalization

Two oft-repeated rationalizations are used to support moral transgression. The first is “I loved her.” Satan is the great counterfeiter. He tries to palm off lust as love. There

is a simple test to detect the difference. Love is motivated by self-control, obedience to God’s moral laws, respect for others, and unselfishness. On the other hand, lust is motivated by disobedience, self-gratification, and lack of discipline.

The second rationalization is “No one will ever know.” The Lord has dispelled that myth on multiple occasions. He declared, “The rebellious shall be pierced with much sorrow; for their iniquities shall be spoken upon the

housetops, *and their secret acts shall be revealed*” (D&C 1:3; emphasis added).

There is no field so dark or corner so secluded that no one will ever know. God will know, and you will know if you violate His moral law.

REPENTANCE

If we have made moral mistakes in our lives, we can repent because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. The first and foundational step to living a morally clean life for the future is to repent of past transgressions, to exchange a foundation of sand for a foundation of rock. Often that commences with confession.

Repentance, however, is not just a matter of time or forsaking a sin or making a confession. Most of all, repentance is an honest change of heart, a burning resolve to live a morally clean life—not because we have to but because we want to.

God made it clear that we cannot violate His standards without suffering the consequences, but because He is

Lust is motivated by disobedience, self-gratification, and lack of discipline.

loving and compassionate beyond measure, He gives us this glorious hope:

“For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance;

“*Nevertheless, he that repents* and does the commandments of the Lord *shall be forgiven*” (D&C 1:31–32; emphasis added).

To all honest souls who change their hearts and forsake their sins, He has promised, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18).

However, it is always better to remain clean than to sin and repent afterward. Why is that? Because certain adverse consequences of sin may remain even after repentance, such as disease or a child born out of wedlock or damage to our reputation. Our goal in life is not just to be clean but also to be perfect. The quest for perfection is accelerated when we are clean, but it is stymied when we are not.

Alma taught, “Wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10). We cannot break God’s moral laws with impunity and be happy because God, who created us, placed within our souls a moral compass known as our conscience. Anytime we violate God’s standard of morality, that conscience goes to work—it gnaws at us, it triggers feelings of guilt and remorse, and it acts as a divine witness testifying to the truth of that standard.

We may try to ignore it and we may try

to suppress it, but we cannot escape it. God’s standard of morality cannot be dismissed; it cannot be diluted or compromised; it can only be obeyed or disobeyed. Eventually we either fight it or embrace it. Our choice will largely determine our happiness in life.

BLESSINGS OF A MORAL LIFE

The blessings of living a clean and moral life are overwhelming. Such a life will bring self-confidence and self-esteem. It will result in a clear conscience. It will make us eligible for a spouse of like purity and will make the expression of the procreative power in the marriage relationship sweeter and more rewarding because we have reserved it for the time the Lord Himself has endorsed.

Because the Lord loves us immensely and wants us to be happy, He has announced His intentions for His children in these latter days: “For I will raise up unto myself a pure people, that will serve me in righteousness” (D&C 100:16).

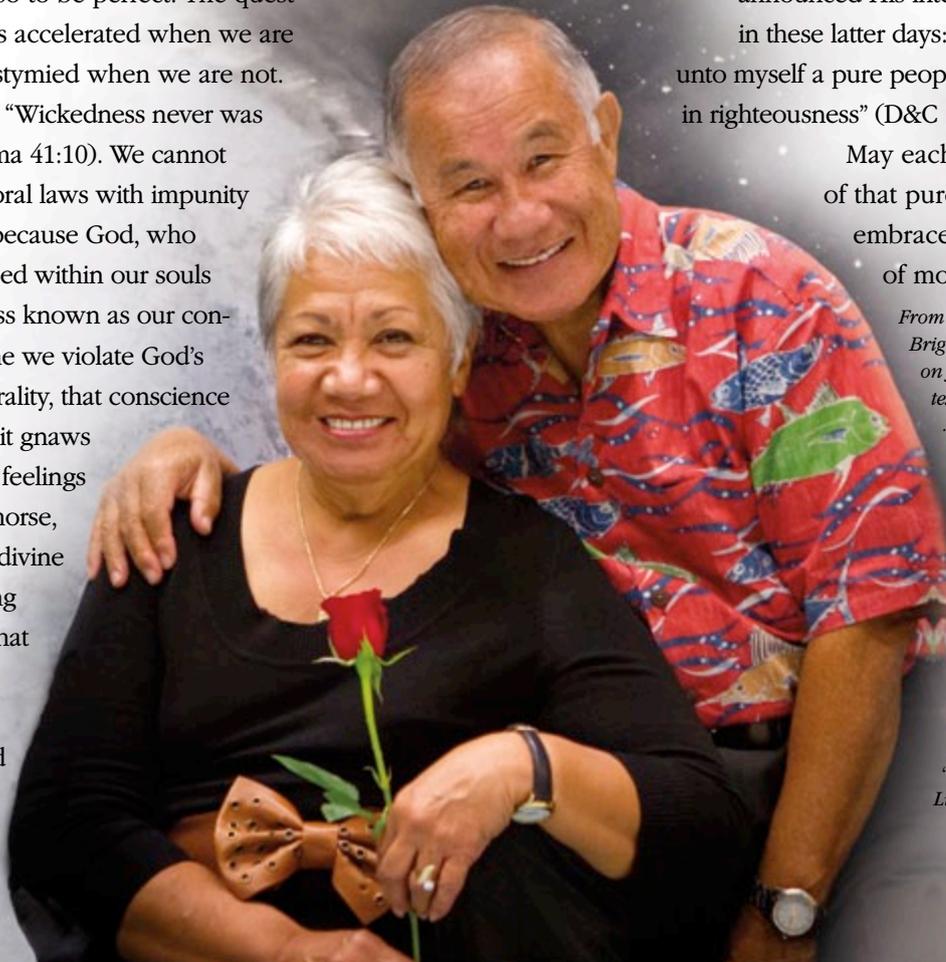
May each of us be a part of that pure generation and embrace the Lord’s standard of morality. ■

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University–Idaho on January 22, 2013. For the full text in English, go to web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches.

NOTES

1. See Richard G. Scott, “The Power of Righteousness,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 69; *Liahona*, Jan. 1999, 81.
2. Boyd K. Packer, *To Young Men Only* (1976), 4, 5.
3. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 21.4.6.
4. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Pornography,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2005, 90.

Love is motivated by self-control, obedience to God’s moral laws, respect for others, and unselfishness.



NOW I KNOW THERE IS A GOD

Several years ago I served as a temple worker in the Santiago Chile Temple. During one evening shift I began to experience difficulty breathing, so I reluctantly requested to leave early.

As I walked to the subway station, I prayed that the train I needed would be there so I could get home soon. I thought my prayer was answered when I saw the train stopped at the platform. But as I approached, I saw the train staff rushing to help a passenger who was experiencing a possible heart attack. The words of my favorite hymn pierced my mind: “Have I done any good in the world today?”¹ I immediately felt impressed to help.

I hurried to where the staff took the young man to wait for the ambulance, and they allowed me to stay. I prayed to know what to do and pled with Heavenly Father to spare the young

man’s life. I didn’t want to leave him alone and scared, so I held his hand and tried to help him remain calm. I assured him that he had a long life ahead and that God had a purpose for him. I found out his family’s phone number, called them, and let them know their son was on his way to the hospital and was not alone.

When the paramedics arrived, I followed them to the ambulance. I felt I should stay with the young man until his family arrived. To my surprise, the paramedics decided I should come with them, so I held the young man’s hand all the way to the hospital.

Shortly after we arrived, they took him to the emergency room, and I went outside to watch for his family. When they came, his mother broke into tears, threw her arms around me, and said she was so glad there

are still good people on earth.

A week later I received a phone call from the young man. He told me the doctors said that remaining calm had been critical during that time before he reached the hospital.

Until that day, he did not believe in God. I was speechless when he exclaimed, “You saved my life, and I am forever grateful to you! Now I know there is a God.”

When I left the temple early that day, the Spirit led me to the right place at the right time. I feel grateful to our Heavenly Father for guiding me and giving me courage to do as the hymn says and not let the opportunity pass by, even if the only thing I could do was hold the hand of a stranger. ■
Carla Sofia Gavidia, Ontario, Canada

NOTE

1. “Have I Done Any Good?” *Hymns*, no. 223.

didn’t want to leave the young man alone and scared, so I held his hand and tried to help him remain calm.



I WAS THE NEEDY ONE

A few years ago a beat-up car appeared in our meetinghouse parking lot. It belonged to a single father of four children. He had come to ask for assistance. Our ward found them housing, and the father began bringing his family to church.

Sometimes the children's clothes were clean and sometimes they were dirty, but their hair was always messy. We never knew how snarled and tangled it would be. Each week the Primary president brought hair detangler and brushes. She and a teacher would work to fix the children's hair before Primary.

I was a counselor in the Primary presidency, and I admired the ability of these two sisters to embrace these unwashed children. I could not bring myself to touch their hair, and I wondered how these sisters did it. I eased my conscience by telling myself that I could help by watching the rest of the children while these women worked.

The youngest child in this family was three years old. She could not speak intelligibly, but she tried to make loud musical sounds when we sang. This irritated me.

Because three-year-old children have short attention spans, I began putting this little girl on my lap to help her listen. She would smile at me in appreciation, and I began to feel the joy and love that Heavenly Father had for this unwashed child—His child. Eventually, I found myself overlooking

the dirt and grabbing a brush to smooth out her tangled locks. I even decided that her attempt to sing was a joyful sound.

A few months later the children's father got up in testimony meeting and thanked us for helping his children.

The next week the family was gone.

I am grateful for the chance I had to serve those children. When they arrived, I felt they were too needy, but I found out that I was the one who needed them to help me change. ■

Diane Hatch, Arizona, USA

Sometimes the children's clothes were clean and sometimes they were dirty, but their hair was always messy.



MY BISHOP'S BIRTHDAY GIFT

On my birthday one Sunday morning, my husband and I were getting ready for church when the phone rang. I answered, and the bishop said, "I know today is your birthday, but could you meet with me in my office in 30 minutes? I would like to talk with you."

Curious, I hurried to church.

In his office, the bishop said to me, "Sister Cruz, I have a birthday present for you. The Lord is calling you to serve as Young Women president. Will you accept this calling?" I felt overwhelmed, but I accepted the calling. I was sustained and set apart that day.

When I returned home after church, I sat on my bed. The weight of responsibility hit me. I cried and felt inadequate for the work. What a responsibility to guide those young women! I was baptized when I was 22 and had never attended Young Women activities before. How could I be Young Women president?

I did the only thing I knew to do—I knelt and asked Heavenly Father for guidance in this new calling. At that moment I had an experience I will never forget. As I visualized each young woman, I understood that each was a daughter of Heavenly Father.

Each needed a president who loved her and could help her understand that God loved her. In my mind I saw the names of all the less-active young women (whom I had never met), and I understood that they were also daughters of Heavenly Father and needed my attention. I felt each one's potential.

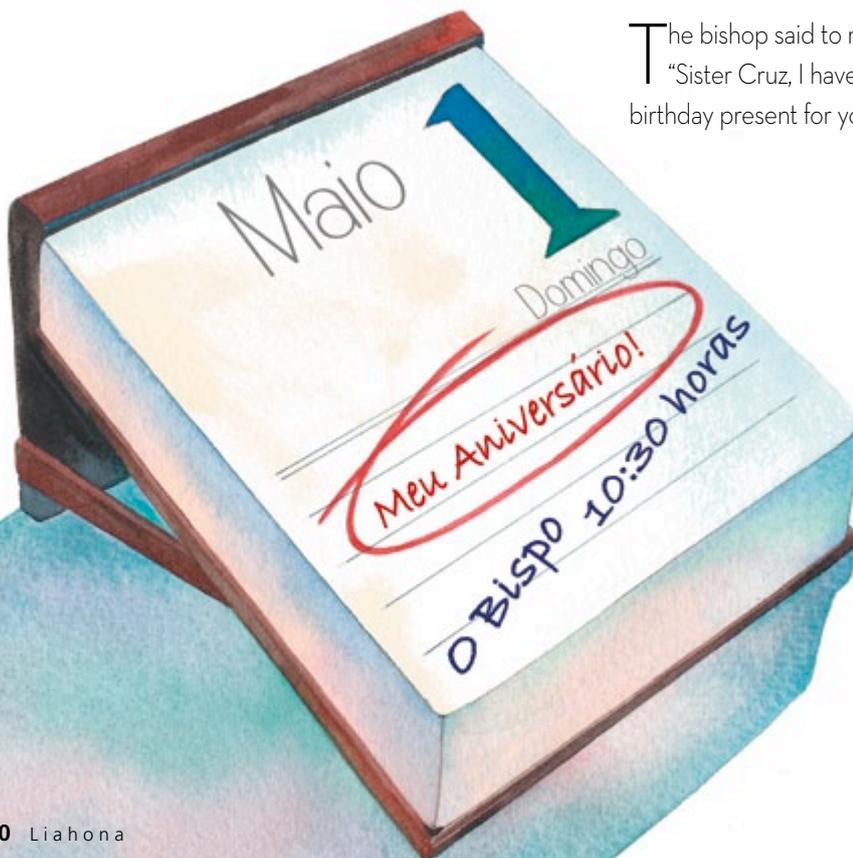
The following months were not easy. I worked hard to get to know each young woman and to understand her needs. Together with the active young women, our presidency helped those who had been less active return to activity. I saw the hand of the Lord at work in many ways.

When I was released from my calling, I worried that perhaps I could have done more. Upon arriving home, I knelt and asked Heavenly Father if my service had been acceptable. I received a sweet feeling that He was pleased.

I thought back on that birthday when I could have turned down the calling because of all my other responsibilities. But I am the one who would have lost most by not accepting the calling. I would have lost the opportunity to learn humility, gain understanding, develop patience, and become an instrument in the Lord's hands. But mostly I would have failed the Lord in the confidence He placed in me, and I would have failed to learn that the opportunity to serve is a gift. ■

Mariana Cruz, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The bishop said to me, "Sister Cruz, I have a birthday present for you."



SHE NEEDS LOVE

I was not a very impressive teenager and spent little time serving others. During this time my mother invited me to come with her to visit my great-aunt at a nursing home.

My cousin and her daughter Stephanie accompanied us on this visit. Stephanie was seven or eight years old. As we walked into the nursing home, she waved at everyone she saw. They lit up as if she were handing out sunshine and rainbows. I, on the other hand, avoided eye contact.

When we entered the room that my great-aunt shared with another elderly woman, I did my best to disappear into the background. Stephanie, however, jumped onto my aunt's bed and began to regale her with stories.

I noticed something about this room. On my aunt's side were signs of love and family. Pictures and crayon drawings hung on the wall, and flowers adorned a nightstand. The other side of the room was sterile and bare. There were no signs of any visitors; no cards or pictures hung on the wall.

My aunt's roommate sat alone in a wheelchair and did not acknowledge our presence. She was humming a tune and tapping the arms of her wheelchair, which made me uncomfortable.

Stephanie tugged on her mother's arm and asked, "Mommy, what's the matter with that lady?" Stephanie's mother leaned down and whispered, "She needs love." I was not prepared

for what happened next.

Without hesitation, Stephanie ran over and jumped into the woman's lap. She then began to tell her stories and ask all kinds of questions. The woman did not answer. Instead, tears ran down her face as she embraced Stephanie. For the next several minutes, Stephanie sat in her lap, stroking her hair and kissing her cheek.

I had never witnessed this type of unselfish love before, and I tried to hide my tears. Later, as we drove away from the nursing home, I marveled at how young Stephanie could be so selfless and so full of love and compassion for a complete stranger.

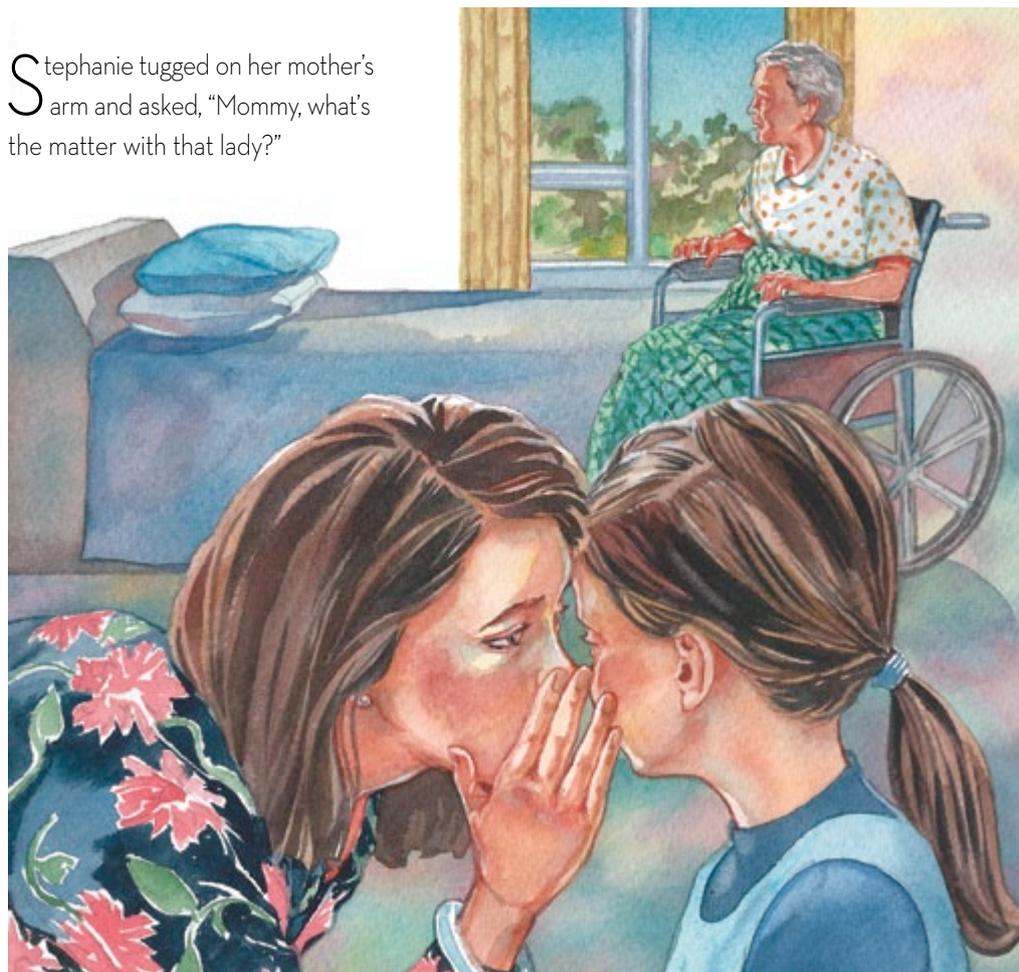
Eventually I turned my life around and served a full-time mission. While I served, Stephanie wrote me cute letters that included drawings just like the ones in my aunt's room in the nursing home.

Before I returned home, I received the devastating news that an illness had claimed Stephanie's life. I still weep that her light went out so soon, but I remain grateful for her example. She taught me what service truly is.

We do not ever have to wonder how or if we should serve. If our hearts are in the right place, then service will become a part of who we are, not just what we do. ■

Jay McFarland, Utah, USA

Stephanie tugged on her mother's arm and asked, "Mommy, what's the matter with that lady?"



Inviting Success

By Richard M. Romney
Church Magazines

Sharing the gospel is often as simple as extending an invitation, asking a question, or joining in a conversation. As we prepare our hearts to share the gospel, the Lord will direct us to those who are ready to hear it.

“[The Lord] has prepared the means for us to share the gospel in a multitude of ways, and He will assist us in our labors if we will act in faith to fulfill His work,” President Thomas S. Monson said in the October 2013 general conference.¹ Here are several examples.



**I saw Harley carrying my stolen bicycle. “I need to ask where you got that,” I said.
—Nick Barton**

Simply by asking others if they are interested in the gospel, you can join in hastening the work of salvation.

Bring Back the Bike

When Nick Barton and his wife, Morgan, moved to Arizona, USA, where Nick would attend law school, they started praying for missionary opportunities. “We asked Heavenly Father to help us become more sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Ghost and to be bold enough to take action,” Nick says.

One Saturday, Morgan needed their car for work, so Nick rode his bicycle to campus. When it was time to return home, however, the bike was gone.

“Stolen bicycles were so common that the police asked if there was anything that would help identify it. I remembered that Morgan had glued a label on the handlebar that said, ‘I Love You.’”

Once again Nick prayed. “I asked that I might learn something from the situation,” he says. Then he hopped on the train to get as close as possible to home before calling his wife to come and get him.

“At the next train stop, I saw a big guy with a backwards cap board the train, carrying my bicycle! I saw the ‘I Love You’ on the handlebar, so I knew it was mine,” Nick said. He tapped the man on the shoulder.

“I said, ‘I need to ask you where you got that bike.’ He responded, ‘At a yard sale down the street.’” Nick



explained that his bike had been stolen. The young man replied that he was not a thief and that Nick could have the bike back.

“I thanked him and said I would have the police call him so the ‘yard sale’ could be investigated,” Nick says. “He told me his name was Harley and gave me his phone number. I told him I would share the cost of what he had paid, since we had both been wronged, and I walked off the train glad to have my bicycle back.”

But that was only the beginning.

“Out of curiosity, I called Harley the next morning. He said the police were following through. Then he asked if my wife and I might want to do something later in the day. I realized he was trying to become friends.

“It being Sunday, I told him we were going to church but that we would be happy to get together with him another time. As I hung up the phone, it dawned on me that this was a missionary opportunity pure and clear. I called him back and asked if he would be interested in coming to church with us. He agreed! He attended all the meetings and let me know afterward that he felt the speakers and teachers were talking directly to him.

“Harley had family overseas and moved away shortly after we met,” Nick says. “But he did become our friend, gained respect for the Church, and was reassured that his Heavenly Father is mindful of him.”

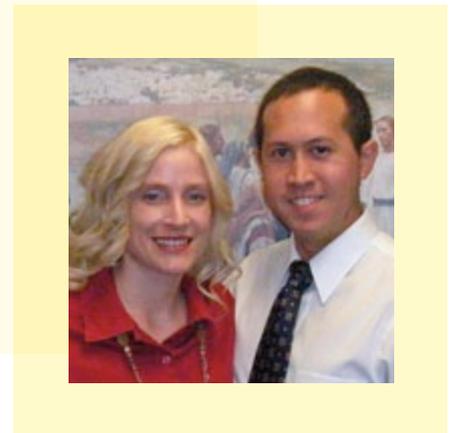


Talk to the Tech

“One day, after listening to a conference message, I had the impression that I needed to talk to the pharmacy technician at the store,” says Hannah Rawhouser, also of Arizona. “The voice inside me said, ‘He is a good person. You need to invite him to a Church activity.’”

The next time Hannah was in the drive-through, she looked for him, but he wasn’t there. Still, the prompting persisted.

“A few weeks later, I pulled up again, and there he was. With the expectation that my time would be brief, I went directly to the matter at



**“Do you go to church?” I asked.
Greg said yes. I handed him my card.
“Call me,” I said.
—Hannah Rawhouser**



Ask the Elevator Operator

As a 26-year-old, Robert G. Ellis Jr. was working as a police officer in a Senate office building in Washington, D.C., USA.

“I spent a lot of time pondering what I had learned about Jesus,” he recalls. “My father and mother didn’t attend any church, but they had allowed me to go, and I had enjoyed attending more than a dozen denominations.” As a newly married young adult, he felt that he should be baptized—but in what church?

“My spirit was troubled. I wanted to find a church that was true to Christ’s teachings. People would say that all the churches were the Lord’s Church, but they did not hesitate to say that another denomination was wrong. I prayed, ‘I want to be baptized, but I don’t know which church to join.’”

Remembering that Jesus Christ said, “Ask, and it shall be given you” (Matthew 7:7), Robert kept pleading. One day while he was at work, Robert again felt troubled, and tears came to his eyes.

“I felt frightened and did not know if my thoughts were right or wrong. Then a peaceful feeling came over me. Without totally realizing why I was doing it, I walked over to an elevator operator and asked, ‘What church do you belong to?’”

The elevator operator was Norman Maxfield, a returned missionary attending Georgetown University.



**“What do you believe in?” Norman asked me. “In Jesus Christ,” I answered proudly.
—Robert G. Ellis Jr.**

hand. ‘Do you go to church?’ I asked. He paused with surprise and then said yes. I handed him my business card. ‘Call me sometime,’ I said and drove away. ‘Well, I did my part,’ I thought. ‘Now I won’t have any more nagging feelings.’”

To her surprise, he called the next day and introduced himself as Greg Eiselin. “He told me later that, because we are both young and single, he thought I was asking him for a date,” she says. “But we ended up talking about religion for three hours, and he began learning about the Church.” Today Elder Eiselin is serving a full-time mission in Montana, USA.

“He looked up from some books. I could tell he was surprised. He said, ‘I’m a Mormon. Why?’”

“I said, ‘I want to be baptized, but I don’t know which church to join.’”

“He asked, ‘What do you believe in?’”

“‘Jesus Christ,’ was the answer I proudly gave.”

“He asked, ‘May I tell you about my church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?’ As he told me that Christ’s Church had been restored to the earth, I knew that my prayers had been answered. The feeling within me was wonderful.”

That was in 1977. Today Brother and Sister Ellis are members of the Church in Virginia, USA.

Rely on the Lord

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said that “when we are standing as ‘witnesses of God at all times and in all things’ (Mosiah 18:9), the Lord will open ways for us to find and have appropriate communications with those who are seeking. This will come when we seek direction and when we act out of a sincere and Christlike love for others.”²

Nick, Hannah, Greg, Robert, and Norman would all agree that what he said is true. ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Welcome to Conference,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 4.
2. Dallin H. Oaks, “Sharing the Gospel,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 8; *Liahona*, Jan. 2002, 9.
3. Russell M. Nelson, “Ask the Missionaries! They Can Help You!” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 18–21.

TEN SUGGESTIONS FOR SHARING

There are many ways to invite people to learn about the gospel. Here are 10 suggestions to get you started.

1. **Strike up a conversation.** As you are getting acquainted, it’s natural to let people know you’re a member of the Church. Simple statements like, “I’m a Latter-day Saint, but many people know us as Mormons,” can open the door.
2. **Talk while traveling.** Visit with fellow travelers on the bus or plane or with families you meet at vacation spots. One man made it a point to ask taxi drivers about their family and then discuss family home evening.
3. **Refer friends to Mormon.org.** This website is a great place for those unfamiliar with the Church to get to know it better.
4. **Invite your friends to chat with the full-time missionaries online or in person.** On Mormon.org, people can have conversations with missionaries. And of course you can always introduce people to the elders or sisters in your area.
5. **Use social media.** The Church provides an array of opportunities to like or share content online, including memes, quotes, and videos. Hashtags (a word or group of words tagged with #) also enable people to follow web conversations about the Church.
6. **Share videos.** Become familiar with videos on Mormon.org and biblevideos.lds.org. Watch them with friends or share links. Also mention Mormon Messages, which offer inspiring answers to life’s questions.
7. **Share cards and posters.** Pass-along cards and posters allow you to share inspiring ideas (see cards on page 71 of the October 2013 *Liahona*, for example).
8. **Ask the missionaries.** Invite your friends to read “Ask the Missionaries! They Can Help You!” by Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.³
9. **Attend a temple open house.** Let people know about the marvelous opportunity to attend the open house prior to a temple dedication. Offer to go with them.
10. **Reach out to those who are returning.** Home teachers and visiting teachers have a great opportunity to be missionaries to less-active members, who in turn know others who may be receptive to the gospel.



By Elder
Richard G. Scott

Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

HEALING

THE TRAGIC SCARS OF ABUSE

*You may be left scarred by abuse,
but those scars need not be permanent.*

I speak from the depths of my heart to each one of you who have been scarred by the ugly sin of abuse.

Unless healed by the Lord, mental, physical, or sexual abuse can cause you serious, enduring consequences. As a victim you have experienced some of them. They include fear, depression, guilt, self-hatred, destruction of self-esteem, and alienation from normal human relationships. When aggravated by continued abuse, powerful emotions of rebellion, anger, and hatred are generated. These feelings often are focused against oneself, others, life itself, and even Heavenly Father. Frustrated efforts to fight back can degenerate into drug abuse, immorality, abandonment of home, and, tragically in extreme cases, suicide. Unless corrected, these feelings lead to despondent lives, discordant marriages, and even the transition from victim to abuser. One awful result is a deepening lack of trust in others, which becomes a barrier to healing.

To be helped, you must understand some things about eternal law. Your abuse results from another's unrighteous attack on your freedom. Since all of Father in Heaven's children enjoy agency, there can be some who choose willfully to violate the commandments and harm you. Such acts temporarily restrict your freedom. In justice, and to

compensate, the Lord has provided a way for you to overcome the destructive results of others' acts against your will. That relief comes by applying eternal truths with priesthood assistance.

Know that the wicked choice of others cannot completely destroy your agency unless you permit it. Their acts may cause pain, anguish, even physical harm, but they cannot destroy your eternal possibilities in this brief but crucial life on earth. You must understand that *you are free to determine to overcome the harmful results of abuse*. Your attitude can control the change for good in your life. It allows you to have the help the Lord intends you to receive. No one can take away your ultimate opportunities when you understand and live eternal law. The laws of your Heavenly Father and the Atonement of the Lord have made it possible that you will not be robbed of the opportunities that come to the children of God.

You may feel threatened by one who is in a position of power or control over you. You may feel trapped and see no escape. Please believe that *your Heavenly Father does not want you to be held captive by unrighteous influence, by threats of reprisal, or by fear of repercussion to the family member who abuses you*. Trust that the Lord will lead you to a solution. Ask in faith, nothing doubting. (See James 1:6; Enos 1:15; Moroni 7:26; D&C 8:10; 18:18.)

I solemnly testify that when another's acts of violence, perversion, or incest hurt you terribly, against your will, you are not responsible and you must not feel guilty. You may be left scarred by abuse, but those scars need not be permanent. In the eternal plan, in the Lord's timetable, those injuries can be made right as you do your part. Here is what you can do now.

Seek Help

If you are now or have in the past been abused, seek help now. Perhaps you distrust others and feel that there is no reliable help anywhere. Begin with your Eternal Father and His beloved Son, your Savior. Strive to comprehend Their commandments and follow them. They will lead you to others who will strengthen and encourage you. There is available to you a priesthood leader, normally a bishop, or at times a member of the stake presidency. They can build a bridge to greater understanding and healing. Joseph Smith taught: "A man can do nothing for himself unless God direct him in the right way; and the priesthood is for that purpose" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 109).

Talk to your bishop or branch president in confidence. His calling allows him to act as an instrument of the Lord in your behalf. He can provide a doctrinal foundation to guide you to recovery. An understanding and application of eternal law will provide

the healing you require. He has the right to be inspired of the Lord in your behalf. He can use the priesthood to bless you.

Your bishop can help you identify trustworthy friends to support you. He will help you regain self-confidence and self-esteem to begin the process of renewal. When abuse is extreme, he can help you identify appropriate protection and professional treatment consistent with the teachings of the Savior.

Principles of Healing

These are some of the principles of healing you will come to understand more fully:

Recognize that you are a beloved child of your Heavenly Father. He loves you perfectly and can help you as no earthly parent, spouse, or devoted friend can. His Son gave His life so that by faith in Him and obedience to His teachings, you can be made whole. He is the consummate healer.

Gain trust in the love and compassion of your elder brother, Jesus Christ, by pondering the scriptures. As with the Nephites, He tells *you*, "I have compassion upon you; my bowels are filled with mercy. . . . I see that your faith is sufficient that I should heal you" (3 Nephi 17:7–8).

Healing best begins with your sincere prayer asking your Father in Heaven for help. That use of your agency allows divine intervention.



When you permit it, the love of the Savior will soften your heart and break the cycle of abuse that can transform a victim into an aggressor. Adversity, even when caused willfully by others' unrestrained appetite, can be a source of growth when viewed from the perspective of eternal principle (see D&C 122:7).

As a victim, do not waste effort in revenge or retribution against your aggressor. Focus on your responsibility to do what is in your power to correct. Leave the handling of the offender to civil and Church authorities. Whatever they do, eventually the guilty will face the Perfect Judge. Ultimately, the unrepentant abuser will be punished by a just God. Predators who victimize the innocent and justify their own corrupted life by enticing others to adopt their depraved ways will be held accountable. Of such the Master warned: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6).

Understand that healing can take considerable time. Recovery generally comes in steps. It is accelerated when gratitude is expressed to the Lord for every degree of improvement noted.

Forgiveness

During prolonged recovery from massive surgery, a patient anticipates complete healing in patience, trusting in others' care. He does not always understand the importance of the treatment prescribed, but his obedience speeds recovery. So it is with you struggling to heal the scars of abuse. Forgiveness, for example, can be hard to understand, even more difficult to give. *Begin by withholding judgment.* You don't know what abusers may have suffered as victims when innocent. The way to repentance must be kept open for them. Leave the handling of aggressors to others. As you experience an easing of your own pain, full forgiveness will come more easily.

You cannot erase what has been done, but you can forgive (see D&C 64:10). Forgiveness heals terrible, tragic wounds, for it allows the love of God to purge your heart and mind of the poison of hate. It cleanses your consciousness of the desire for revenge. It makes place for the purifying, healing, restoring love of the Lord.

The Master counseled, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them *who despitefully use you and persecute you*” (3 Nephi 12:44; emphasis added).

Bitterness and hatred are harmful. They produce much that is destructive. They postpone the relief and healing you yearn for. Through rationalization and self-pity, they can transform a victim into an abuser. Let God be the judge—you cannot do it as well as He can.

To be counseled to just forget abuse is not helpful. You need to understand the principles that will bring healing. Healing may begin with a thoughtful bishop or stake president or a wise professional counselor. If you had a broken leg, you wouldn’t decide to fix it yourself. Serious abuse can also benefit from professional help. There are many ways to begin healing, but remember that a full cure comes through the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Master and Redeemer. Have faith that with effort, His perfect, eternal,

infinite Atonement can heal your suffering.

As impossible as it may seem to you now, in time the healing you can receive from the Savior will allow you to truly forgive the abuser. When you can forgive the offense, you will be relieved of the pain and heartache that Satan wants in your life by encouraging you to hate the abuser. As a result, you will enjoy greater peace. While an important part of healing, if the thought of forgiveness causes you yet more pain, set that step aside until you have more experience with the Savior’s healing power in your own life.

Caution

I caution you not to participate in two improper therapeutic practices that may cause you more harm than good. They are: Excessive probing into every tiny detail of your past experiences, particularly when this involves penetrating dialogue in group discussion; and blaming the abuser for every difficulty in your life.

The repair of damage inflicted by abuse should be done privately, confidentially, with a trusted priesthood leader and, where needed, the qualified professional he recommends. There must be sufficient discussion of the general nature of abuse to allow you to be given appropriate counsel and to prevent the aggressor from committing more

violence. Then, with the help of the Lord, bury the past.

I humbly testify that what I have told you is true. It is based upon eternal principles I have seen the Lord use to give a fulness of life to those scarred by wicked abuse.

If you feel there is only a thin thread of hope, believe me, it is not a thread. It can be the unbreakable connecting link to the Lord, which puts a life preserver around you. He will heal you as you cease to fear and place your trust in Him by striving to live His teachings.

Ask now for the Lord to help you (see Mormon 9:27; Moroni 7:26, 33). Decide now to talk to your bishop. Don’t view all that you experience in life through lenses darkened by the scars of abuse. There is so much in life that is beautiful. Open the windows of your heart and let the love of the Savior in. And should ugly thoughts of past abuse come back, remember His love and His healing power. Your depression will be converted to peace and assurance. You will close an ugly chapter and open volumes of happiness. ■

To learn more about the healing the Redeemer can provide, see Elder Richard G. Scott, “To Be Healed,” in the April 1994 general conference at conference.lds.org.

From Elder Scott’s April 1992 and April 2008 general conference addresses; capitalization and punctuation standardized.



PURE HEARTS and CLEAN BODIES

The Lord has commanded, “Prepare yourselves, . . . yea, purify your hearts . . . that I may make you clean” (D&C 88:74).

“**Y**ou young people are being raised in enemy territory,” said President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.¹ Truly, the moral standards of faithful Latter-day Saints are under attack! Are you ready to fight against any unclean or impure thought that Satan, the Internet, and the world may put in your head or heart?

Prepare Yourselves

On most mornings before 5:00 a.m., groups of worthy youth line up in the dark by the Salt Lake Temple doors, ready to enter the baptistry.

They step from the dark of the world into the light of the temple. After dressing in white, they quietly proceed to the magnificent baptismal font, where they are baptized for the dead. As they emerge from the pure, refreshing waters of the font, these youth are fortified, knowing they have participated in an eternal work for others.

Back out into the dark they go, hurrying to school—but they are not the same, because they leave armed with power and glory (see D&C 109:22–23). Carrying the light and purity of the temple in their hearts, they are prepared to push back the darkness

of this “enemy territory” and stay morally clean. This scene is not unique to the Salt Lake Temple—it happens frequently as youth throughout the world leave the darkness of enemy territory and choose to live worthy of and enter the light of the temple.

For example, a sister and brother from Colorado, USA, have each been baptized for more than 50 of their ancestors this past year and have experienced the purity of the temple. The brother said, “I get a good, spiritual feeling when I’m in the temple. Later, when I face temptations, I remember that feeling and it helps me.” In an effort to live worthy of



By Neill F. Marriott

Second Counselor in
the Young Women
General Presidency

attending the temple, the sister wrote a list in her journal of what she *will* and *will not* do when faced with temptation. She took a stand, and she even shared the list with her parents and friends so they could help her. These two young people have created a powerful moral armor for their hearts, minds, and bodies.

Purify Your Heart

Along with clean actions, do you have clean desires?

David, the psalmist, prays in Psalm 139:23–24: “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me.” Referring to these verses, President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901) counseled: “I would recommend that [every person] adopt this prayer of David . . . Many fail in coming up to this standard of excellence because they do things in secret . . . that . . . alienate them from the Almighty.”²

Asking Heavenly Father to create a clean heart in you is an act of faith. He has all power; turn to Him often and humbly ask for His divine help to keep your feelings pure—even sexually pure.

“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). What power you will have when you walk in the Spirit! Each Sunday as you partake of the sacrament, you witness that you are willing to always remember Jesus Christ (see D&C 20:77, 79). Remembering the Savior can give you spiritual power to turn away from impurity.

Be Clean before God

Why is sexual purity a commandment? Because Heavenly Father provided the powers of procreation within marriage for godly purposes only. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “How we feel about and use that supernal power will determine in large measure our happiness in mortality and our destiny in eternity.”³

Sexual intimacy provides loving, emotional unity to husband and wife. However, Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has warned, “Those intimate acts are forbidden by the Lord outside the enduring commitment of marriage because they undermine His purposes. . . . They cause serious emotional and spiritual harm. Even though

participants do not realize that is happening now, they will later. Sexual immorality creates a barrier to the influence of the Holy Spirit.”⁴

Sexual intimacy is not given to satisfy lust, popularity, or curiosity. Such selfish use of this God-given gift will *always* cause unhappiness and limit spiritual growth.

As you prepare yourself and purify your heart, the Lord can make and help keep you clean. If you feel guilty or quietly ashamed, seek the power of the Atonement. It is only through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ that we can be cleansed. Repent and pray honestly for forgiveness. Go to your bishop or branch president if necessary. Can you become clean and stay clean in an unclean world? Yes, you can! You know the truth and have the support of the Holy Ghost, parents, leaders, and the living prophet. As you look to Jesus Christ, you can and will remain clean before Him. ■

NOTES

1. Boyd K. Packer, “Counsel to Youth,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 16.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow* (2012), 120.
3. David A. Bednar, “We Believe in Being Chaste,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 42.
4. Richard G. Scott, “Making the Right Choices,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 38.

KEY IDEAS ABOUT SEXUAL PURITY

“Avoid situations that invite increased temptation. . . . Do not participate in any type of pornography. The Spirit can help you know when you are at risk. . . .

“If you are tempted to commit any form of sexual transgression, seek help from your parents and bishop. Pray to your Father in Heaven, who will help you resist temptation and overcome inappropriate thoughts and feelings. If you have committed sexual transgression, talk to your bishop now.”

For the Strength of Youth
(booklet, 2011), 36–37.



STAY WATCHFUL

Name withheld

I have many regrets about the last four years of my life. I was raised in the Church, and many family members and friends have set good examples for me. Despite these blessings, I was not watchful enough, which caused a series of problems in my life.

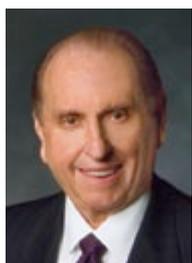
It started when I was about 13 and became addicted to media. I watched endless TV and acted as if I would die without video games. My media addiction led to another problem: I didn't have any good friends because I had not made enough of an effort to befriend the boys in my quorum. In an attempt to find friends, I looked in the wrong places and became part of an online chat group. In this group some people posted pornography. Because of the weakness that had come from my other problems, I was easily ensnared by pornography.

I tried to justify my behavior by making excuses: it's not hurting anyone; it can't be that wrong. I hated viewing pornography from the first time I saw it, but I became hooked. I wanted to be a good member of the Church, but I had made a series of

mistakes and did not correct them in the right way for a long time.

It took me one and a half years to see my bishop. He helped me overcome the desire to view pornography. Over time I also began to make friends with the people in my ward, stake, and seminary class. I am 17 now, and only recently have I been able to feel free. Only in the last few months have I conquered my addiction to media, sincerely prayed daily, and regularly read the scriptures.

Do not let any of these problems take root in your heart. I testify that the Lord does forgive those who have sinned. But you will have a much less painful life if you don't have to repent as I have. I beg you to spare yourself as much pain as possible by learning the consequences of sin in such a way that you will fear and avoid it. I say this because sin kills the soul, and if you sin, you will feel pain. The devil hates us, seeks our misery, and has power to influence us if we let him. But I testify that we can find grace, charity, kindness, and safety in the Atonement of Jesus Christ. ■



By President Thomas S. Monson

HOW TO CHOOSE GOOD FRIENDS

In a survey which was made in selected wards and stakes of the Church, we learned a most significant fact. Those persons whose friends married in the temple usually married in the temple, while those persons whose friends did not marry in the temple usually did not marry in the temple. The influence of one's friends appeared to be a more dominant

factor than parental urging, classroom instruction, or proximity to a temple.

We tend to become like those whom we admire. Just as in Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic account "The Great Stone Face," we adopt the mannerisms, the attitudes, even the conduct of those whom we admire—and they are usually our friends. Associate with those who, like you, are planning not for temporary convenience, shallow goals, or narrow ambition but rather for those things that matter most—even eternal objectives.

Inscribed on an east wall of Stanford University Memorial Church is the truth: "All that is not eternal [is] too short, [and] all that is not infinite [is] too small."¹

Beyond your circle of earthly friends, I urge you to make a friend of your Heavenly Father. He stands ready to answer the prayer of your heart. Being the Father of your spirit and having created you in His own image, knowing the end from the beginning, His

wisdom will not fail and His counsel is ever true. Make a friend of Him.

There is another important friend you should have, and that is the bishop of your ward. He has been called of God by prophecy and the laying on of hands by those who are in authority. He is entitled to heavenly help in providing you with counsel and guidance. Make a friend of him.

Choose your friends with caution. ■

From a Brigham Young University devotional address given on November 6, 2005.

NOTE

1. See www.stanford.edu/group/religiouslife/cgi-bin/wordpress/memorial-church/history/memorial-church-inscriptions.

HOW HAVE YOU DONE THIS?

My Heavenly Father has always been my best friend and provides me with comfort and guidance every day. My earthly friends have helped me gain a stronger testimony and a deeper desire to do more diligent work in the Church. And the bishop of my ward has given me an insightful view of the Church that has helped me grow as a member. By choosing uplifting friends, I've been able to better follow the strait and narrow path that will one day take me to see my Father in Heaven again.

Savannah A., Montana, USA





GRACE AND THE ATONEMENT OF JESUS CHRIST

We can receive strength to do more than we realize.

By Joshua J. Perkey
Church Magazines

In the summer of 2012, Palakiko C. had just graduated from high school in Hawaii, USA, and was looking forward to attending Brigham Young University and serving a mission. Palakiko had done a lot to prepare for his mission already—he had accompanied the full-time missionaries all day three times, and he often went with them to visit and teach the gospel to families.

One evening Palakiko and the missionaries began teaching a

part-member family with five children, ages 8 to 14, who hadn't been baptized.

“We visited with them for six weeks,” Palakiko says. “Each week, I saw their faith increase as we taught them doctrinal principles that would help them receive eternal life.”

Soon all five children had accepted the invitation to be baptized and asked Palakiko if he would perform the baptisms. He enthusiastically agreed. Baptizing them would be

a privilege and an honor. But for Palakiko, there was a more difficult challenge: they also asked him to give a talk about the Holy Ghost at the baptismal service.

Palakiko was more than a little nervous. “How was I supposed to give a talk on a day that they would remember for the rest of their lives?” he asked. “What would I say?”

In spite of his anxiety, Palakiko knew he should do it, and he started preparing for his talk that very day.

“I did everything in my power to make sure everything would go well,” he says. He prayed, read scriptures for guidance and comfort, and rehearsed the baptismal prayer in his mind. On the day of the service, the baptisms went fine. And as he gave his talk and focused on striving to have the Spirit, he felt guided in what to say.

“At no other time in my life have I felt the Spirit more than during that talk,” Palakiko says. “I’m glad I was able to be an instrument in the Lord’s hands.”

Palakiko was able to do what he needed to do because he was strengthened by the grace, or enabling power, of the Atonement.

What Is the Enabling Power of Jesus Christ?

Because we all sin, we need to learn about and apply the principles of repentance, a core feature of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Without the

Savior’s sacrifice, none of us could conquer sin and return to the presence of our Father.

Helping us overcome sin is one facet of the Savior’s grace. But there’s another. Grace is defined as “divine help or strength . . . given through the mercy and love of God.”¹ By the grace of Jesus Christ, we can be strengthened to “do and be good and to serve beyond our own individual desire and natural capacity.”² As Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has explained, “The word *grace* frequently is used in the scriptures to connote a strengthening or enabling power.”³

Palakiko was blessed by the grace of the Savior to accomplish something he felt inadequate to do on his own. That same power can help all of us in ways both small and great.

How Can We Access the Savior’s Grace?

When we need guidance or support or strength, God can help us. But it depends on us too. We have to seek His help and be worthy of it.

As Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “When we obey the commandments of the Lord and serve His children unselfishly, the natural consequence is power from God—power to do more than we can do by ourselves. Our insights, our talents, our abilities are expanded because we receive

strength and power from the Lord.”⁴

This pattern can be seen in the life of Jasmine B. of Washington, USA, who received help in coping with a disease. Before contracting the disease, she was a healthy young woman who excelled on her high school track team and loved getting up early for seminary.

Then she started feeling ill. She lost 15 pounds very quickly, and no matter how much sleep she got, it became harder and harder to get up for seminary. She couldn’t run as well as she used to and was hungry, thirsty, and weak all the time.

Over a month went by before she started to pray for help. “I held off so long,” she says, “because the thought of praying for help was an act of submission, admitting that something was indeed wrong with me. It scared me.”

But because she humbled herself to seek the Lord’s help, answers started to come. She went to see a doctor, who discovered she had developed type 1 diabetes, which meant her body could not produce insulin to process sugar. Diabetes has lifelong consequences and must be carefully monitored. Even as the doctors developed a plan to help her manage her condition, she began to worry that she would not be able to continue running track.

“I never ceased to pray as I struggled to understand my new life and to control my disease,” she says.



“I prayed for strength and understanding and that I would be able to accept this trial. I would not have made it through those hard days and weeks without prayer.”

Jasmine made incredible strides. Within two weeks of being diagnosed, she was back practicing on the track, and later that year she did well in state competitions. “I believe Heavenly Father has blessed me with a strong, healthy body because I have been striving to be steadfast in the gospel,” she says. “Having diabetes was not the end of the world. With His help, I knew I could get through this.”

By the grace of God and through her dependence on Him, Jasmine is able to cope with her disease and have wonderful successes in her life.

Grace Is Available to Everyone

This same strengthening power, the grace of Christ, is available to all of

us. Whenever you feel alone or overwhelmed or discouraged, remember that the Lord Jesus Christ makes His grace available to you.

As Elder Craig A. Cardon of the Seventy has explained, “If we exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the enabling power of His Atonement *strengthens* us in our moment of need [see Jacob 4:7], and His redeeming power *sanctifies* us as we [put] off the natural man’ [Mosiah 3:19]. This brings hope to all, especially to those who feel that recurring human weakness is beyond the Savior’s willingness to help and to save.”⁵ ■

NOTES

1. Guide to the Scriptures, “Grace,” scriptures.lds.org.
2. David A. Bednar, “The Atonement and the Journey of Mortality,” *Ensign*, April 2012, 43; *Liahona*, Apr. 2012, 15.
3. David A. Bednar, “In the Strength of the Lord,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2004, 76.
4. Richard G. Scott, “For Peace at Home,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 30.
5. Craig A. Cardon, “The Savior Wants to Forgive,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 15.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Things You Might Do:

- Ponder on the times God has granted you grace and record these experiences in your journal.
- Set goals to stretch your abilities and take time to recognize the Savior’s grace as you strive to reach your goals.
- Share your testimony and experiences with others at home, at school, at church, or on social media.



YOU CAN BE A GIANT HELP

Each time you set a good example, help a family member, or show kindness, you make a big difference in building your home.

(See For the Strength of Youth [2011], 14.)

How many times can I go out with someone before it becomes "steady dating"?

Can I listen to a song or watch a movie with a bad part if it's played in school and the teacher says, "It's not really that bad"?

Is it OK to wear immodest clothes as part of a sports team?

IS IT OK TO...? CAN I...?

What can you do if you don't know how to apply the standards in For the Strength of Youth to a certain situation?

By Heidi McConkie

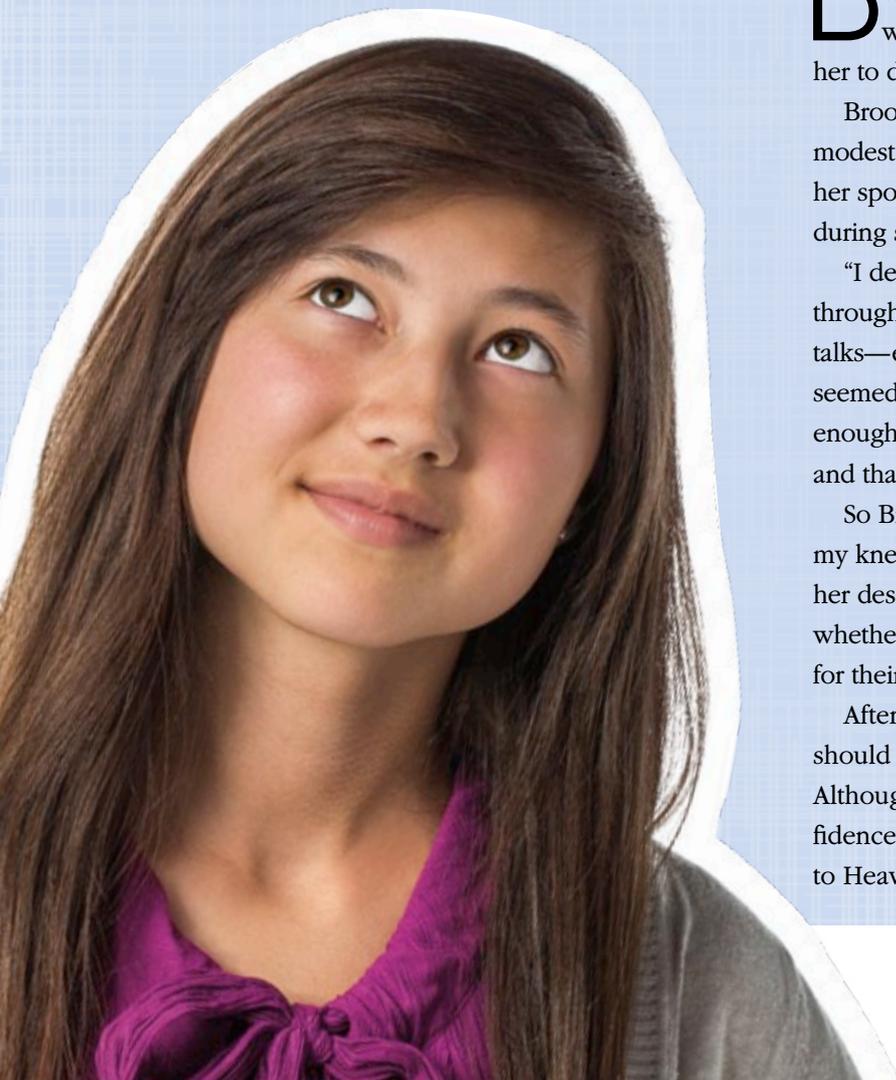
Brooke P. of California, USA, could feel her resolve wavering—it would be so much easier to blend in with her teammates. The other girls were pressuring her to dress like them for practices and games.

Brooke had already decided that she wanted to be modest, but she didn't know what that meant for playing her sport. Would it be OK to dress like her teammates just during sporting events?

"I decided to do some research," Brooke says. "I looked through *For the Strength of Youth*, the scriptures, Church talks—everything I could get my hands on. Nothing seemed to describe my exact situation and give me specific enough advice. But I knew that Heavenly Father knew me and that He knew what would be modest."

So Brooke took action again. "I decided to get down on my knees and pray," she says. As she prayed, she expressed her desire to obey the commandments and then asked whether it would be OK for her to dress like her teammates for their practices and games.

After her prayer, Brooke felt impressed that she should not alter her clothing choices to satisfy her peers. Although her decision was unpopular, Brooke found confidence and peace knowing that her choice was pleasing to Heavenly Father.



Your Story

Perhaps you've never found yourself in Brooke's specific dilemma, but you've probably faced a similar predicament. You're doing your best to live by a gospel standard—being modest, using uplifting language, watching wholesome entertainment, obeying the Word of Wisdom, . . .

Then BAM! Someone cranks up the heat, and suddenly "opposition in all things" (2 Nephi 2:11) is more than just an oft-quoted phrase from the scriptures. Your friends—or maybe even your own family members—pressure you to dress or speak or act differently from what you feel is right. You want to make good gospel choices, but maybe you're starting to feel confused: *What does living by the standards mean in your life, anyway?* Just like Brooke, you can discover your own answer to this question through study, prayer, and personal revelation.

Your Questions

Your everyday life is full of questions: *What will I wear to school? What will I eat for lunch? Whom will I hang out with?* Some questions have pretty simple answers. *Should I chew this piece of gum I found on the sidewalk?* No. You probably don't have to think twice about that one. Some of your questions, particularly ones about standards, can be a lot trickier to answer, though: *What music is appropriate to listen to? How do I keep the Sabbath day holy?* Fortunately, you don't have to come up with all of the answers on your own. Our living prophets have outlined gospel standards, and you can study their teachings in *For the Strength of Youth*.

After you've studied the standards, you likely won't always know exactly how to apply them in every situation, and that's

normal. You're in good company if you have some unanswered questions about what a specific standard means for your situation.

Just think about the Book of Mormon story where the Lord commanded Nephi to build a ship. Nephi didn't know immediately how to obey the Lord's commandment, but he chose to try anyway. And he didn't hesitate to seek help; he asked, "Whither shall I go that I may find ore to smelt, that I may make tools to construct the ship?" (1 Nephi 17:9). He started by figuring out what the first step would be—make tools—and then asking the Lord to help him know how to do that. The Lord answered Nephi's questions (and step-by-step he was able to complete the ship), and when you're trying to obey the commandments, He can answer your questions too.

Your Answers

When you have questions about how to live by a particular standard or obey a certain commandment, first go to the scriptures, *For the Strength of Youth, True to the Faith*, the prophets' counsel, and prayer. You can look up the relevant scriptures listed in the booklets or general conference talks—and even branch

You can discover your answer to any questions through study, prayer, and personal revelation.



out to include additional scriptures in your search. As you seek knowledge through gospel study, the Holy Ghost will “enlighten [your] understanding” (Alma 32:28).

You can also turn to family members, friends, and Church leaders for support. They may be able to guide you to helpful resources, provide support and encouragement, and even share personal experiences about similar issues and how they overcame their challenges.

Sometimes even after praying, rereading *For the Strength of Youth*, studying the scriptures, and seeking advice, you may still feel like you’re wandering through a fog of uncertainty regarding particular standards. Although you’ve received great counsel, applying it to your circumstances can sometimes feel like trying to find a street by using a globe instead of a roadmap. At other times you may need to make a quick decision without the luxury of thoughtful study over a long period of time.

In either case, remember that prayer is a powerful resource. It’s not a last resort either; prayer is a great place to begin your quest for knowledge and a helpful tool all along the way. Heavenly Father knows you personally—your gifts, your challenges, your strengths, and your struggles. So if you don’t know how best to follow the Church’s standards in a particular situation, don’t panic. He knows! It’s easy to fall into the trap of trying to fit the gospel into your life; but instead, He can show you how to fit your life into the gospel. When you pray in faith, He will teach you, providing answers just for you “in the very moment” (D&C 100:6) that you need them. That opportunity for personal revelation is one of the great blessings we have because we were baptized and received the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Your Example

As you live by God’s standards, you can be a light to others around you. You can encourage them to keep the commandments. And when they’re confused about *how* to obey, you can teach them this pattern for finding answers to their personal questions.

As you strive to set a good example, don’t be too surprised if sometimes others—even those who are also trying to live the gospel—don’t always make the same choices you do. If you feel frustrated, just remember that someone, perhaps Mom or Dad, once had to teach you the answers to even the most basic questions—like *Should I chew this piece of gum I found on the sidewalk?* So try to be patient with yourself and others as we all work to figure out the answers to trickier questions, the kind that don’t always come with a yes-or-no answer. *How do I live by this standard in my life?* Keep in mind that we’re all imperfect people learning day by day to live a perfect gospel and working toward becoming perfected ourselves. It’s an ongoing process.

And you can take an active role in that process! Actively seek out answers to your personal questions and encourage others to do the same. As you do so, always remember that regardless of others’ choices, you can choose to keep Heavenly Father’s commandments. ■

Heidi McConkie lives in Delaware, USA.



TO THE POINT

The scriptures tell us
to **be perfect.**
How can I do that?

What was the Savior asking of us when He said, “Be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect”? (3 Nephi 12:48).

In the scriptures, *perfect* means “complete, whole, and fully developed; totally righteous. . . . True followers of Christ may become perfect through his grace and atonement.”¹

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught that perfection in this life “can be achieved as we try to perform every duty [and] keep every law. . . . If we do the best we can, the Lord will bless us according to our deeds and the desires of our hearts.”²

Now, the Savior did *not* say that being perfect means never making mistakes. He also did *not* say that making a mistake means that perfection is out of reach. We *can* repent.

According to President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901), the key to perfection in this life is to “be better today than you were yesterday. . . . Continue to be a little better day by day.”³ ■

NOTES

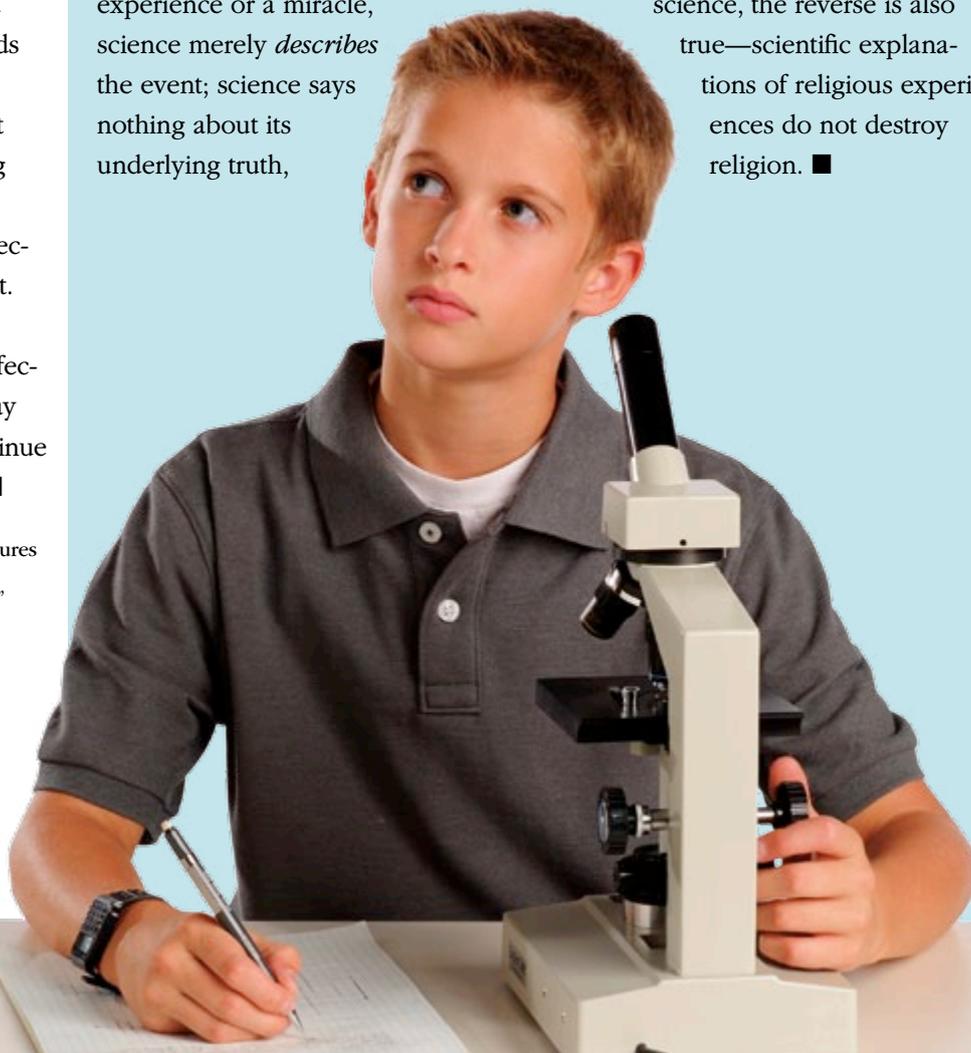
1. Guide to the Scriptures, “Perfect,” scriptures.lds.org.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “Perfection Pending,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 86.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow* (2012), 103.

I have a friend who believes that there is a scientific explanation for everything—spiritual feelings, answers to prayer, miracles, and so on.

What can I tell this friend?

In one sense, your friend is right—all things probably have explanations that can be given in scientific terms (though we don’t have all of these yet). The ability of science to explain something does no harm to religion. Even if you accept scientific explanations of a spiritual experience or a miracle, science merely *describes* the event; science says nothing about its underlying truth,

meaning, or purpose. That’s the role of religion. Our Father in Heaven knows all things and reveals to us what we need in order to return to Him and to develop faith, hope, charity, and all other divine attributes. Just as religious interpretations of natural phenomena do not destroy science, the reverse is also true—scientific explanations of religious experiences do not destroy religion. ■



Virtual PEN PALS

My family's friend Aleksander told me about his niece Lule. She is about my age, and he wanted me to get to know her. I didn't think much of it, but a few weeks later, she added me as a friend on Facebook.*



Hi, Stephanie! I'm Lule, Aleksander's niece. He told me that you and I are about the same age.

Hey, Lule. I remember hearing about you. Aleksander said you live in Albania. That's so cool!

That's funny—to me, living in America sounds cool! Hahaha. What are you doing this weekend?

I have a basketball game on Saturday morning, then I'm going to a Latter-day Saint temple. On Sunday I'm going to church. What are you doing?

Not much. I saw a picture of the Salt Lake Temple on the Internet. It is beautiful! My uncle told me that you are a Mormon, just like he is. I've been to church with him a few times. I really liked it! I would love to go every week, but I usually have things to do with my family on Sundays.



If you want, I can take notes at church each week and send them to you. That way you can learn more about what we believe in.

Oh, thank you! I would love to hear what you talk about there.

Hey, Lule! I hope you had a good week. Church was great yesterday. Here are some notes I took. We talked a lot about service and prayer.

- When we serve other people, we are serving God (read Mosiah 2:17 at scriptures.lds.org/bofm).
- Check out “Dayton’s Legs” on YouTube. It is about a boy who helped his friend, who has cerebral palsy, compete in a triathlon.
- God is there for you and will listen to you when you pray. I found this article that talks about how to pray: lds.org/youth/article/how-to-pray.

Stephanie, thanks so much! That video was so inspiring! I pray a lot, and I want to do the right thing . . . but how can I know if what I’m doing is right?

THE STORY CONTINUES . . .

Stephanie is still teaching Lule about the gospel by sending her notes and answering her questions. Stephanie says that when she takes notes on Sundays, “the lessons stay with me more.” And by answering Lule’s questions, Stephanie gets to have meaningful discussions about the gospel with her parents. This experience has also taught Stephanie about missionary work. “I can still be a missionary even though I’m young,” she says.

**Names have been changed.
Please consult with your parents or guardian before communicating with strangers on Facebook.*



DON'T MISS THE PHONE CALL

In each general conference, there is bound to be a message just for you. Don't miss it!

By David Dickson
Church Magazines

Imagine that you're expecting an incredibly important phone call.

Pretend, for example, that you've applied to a dozen colleges and your top choice wanted to call you on Thursday night to let you know whether you were accepted. But there's a slight catch: they have a long list of people to call and will have to automatically reject you if you aren't available to talk through the details.

If college is too far down the road

to imagine, picture instead something else that you'd be waiting for impatiently. Maybe somebody is calling to let you know whether you've been accepted on a sports team, dance class, or the school musical—whatever would be truly important to you.

Now, here's the question: would you stay close to your phone for that expected call?

Chances are, if it were important enough to you, you wouldn't want to be out of earshot of that phone! You wouldn't want to miss the call.

Similarly, every six months there's an extremely important message waiting for you personally. But again there's a small catch: you have to first show up to receive the message.

An Outpouring of Revelation

General conference is a time to be uplifted, inspired, and strengthened spiritually. It's also an invaluable opportunity to find answers to personal questions.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, "A general conference of this Church is a remarkable occasion indeed—it is an institutional declaration that the heavens are open, that divine guidance is as real today as it was for the ancient house of Israel, that God our Heavenly Father loves us and speaks His will through a living prophet."¹

If you have any questions you've been praying about, general conference can be a time to find answers to those questions. Even if you don't have specific questions in your heart, you never know which message or messages from general conference will be exactly what you need to hear. Often, the most important inspiration we receive helps us know how to serve others better.

Speaking in general conference *about* general conference, President Thomas S. Monson has said: "We meet each six months to strengthen one another, to extend encouragement, to provide comfort, to build faith. We are here to learn. Some

of you may be seeking answers to questions and challenges you are experiencing in your life. Some are struggling with disappointments or losses. Each can be enlightened and uplifted and comforted as the Spirit of the Lord is felt."²

The messages given in general conference are like scripture to us in our day. As the Lord said, "Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same" (D&C 1:38).

If you prepare yourself spiritually for conference and especially if you pay close attention to the messages, you can and will find instruction and inspiration specific to you—no matter your circumstances.

Preparing to Be Inspired

It always helps to spend time before conference preparing to receive revelation. The Lord has counseled us to seek revelation: "If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal" (D&C 42:61).

While it's possible to receive personal revelation anywhere, anytime, we should never let that fact keep us from studying general conference closely. Only at general conference can we hear from prophets, apostles, and other leaders of the Church in such abundance.

In the October 2013 general conference, Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"To the young members of the Church, I promise that if you will listen, you will feel the Spirit well up within you. The Lord will tell you what He wants you to do with your life."³

Every Session Counts

Back to that important phone call. If you knew such a call were coming, you most likely wouldn't stray from your phone unless it were absolutely necessary. With general conference, then, does it make sense to skip a session or two because you'd rather do other things for part of the weekend? What if you decided to go hiking Saturday morning—missing "only" that first session—but it happened to be the exact session you most needed to hear?

Whether you live in a part of the world where you can watch a live general conference broadcast or you need to wait some time before it reaches your area, it's always worth the time and effort to pay close attention to each talk as soon as it is available to you.

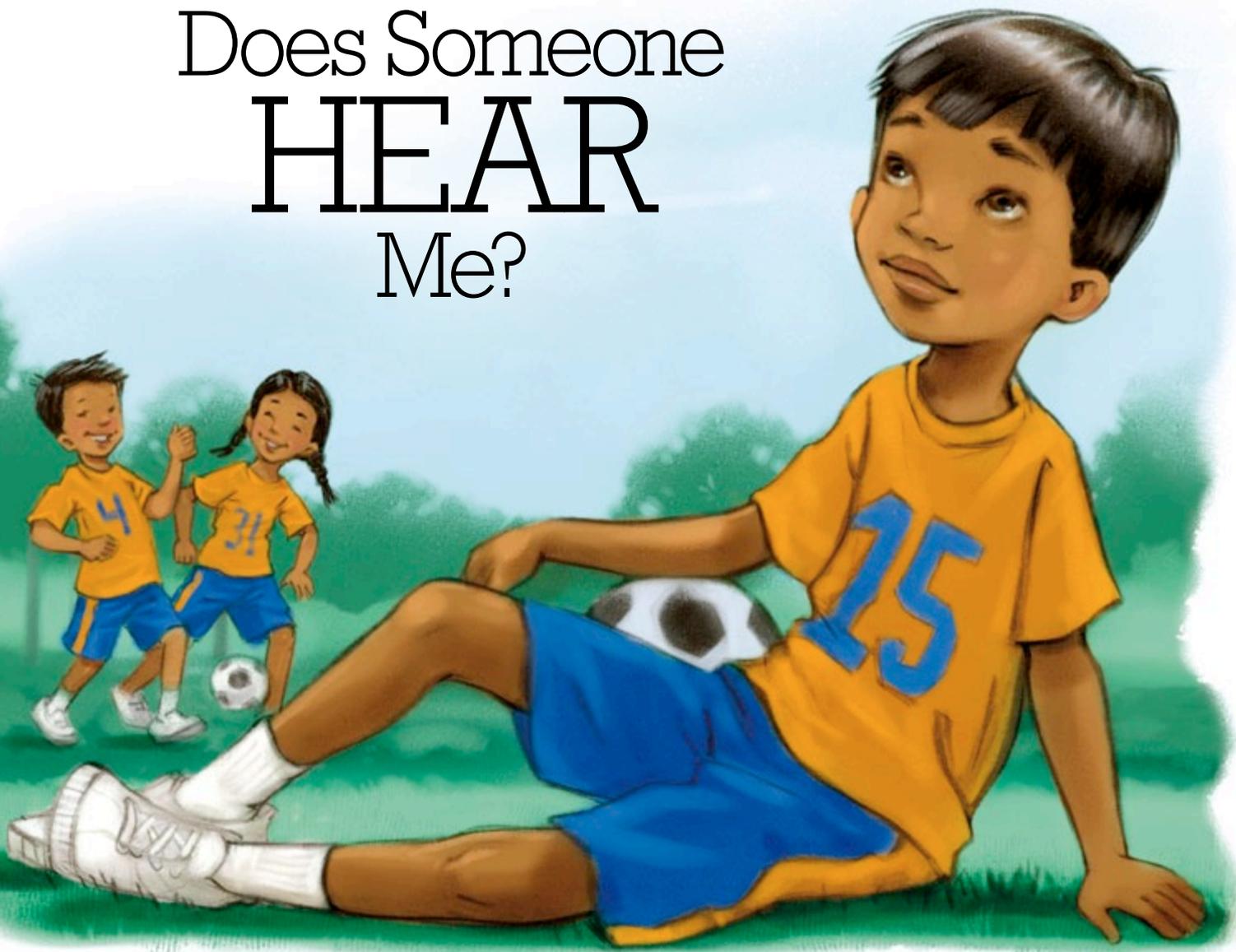
Consider deciding today that you will show up ready to hear and willing to listen to each talk, paying close attention for the inspiration you most need to hear.

After all, you never know when the phone is going to ring. ■

NOTES

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, "The Peaceable Things of the Kingdom," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 82.
2. Thomas S. Monson, "As We Gather Once Again," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2012, 4.
3. Robert D. Hales, "General Conference: Strengthening Faith and Testimony," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 6.

Does Someone HEAR Me?



By Lucas F., age 10, Brazil, and Susan Barrett

"I kneel to pray ev'ry day. I speak to Heav'nly Father. He hears and answers me when I pray in faith" (*"I Pray in Faith,"* Children's Songbook, 14).

I was worried. My Primary teacher had asked me to give a talk the next week in sharing time. "You could bear your testimony about prayer," she had said. We had just talked about prayer in our class.

I had prayed many times. I always said my own prayers, and I often prayed during family prayer. I had prayed for blessings on the food many times too, and I had prayed in Primary before. But now I wasn't sure I had a *testimony* of prayer or if I understood how prayer could help me. "Does someone really hear me when I pray?" I wondered.

I went to the kitchen, where my mother was getting dinner ready.

"Mama," I said, "how can I bear my testimony of prayer when I'm not sure I *have* a testimony of it?"

My mother put her arm around me. "Why don't you give a lesson about prayer in family home evening tomorrow, and we'll talk about it together," she said.

My mother helped me find stories and conference talks about prayer. Then I began to prepare for family home evening and for my Primary talk.

Lucas had prayed many times, but did he have a testimony of prayer?



HOW SHOULD I PRAY?

When we pray, we are talking to Heavenly Father, so we begin by saying, “Our Heavenly Father.” We thank Him for our blessings. Then we ask Him for the things we need. We always close by saying, “In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.”

We can pray anytime, anywhere, about anything. We don’t have to be kneeling or be in church. We can pray about something small or large.

We can pray out loud or silently, alone or with other people.

We use special words that show respect for Heavenly Father. We say *thee* and *thou* instead of *you*, and *thy* and *thine* instead of *your* and *yours*.

We always speak reverently, showing respect to Heavenly Father.



President Thomas S. Monson, “Until We Meet Again,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 114.

“I bear my personal witness and testimony to you that God lives, that He hears the prayers of humble hearts.”

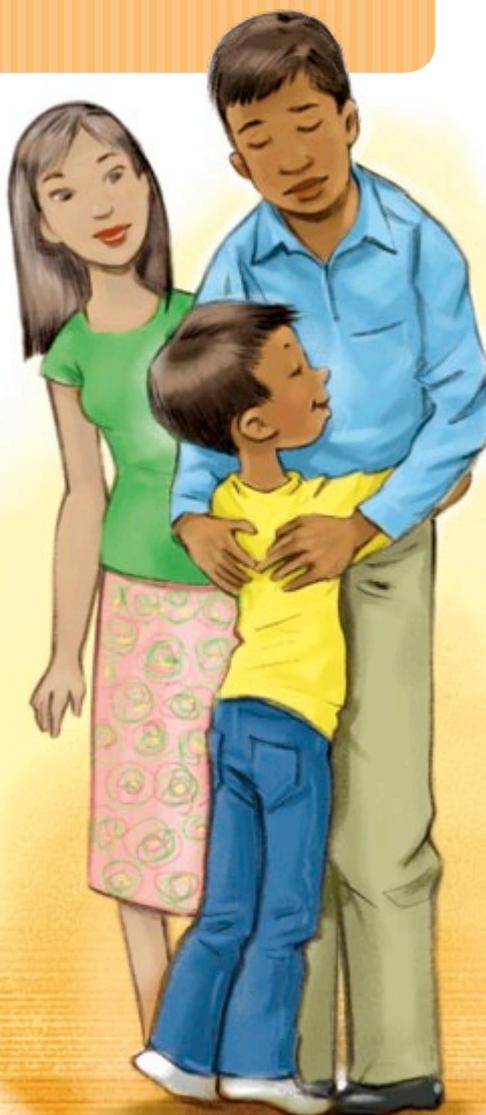
When I gave the lesson on Monday, my mother and father told me how prayer had helped them. I gave my Primary talk the next Sunday too, but I didn’t feel much different. I still wondered if I had a testimony of prayer. I prayed sincerely about my doubts, but the answer didn’t come right away.

One day my father came home after looking for work all day with no success. He was very sad. He had been out of work for many weeks. I ran to him and hugged him, as I always did.

“Don’t be sad, Papa,” I said. Then suddenly I felt something in my heart. “We need to pray,” I said.

“Right now?” my father asked.

“Yes, right now,” I said. “I believe Heavenly Father will hear us.”



We knelt together and prayed, asking Heavenly Father to comfort us.

After the prayer we read the scriptures, as we did each night, and then sat together and talked. I noticed that little by little our sadness was replaced with the happiness we always had in our home. I felt different—as though we were safe and protected, and I knew that everything would be all right. It was a wonderful feeling.

Mama noticed it too. “Can you feel it, Lucas?” she asked quietly. “The Holy Ghost is comforting us, helping us know that we are not alone.”

“Yes, I feel it,” I said. I knew that Heavenly Father heard our prayer.

It was a night that I will never forget. Now I have my own testimony of the power of prayer. ■

13

1

“Use your
bright minds
to study and learn the
Articles of Faith and the
doctrines they teach.”

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
From the October 2013 general conference

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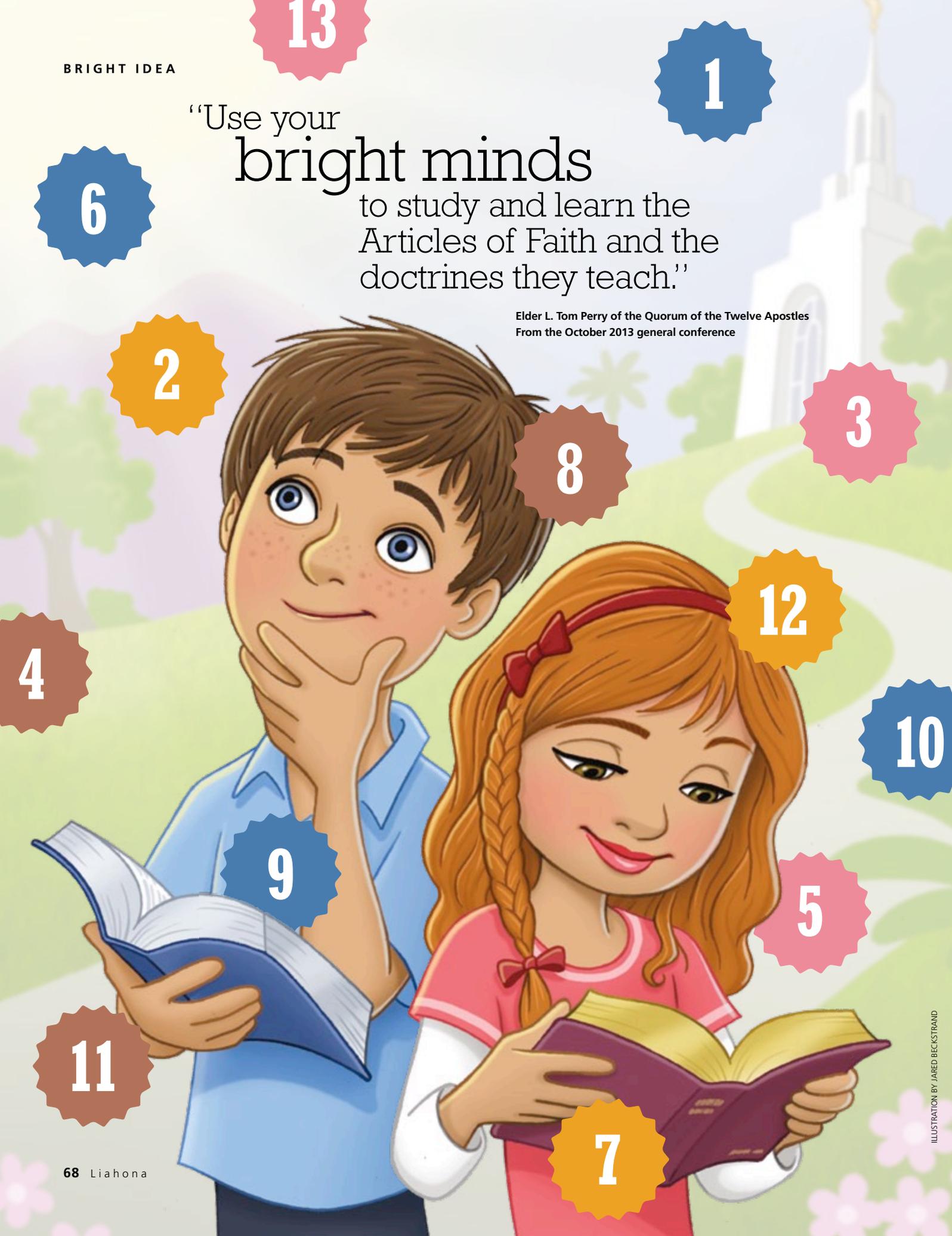
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OUR PAGE



I love the gospel and being a member of the Church. My favorite song is "I Love to See the Temple" (*Children's Songbook*, 95). I am so happy to know that my family is eternal.

Atonina T., age 10, Samoa



Yery R., age 12, Ecuador



My body is a temple. I dress modestly to show that I love and respect my body and that I love Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

Lorienne P., age 6, Philippines



This is the First Presidency. Every evening, I access general conference on the Internet and listen to it before I go to sleep. I am

looking forward to watching the next general conference.

Rina H., age 10, Japan



Ittary V., age 5, from Mexico, is very obedient. She loves her family and likes to draw pictures of them. Her favorite Primary song is "I Love to See the Temple" (Children's Songbook, 95). She loves to see the flowers at the temple. When she prays, she always tells Heavenly Father how much she loves Him. She loves Primary and tries to be a good example to her little sister, Ailime.





From an interview by Amie Jane Leavitt

*Mhoroi, shamwari!** Meet Tendai, who lives in the country of Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is in the southern part of Africa. There are lots of animals in Africa, like rhinos, elephants, Cape buffalo, lions, and giraffes. But Tendai does not get to see these animals near his house since he lives near Harare, Zimbabwe's biggest city. Still, Tendai is glad that these beautiful animals live in his country. ■

* *"Hello, friends!" in Shona.*

My favorite scripture story is when Nephi was commanded to build a ship. I hope that I can always have the courage to do what is right, just like Nephi.



I'm **TENDAI** from Zimbabwe



My favorite part about Primary is doing the Primary presentation. I like sharing my testimony of Jesus Christ.

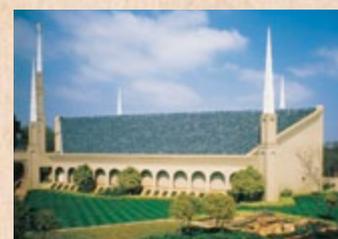
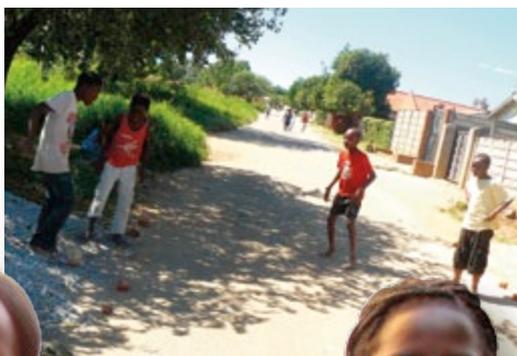


When I'm finished with my homework, I help my older sister with her lessons. She has some challenges that make it hard for her to learn. I also like helping some of the other children in my school who have challenges. Some kids laugh at these children, but I never do.



One day some of my friends were playing in our yard. One of them said a bad word. The other kids laughed, but I didn't. I told them it wasn't funny and that we should not say bad words.

My family is very important to me. I have an older sister and a twin sister. My two sisters and I live with our mom and our great-grandmother, or Gogo. That is how you say "grandmother" in our native language of Shona.



I LOVE TO SEE THE TEMPLE

My family has to travel 13 hours in a car to get to the temple in Johannesburg, South Africa.

READY TO GO!

Tendai's bag is packed with some of his favorite things. Which of these things would you pack in your bag?



Mudiwa from Zimbabwe

Mudiwa is dressed up for church, but you can also put her in school clothes or her dance festival costume. You may want to glue this figure onto heavy paper before you color and cut it out. Ask an adult to help you. ■





By Linda K. Burton
Relief Society General
President

I Felt the Spirit

“Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:14).

I remember two simple events that happened when I was a little girl. Each shows how the Spirit touches hearts in special ways no matter our age.

The first experience happened when my brother was sick. My father called a man from our ward to come to our home and help give a priesthood blessing. As our family gathered before the blessing, the man suggested that we children should leave because we might disrupt the spirit of the blessing. My father replied gently that it was important that each child be present during the blessing because our pure faith was needed. Even at that young age, I not only felt the presence of the Spirit, but I also sensed the great love my father had for his children. My father’s love helped me believe in and understand Heavenly Father’s love for me.

A few years later, our family participated in sacrament meeting. My mother was a gifted musician. However, she gave my sisters and me the opportunity to sing instead of her. I clearly remember the song she was inspired to have us sing:

*I think when I read that sweet
story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How He called little children like
lambs to His fold;
I should like to have been with
Him then.*

(“I Think When I Read That Sweet Story,” *Children’s Songbook*, 56)

As my sisters and I sang the song, I felt warm and happy inside. My tender testimony was strengthened as the Holy Ghost helped me feel that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ loved me.

How grateful I am for the blessing of the Holy Ghost and the love of my parents and my Father in Heaven. ■



Jesus Christ Is Our Savior

A 12-year-old girl lay in her bed, growing sicker and sicker. Her parents watched helplessly. They could do nothing to save her.

Then they remembered amazing stories they had heard about a man living among them named Jesus. People said He could heal the sick and make blind people see. Maybe He could save their daughter's life!

The girl's father, Jairus, ran to find Jesus. He begged Jesus to heal his daughter. Then a messenger came with terrible news. It was too late. The girl had already died. "Be not afraid," Jesus said to Jairus, "only believe" (Mark 5:36).

When Jesus and Jairus arrived at Jairus's house, they went into the room where the girl was lying. Jesus took the girl by the hand and told her to arise. When she stood up, her parents were amazed. Jesus had brought their daughter back to life!

That day Jesus showed how much He cared for the girl and her family by ministering to them. Jesus shows



SONG AND SCRIPTURE

- "I Stand All Amazed" (*Hymns*, no. 193)
- 1 John 4:14

IDEAS FOR FAMILY TALK

Together you could read the story of Jairus's daughter (see Luke 8:41–42, 49–56). Then you could hold up the picture of the Savior on the next page and invite family members to tell how they feel about some of the wonderful and amazing ways He shows His love for us. Family members could also take turns reading one of the verses of "I Stand All Amazed." After each verse, invite the family to join in singing the chorus. Then discuss or draw pictures of ways your family can show love for the Savior.

how much He cares for us in many wonderful and amazing ways:

- He helped create the beautiful world and all its creatures.
- He volunteered to come to earth to be our Savior, even though He knew it would be very hard.
- He spent His life on earth blessing, healing, and teaching others.
- He lived a perfect life.
- He willingly suffered for our sins in the Garden of Gethsemane and died on the cross so we can be resurrected and return to heaven. ■

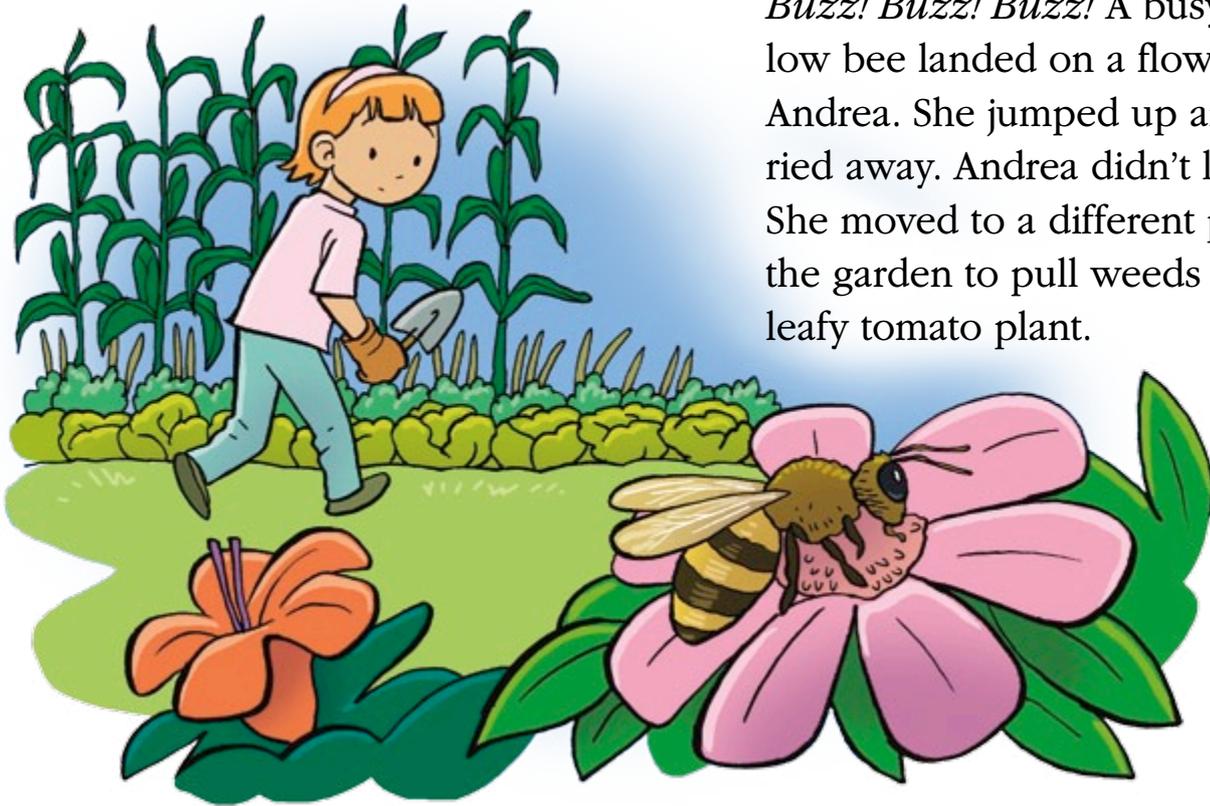


A Garden Full of Blessings

By Linda Pratt

Based on a true story

Buzz! Buzz! Buzz! A busy yellow bee landed on a flower by Andrea. She jumped up and hurried away. Andrea didn't like bees. She moved to a different part of the garden to pull weeds by a leafy tomato plant.



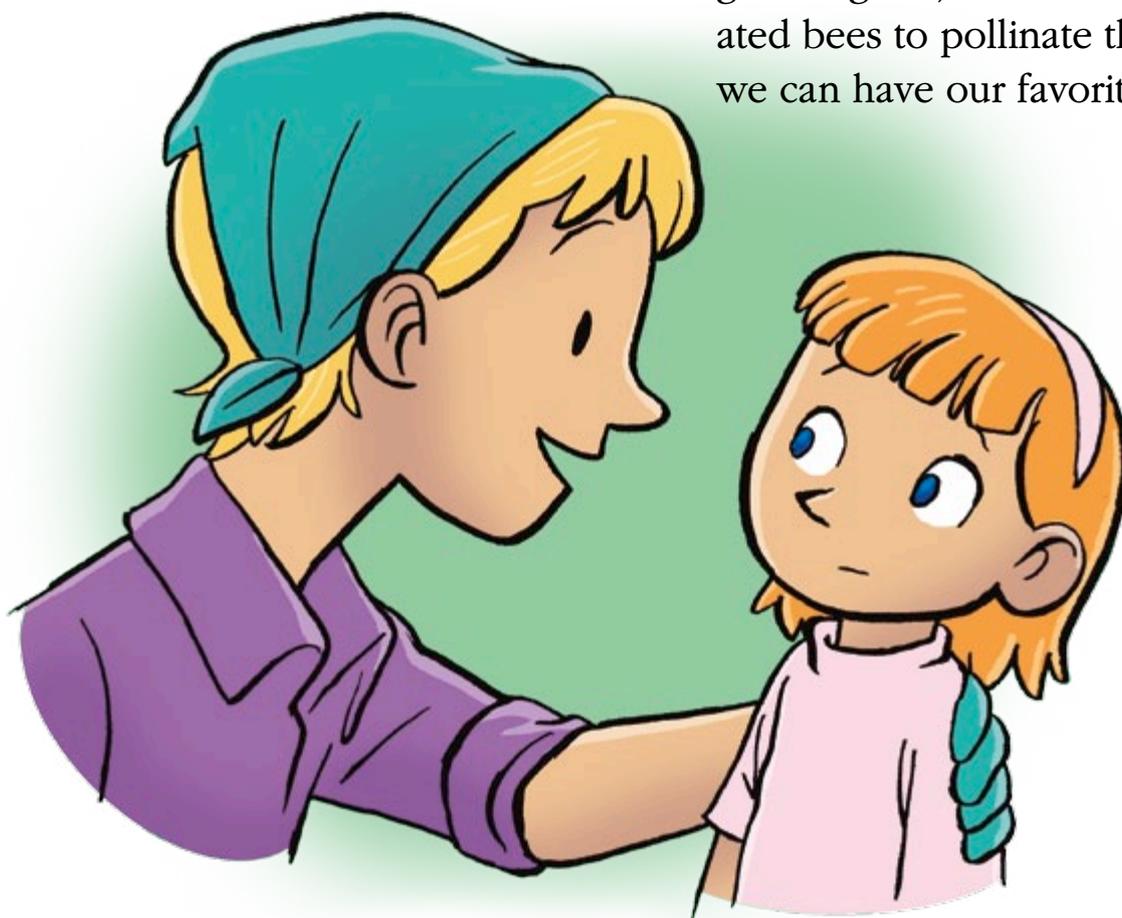
The sun was warm on Andrea's back. She could hear Mom close by in the rows of corn. Suddenly Andrea heard more buzzing. *Buzz! Buzz! Buzz!* She ran to find Mom.



“There are too many bees, Mommy!” she said. “I want to work in the garden *without* the bees.”



“We need the bees to make our garden grow,” Mom said. “Jesus created bees to pollinate the plants so we can have our favorite foods.”





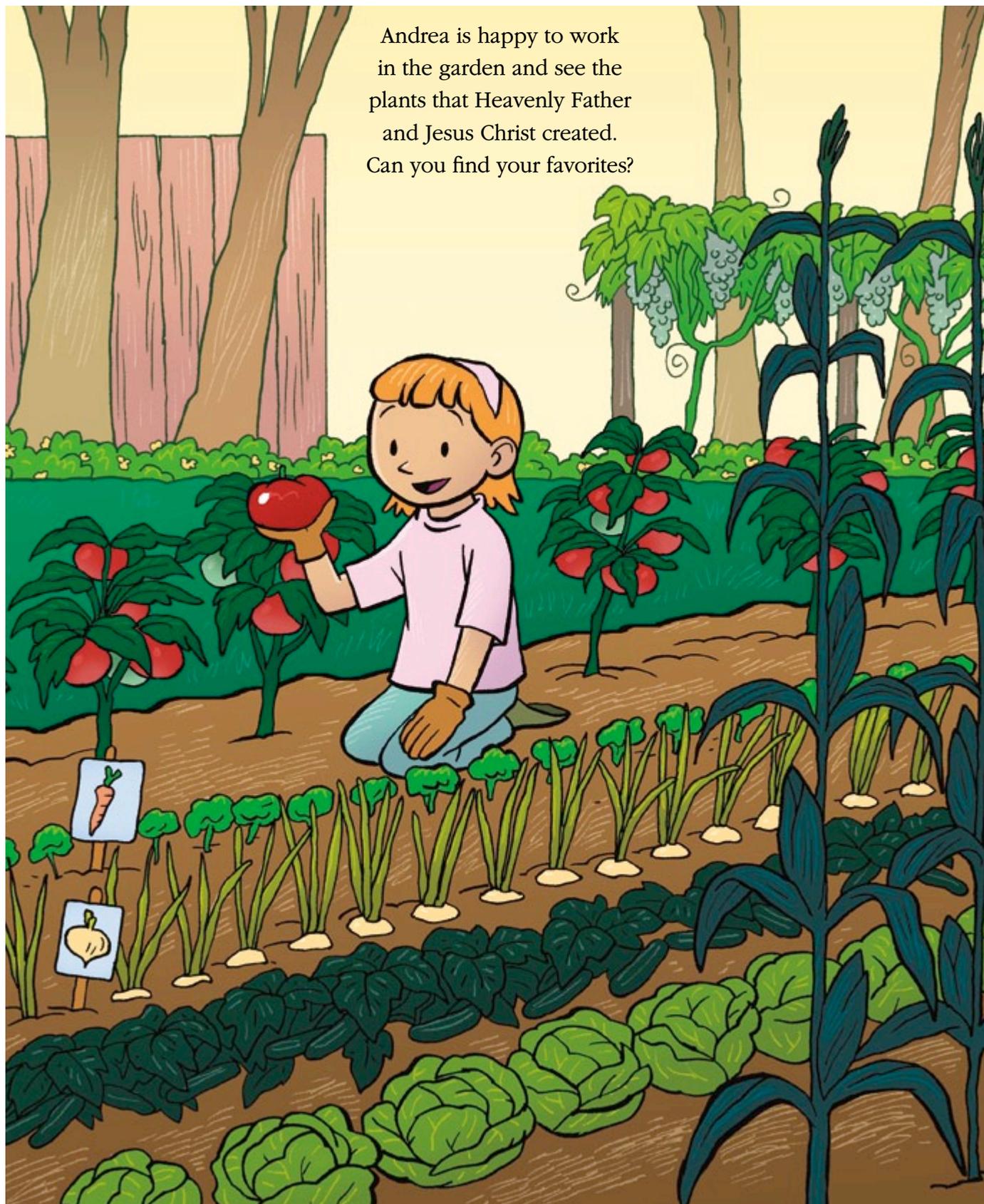
“Without the bees we wouldn’t have our garden?” Andrea asked. She thought about all of her favorite plants. She liked pretty flowers. She liked to eat strawberries and tomatoes. She would be sad to live in a world without them.

“I’m glad Jesus made the plants,” Andrea said. “I’m glad He made the bees too!” ■



Find the Fruits and Vegetables

Andrea is happy to work in the garden and see the plants that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ created. Can you find your favorites?



WAITING IN THE LOBBY

By Lori Fuller
Church Magazines

One evening I took three of my younger siblings to the temple to do baptisms. As the temple worker checked our recommends, he discovered that my sister's was missing the bishop's signature. I started filling out a form to take to the temple recorder, who would call the bishop. Then the temple worker checked my brother's recommend and found that it had not been activated. I had the pen, so I took the form we were handed and began filling it out too.

I knew my brother and sister could not go in with errors on their recommends, but I felt responsible for them, and until I helped them take care of these errors, I could not go in either. I felt frustrated at being kept out of the temple. We left the baptistry and went upstairs to the temple entrance to explain our situation at the front desk. The temple recorder said he could fix the problem in just a few minutes, so the four of us sat down to wait in the lobby.



I felt disappointed when I was kept waiting in the lobby and out of the temple because of a few clerical errors.

As I sat there, my frustration changed to discouragement. We were being kept out for such simple errors, but they were all the difference between waiting in the lobby and entering the Lord's house. It had been a rough day, and I had counted on the temple to help me feel at peace. The mistakes weren't my fault, but as the wait dragged on, I felt ready to cry. I was trying to be good by coming to the temple and setting an example of temple attendance for my younger siblings. So why were we being kept out when I wanted so badly to be inside?

And then I realized something: if I felt discouraged being kept out of the temple for a few clerical errors, how disappointed would I feel to be kept out for my own errors—to not be worthy to enter the temple? As I considered this, I was suddenly calm. I felt that I had learned the lesson God wanted me to learn. I promised Him that I would always try to be worthy to go inside the temple. I promised that I would never be kept out of the Lord's house for my own errors; I never want my actions to confine me to just the lobby.

Later that night I had an appointment with my bishop to renew my temple recommend. Before I went, I checked for any errors in myself that might keep me out of the temple. When the bishop asked if I was worthy to enter the house of the Lord, I was so grateful that I could say yes. ■



EZRA TAFT BENSON

Ezra Taft Benson did many **chores** on his family farm. Because he loved farming, he earned an advanced degree in agricultural economics and eventually served as secretary of agriculture for the United States in **Washington, D.C.** President Benson loved the **Book of Mormon** and encouraged Church members to study it as families and as individuals.

Also in This Issue

FOR YOUNG ADULTS



Inviting Success

Three young adults—a law student, a pharmacy customer, and an elevator operator—show us how they shared the gospel in everyday life.

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FOR YOUTH

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What if I skip just a few sessions of general conference because I want to do something else that weekend—that's OK, right?

DON'T MISS THE PHONE CALL

FOR CHILDREN

I Felt the Spirit

The Holy Ghost can speak to your heart—even when you're a child.

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