

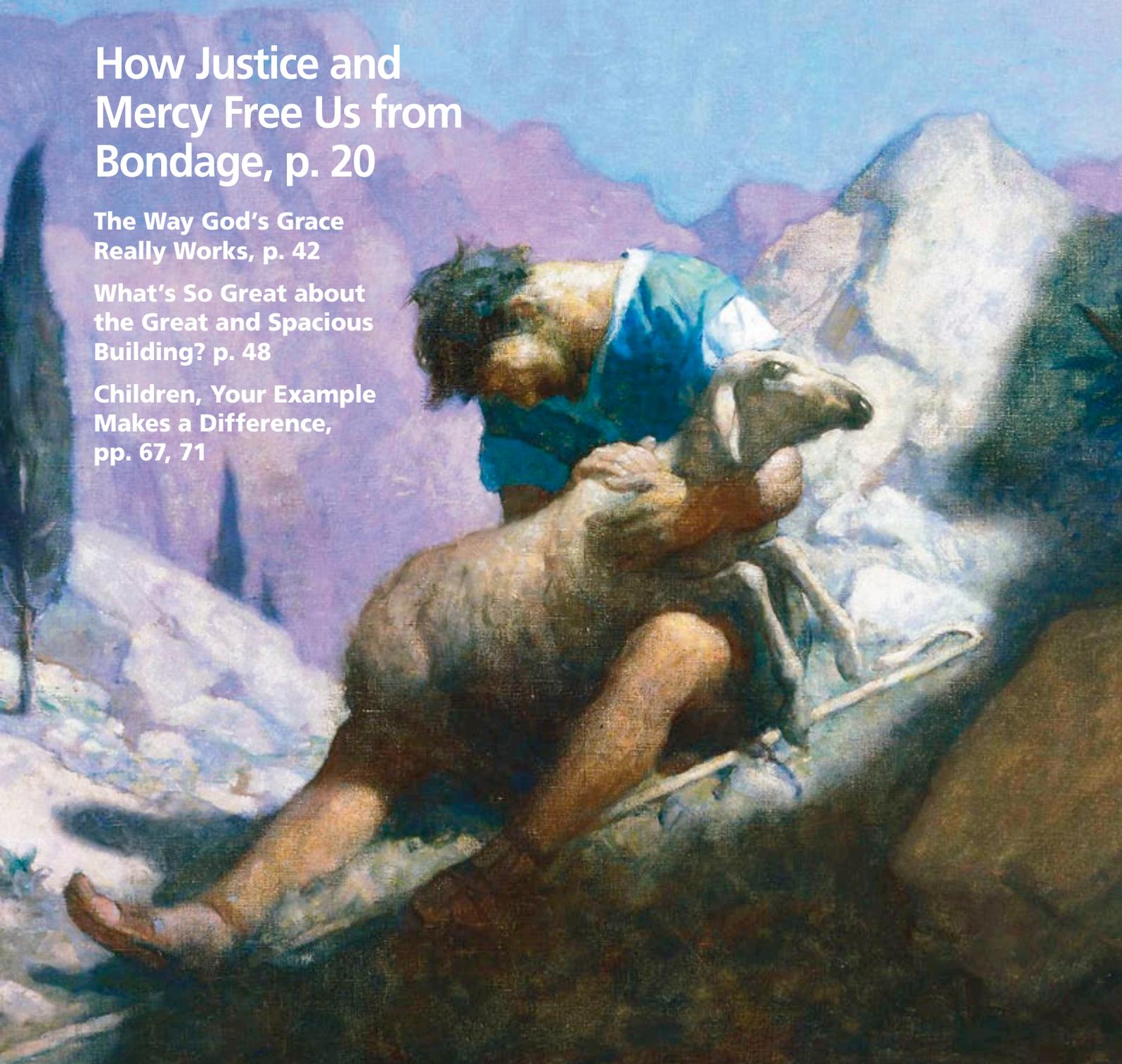
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*"But whosoever  
drinketh of the  
water that I shall  
give him shall  
never thirst; but  
the water that I  
shall give him shall  
be in him . . .  
springing up into  
everlasting life."*

John 4:14



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**CORRECTION**

We apologize for an error in "Scripture Cards" on pages 65–66 of the August issue. The scriptures for the card "When I feel happy . . ." should be Psalm 118:24; John 13:17; and Alma 26:35. The scriptures for the card "When I need courage . . ." should be Daniel 6; 1 Nephi 3:7; and Alma 56:44–48. Corrected pages can be printed from [liahona.lds.org](http://liahona.lds.org).

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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 examples.*



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CODY BELL

**"What's So Great about the Great and Spacious Building?"** page 48: Read the article with your family. Consider asking them if they have ever felt embarrassed to live the standards of the Church; you could share a time when you felt that way and what you learned. Discuss the difference between saying you *can't* do something compared to saying you *won't* do something. Your family could follow this scripture chain to learn more about how agency fits into God's plan: Moses 4:1–4; 2 Nephi 2:14–16, 22–27; Joshua 24:15; Mosiah 2:41; Doctrine and Covenants 82:10; 130:20–21. You could then sing "Choose the Right" (*Hymns*, no. 243) or another hymn about making good choices.

**"Writing It Right,"** page 64, and **"I Chose the Right,"** page 71: Consider sharing how both Cara and Ekene in these stories find ways to stand for the truth. You could discuss what it means to "stand as witnesses of God" (Mosiah 18:9). Brainstorm ways to share your testimony and make a plan to do it this week. For an activity, your family could read or review scripture stories where someone stood as a witness of God; then act out the characters in the stories. Some ideas for stories include Daniel and his friends refusing to eat bad things (Daniel 1), Stephen testifying of Jesus Christ (Acts 6–7), and Nephi encouraging his brothers to get the plates (1 Nephi 3–4).

## IN YOUR LANGUAGE

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

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By President  
Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Second Counselor in  
the First Presidency

# Saints

## FOR ALL SEASONS



I have childhood memories of a part of the world that could serve as a picture postcard for the changing seasons of the year. Each passing month was glorious and wonderful. During a perfect winter day, pristine snow blanketed the mountains and city streets. Spring brought cleansing rains and the explosion of green-dressed life. The lazy skies of summer served as a pleasant blue canvas for the blaze of a bright sun. And spectacular autumn transformed nature into brilliant shades of orange, yellow, and red. As a child, I loved each season, and to this day, I love the character and uniqueness of each one.

We have seasons in our lives as well. Some are warm and pleasant. Others are not. Some of the days in our lives are as beautiful as pictures in a calendar. And yet there are days and circumstances that cause heartache and may bring into our lives deep feelings of despair, resentment, and bitterness.

I am sure at one time or another we have all thought it would be nice to take up residence in a land filled only with days of picture-perfect seasons and avoid the unpleasant times in between.

But this is not possible. Nor is it desirable.

As I look over my own life, it is apparent that many of the times of greatest growth have come to me while passing through stormy seasons.

Our all-wise Heavenly Father knew that for His children to grow into the beings they were designed to become, they would need to experience seasons of adversity during their sojourn in mortality. The Book of Mormon prophet Lehi said that without opposition, “righteousness could not be brought to pass” (2 Nephi 2:11). Indeed, it is life’s bitterness that allows us to recognize, contrast, and appreciate its sweetness (see D&C 29:39; Moses 6:55).

President Brigham Young put it this way: “All intelligent beings who are crowned with crowns of glory, immortality, and eternal lives must pass through every ordeal appointed for intelligent beings to pass through, to gain their glory and exaltation. Every calamity that can come upon mortal beings will be suffered . . . to prepare them to enjoy the presence of the Lord. . . . Every trial and experience you have passed through is necessary for your salvation.”<sup>1</sup>

The question is not whether we will experience seasons of adversity but how we will weather the storms. Our great opportunity during the ever-changing seasons of life is to hold fast to the faithful word of God, for His counsel is designed not only to help us weather the storms of life but also to guide us past them. Our Heavenly Father has given His word through His prophets—precious knowledge designed to lead us through the challenges of difficult seasons toward the unspeakable joy and brilliant light



of eternal life. It is an important part of our life's experience to develop the strength, courage, and integrity to hold fast to truth and righteousness despite the buffeting we may experience.

Those who have entered the waters of baptism and received the gift of the Holy Ghost have set their feet on the path of discipleship and are charged to follow steadily and faithfully in the footsteps of our Savior.

The Savior taught that the sun rises “on the evil and on the good, and . . . rain [falls] on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:45). Sometimes we cannot understand why difficult, even unfair, things happen in life. But as followers of Christ, we trust that if we “search diligently, pray always, and be believing, . . . all things shall work together for [our] good, *if [we] walk uprightly*” (D&C 90:24; emphasis added).

As members of His Church, as

Saints, we serve joyfully and willingly in all weather and in all seasons. And as we do so, our hearts become filled with hallowed faith, healing hope, and heavenly charity.

Still, we will have to pass through all seasons—both pleasant and painful. But no matter the season, as followers of Jesus the Christ, we will rest our hope upon Him as we walk toward His light.

In short, we are Saints of God, determined to learn of Him, to love Him, and to love our fellowman. We are pilgrims on the blessed road of discipleship, and we will walk steadfastly toward our heavenly goal.

Therefore, let us be Saints in spring, summer, fall, and winter. Let us be Saints for all seasons. ■

**NOTE**

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 261–62.

**TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE**

The First Presidency has taught, “Some of the greatest sermons are preached by the singing of hymns” (*Hymns*, ix). As you discuss this message, consider singing with those you teach one of these hymns or another song about enduring adversity: “How Firm a Foundation” (no. 85); “The Lord Is My Shepherd” (no. 108); or “Let Us All Press On” (no. 243). If you feel prompted, share a time when a stormy season in your life turned out to be a blessing.



## I Was Able to Let Go of My Sorrow

By Juan Zhu

When my friends Brother Chen and his wife were baptized into our ward, I was overjoyed. A year after their baptism, they were sealed in the temple, and their son who had passed away before they joined the Church was sealed to them. It was wonderful to see the Chens grow in the gospel.

Then Brother Chen was killed in a car accident the next year. Following the accident, his death seemed to always be on my mind and often haunted my dreams. I woke up in tears and asked over and over again, “Why? Why does the Lord allow this kind of tragedy to happen? Why does such a thing have to happen to this beautiful family?” One day, when I was struggling with these questions, I picked up a lesson manual and read these words from President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985):

“If we looked at mortality as the whole of existence, then pain, sorrow, failure, and short life would be calamity. But if we look upon life as an eternal thing stretching far into the premortal past and on into the eternal post-death future, then all happenings may be put in proper perspective. . . .

“Are we not exposed to temptations to test our strength, sickness that we might learn patience, death that we might be immortalized and glorified?”<sup>1</sup>

At that moment, I decided to let go of my sorrow and look into the promised and possible future. I saw in my mind’s eye Brother Chen happily reunited with his family. That sight brought me peace. I know that Heavenly Father will give us the wisdom and courage to face adversities.

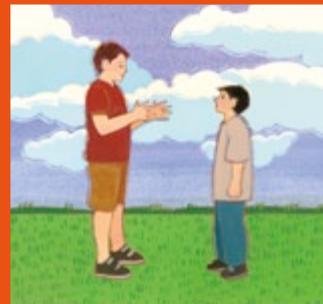
*The author is from Taiwan.*

**NOTE**

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 15.

## Serving in All Seasons

President Uchtdorf teaches that we should “serve joyfully and willingly in all weather and in all seasons.” In the pictures below, children are using objects from different seasons to serve others. Match the object in the right column with its picture in the left column.



Prayerfully study this material and, as appropriate, discuss it with the sisters you visit. Use the questions to help you strengthen your sisters and to make Relief Society an active part of your own life. For more information, go to [reliefsociety.lds.org](http://reliefsociety.lds.org).



Faith, Family, Relief

# Self-Reliance

Self-reliance is the ability, commitment, and effort to provide for the spiritual and temporal well-being of ourselves and of our families.<sup>1</sup>

As we learn and apply the principles of self-reliance in our homes and communities, we have opportunities to care for the poor and needy and to help others become self-reliant so they can endure times of adversity.

We have the privilege and duty to use our agency to become self-reliant spiritually and temporally. Speaking of spiritual self-reliance and our dependence on Heavenly Father, Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught: “We become converted and spiritually self-reliant as we prayerfully live our covenants—through worthily partaking of the sacrament, being worthy of a temple recommend, and sacrificing to serve others.”<sup>2</sup>

Elder Hales counseled us to become self-reliant temporally, “which includes getting a postsecondary education or vocational training, learning to work, and living within our means. By avoiding debt and saving money now, we are prepared for full-time Church service in the years to come.



The purpose of both temporal and spiritual self-reliance is to get ourselves on higher ground so that we can lift others in need.”<sup>3</sup>

### From the Scriptures

Matthew 25:1–13; 1 Timothy 5:8; Alma 34:27–28; Doctrine and Covenants 44:6; 58:26–29; 88:118

### NOTES

1. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 6.1.1.
2. Robert D. Hales, “Coming to Ourselves: The Sacrament, the Temple, and Sacrifice in Service,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2012, 34.
3. Robert D. Hales, “Coming to Ourselves,” 36.
4. See *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 51.

### From Our History

After the Latter-day Saints had gathered in the Salt Lake Valley, which was an isolated desert, President Brigham Young wanted them to flourish and establish permanent homes. This meant the Saints needed to learn skills that would allow them to become self-sufficient. In this effort, President Young had great trust in the capacities, talents, faithfulness, and willingness of the women, and he encouraged them in specific temporal duties. While the specific duties of Relief Society sisters are often different today, the principles remain constant:

1. Learn to love work and avoid idleness.
2. Acquire a spirit of self-sacrifice.
3. Accept personal responsibility for spiritual strength, health, education, employment, finances, food, and other life-sustaining necessities.
4. Pray for faith and courage to meet challenges.
5. Strengthen others who need assistance.<sup>4</sup>

### What Can I Do?

1. How am I helping the sisters I watch over find solutions to their temporal and spiritual needs?
2. Am I increasing my spiritual self-reliance through preparing for the sacrament and sacrificing to serve?

# APRIL 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 April 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.*

## STORIES FROM CONFERENCE

### A Light in Africa

By President Dieter F. Uchtdorf  
Second Counselor in the First Presidency

Some years ago, my wife, Harriet, and I had a memorable experience in which we saw this promise fulfilled. We were in West Africa, a beautiful part of the world where the Church is growing and the Latter-day Saints are delightful. However, West Africa also has many challenges. In particular, I was sorrowed by the poverty that I saw. In the cities there is high unemployment, and families often struggle to provide for their daily needs and for their safety. It broke my heart to know that many of our precious members of the Church live in such deprivation. But I also learned that these fine members help each other to lighten their heavy burdens.

We eventually arrived at one of our meetinghouses near a large city. But instead of finding a people burdened and absorbed by darkness, we discovered a joyful people who were



radiating with light! The happiness they felt for the gospel was contagious and lifted our spirits. The love they expressed for us was humbling. Their smiles were genuine and infectious.

I remember wondering at the time if there could possibly be a happier people on the face of the planet.

Even though these dear Saints were surrounded by difficulties and trials, they were filled with light!

The meeting began, and I started to speak. But soon the power went out in the building, and we were left in complete darkness.

For a while I could hardly see anyone in the congregation, but I could see and feel the brilliant and beautiful

smiles of our Saints. Oh, how I loved being with these wonderful people!

The darkness in the chapel continued, and so I sat next to my wife and waited for the power to be restored. As we waited, something remarkable happened.

A few voices began singing one of the hymns of the Restoration. And then others joined in. And then more. Soon, a sweet and overwhelming chorus of voices filled the chapel.

These members of the Church did not need hymnbooks; they knew every word of every hymn they sang. And they sang one song after another with an energy and spirit that touched my soul.

To read, watch, or listen to general conference addresses, visit [conference.lds.org](http://conference.lds.org).

Eventually, the lights sparked back on and bathed the room with light. Harriet and I looked at each other, our cheeks wet with tears.

In the midst of great darkness, these beautiful, wonderful Saints had filled this Church building and our souls with light.

It was a profoundly moving moment for us—one Harriet and I will never forget.

From “The Hope of God’s Light,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2013, 76.

## QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- How can you open your eyes to the hope of God’s light?
- How can following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ help you to walk in His light?
- What changes do you need to make to feel the light of the gospel more fully?

Consider writing your thoughts in your journal or discussing them with others.

Additional resources on this topic: *Gospel Principles* (2009), “The Holy Ghost,” 31–33; Gospel Topics on LDS.org, “Hope,” “Holy Ghost”; Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Infinite Power of Hope,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 21–24.

## PROPHETIC WORDS ON HUMAN FRAILTY

“In this Church, what we know will always trump what we do not know. And remember, in this world, everyone is to walk by faith.

“So be kind regarding human frailty—your own as well as that of those who serve with you in a Church led by volunteer, mortal men and women. Except in the case of His only perfect Begotten Son, imperfect people are all God has ever had to work with. That must be terribly frustrating to Him, but He deals with it. So should we. . . . So be patient and kind and forgiving.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Lord, I Believe,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2013, 94.

## THE SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE

“The commandment to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force today. Thus, marriage between a man and a woman is the authorized channel through which premortal spirits enter mortality. Complete sexual abstinence before marriage and total fidelity within marriage protect the sanctity of this sacred channel.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “We Believe in Being Chaste,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2013, 42.

## ANSWERS FOR YOU

Each conference, prophets and apostles give inspired answers to questions Church members may have. Use your conference issue or visit [conference.lds.org](http://conference.lds.org) to find answers to these questions:

- How do I stay strong when I am mocked for my beliefs? See Robert D. Hales, “Stand Strong in Holy Places,” 48.
- What can I do if someone I love is making bad choices? See Henry B. Eyring, “Come unto Me,” 22; and Richard G. Scott, “For Peace at Home,” 29.
- Why is marriage between a man and a woman so important? See David A. Bednar, “We Believe in Being Chaste,” 41; L. Whitney Clayton, “Marriage: Watch and Learn,” 83; and L. Tom Perry, “Obedience to Law Is Liberty,” 86.
- What is the purpose of the priesthood? See M. Russell Ballard, “This Is My Work and Glory,” 18.
- Why do we need a church? See Quentin L. Cook, “Personal Peace: The Reward of Righteousness,” 32; and D. Todd Christofferson, “Redemption,” 109.

# THE PRIESTHOOD MUST BE USED WORTHILY

Heavenly Father gives a portion of His power and authority to worthy male members of the Church. This delegated authority is called the priesthood. Those who hold the priesthood are authorized to act in the Lord’s name in leading His Church, teaching the gospel, blessing the sick, and performing the sacred ordinances necessary for salvation.

The priesthood must be used worthily because, as the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith, “the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and . . .

the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness” (D&C 121:36). Thus, there is a difference between the authority and the power of the priesthood. “Priesthood authority, which is the authorization to act in God’s name, . . . is given by the laying on of hands. The power of the priesthood comes only when those who exercise it are worthy and acting in accordance with God’s will.”<sup>1</sup>

Because the priesthood is God’s power, He sets the standards of worthiness for its use and reveals

those standards to His prophets and apostles. Priesthood holders become worthy by repenting of their sins and living in harmony with the gospel and commandments of Jesus Christ. The companionship of the Holy Ghost in their lives can help them know of their worthiness. ■

For more information, see Doctrine and Covenants 121:34–46; Thomas S. Monson, “Priesthood Power,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2011, 66–69.

**NOTE**

1. M. Russell Ballard, “This Is My Work and Glory,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2013, 18–19.

## SAFEGUARD AND LIVE WORTHY OF THE PRIESTHOOD



“Our behavior in public must be above reproach. Our behavior in private is even more important. It must clear the standard set by the Lord. We cannot indulge in sin, let alone try to cover our sins. We cannot gratify our pride. We cannot partake of the vanity of unrighteous

ambition. We cannot exercise control, or dominion, or compulsion upon our wives or children, or any others in any degree of unrighteousness.

“If we do any of these things, the powers of heaven are withdrawn. The Spirit of the Lord is grieved. The very virtue of our priesthood is nullified. Its authority is lost. . . .

“ . . . [The priesthood] serves as a

guide by which to live our lives. In its fulness, its authority reaches beyond the veil of death into the eternities that lie ahead.

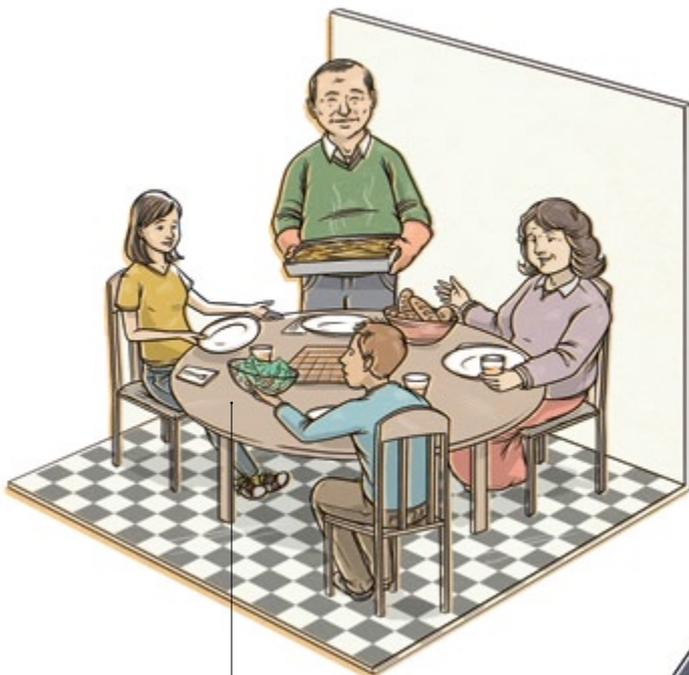
“There is nothing else to compare with it in all this world. Safeguard it, cherish it, love it, live worthy of it.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), “Personal Worthiness to Exercise the Priesthood,” *Liahona*, July 2002, 58, 61; *Ensign*, May 2002, 52, 59.

Priesthood holders gain power in the priesthood through faith and obedience:



*Worship in the temple.*



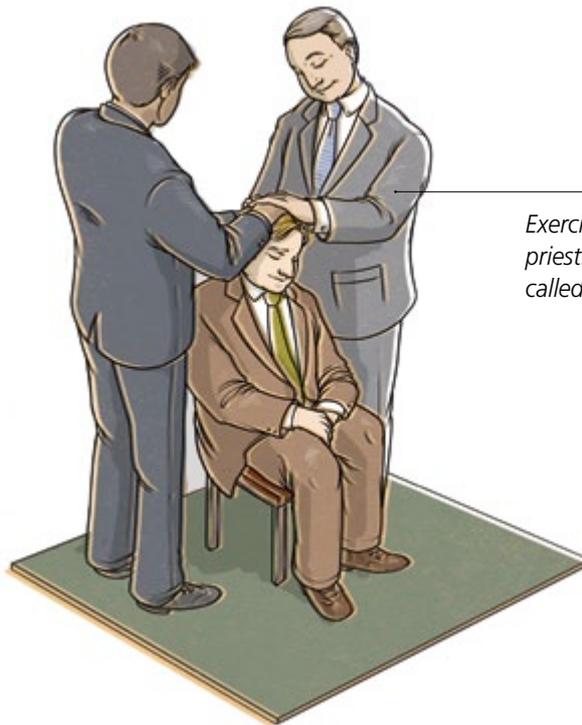
*Treat your wife, children, and others kindly.*



*Serve faithfully in your calling.*



*Take the sacrament worthily.*



*Exercise the priesthood when called upon.*

## THE LORD NEVER SHOUTED AT ME

Name withheld

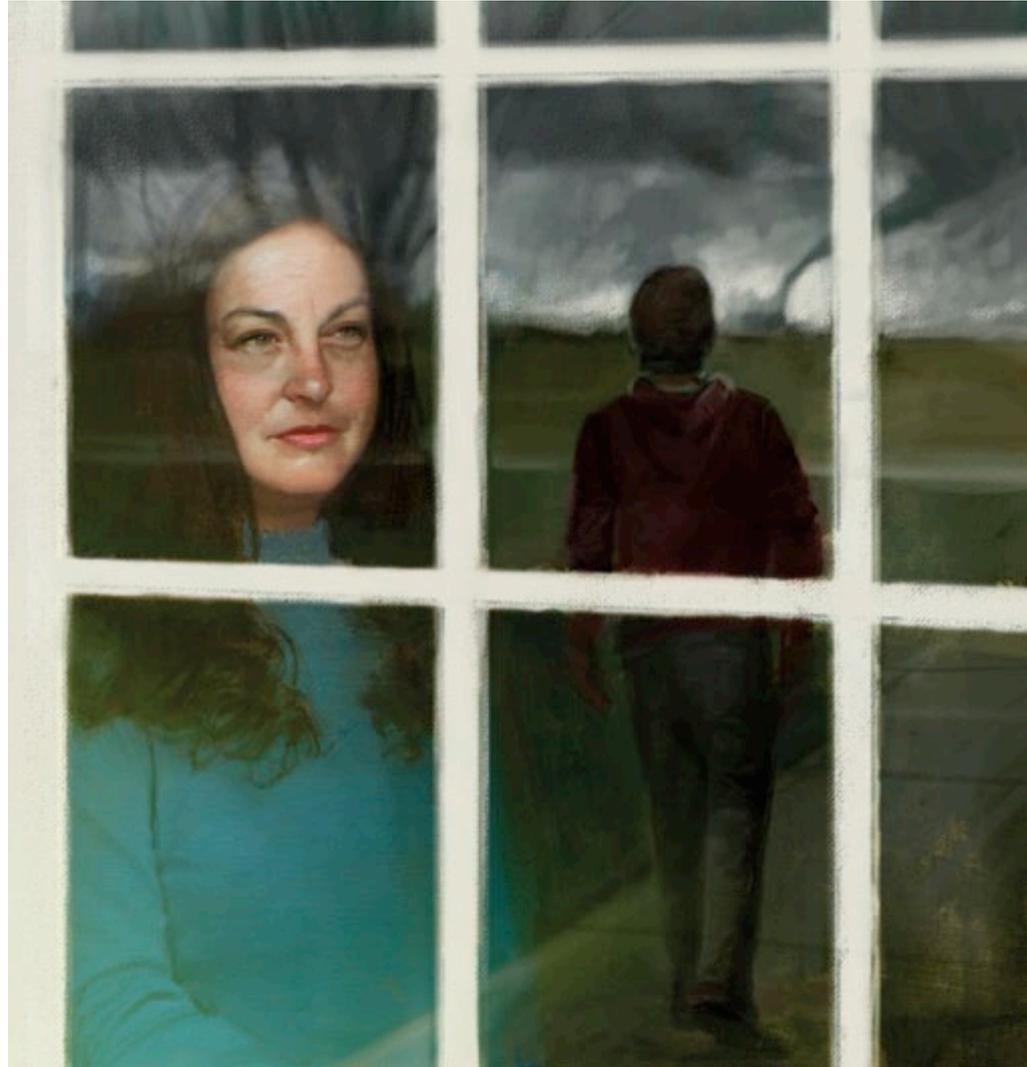
*I felt helpless watching our eldest son fall into Satan's traps, and I often communicated my fear by becoming angry. I had to change myself instead of trying to change my son.*

When our four children were young, my husband and I assumed that if we set good examples and brought them up in the gospel with lots of love and consistency, they would certainly not depart from that path.

One summer day we were forced to abandon that assumption. Our eldest son, about 14 years old, went swimming with his friends. When I came to the swimming pool with the younger children, I thought I saw him with a cigarette in his hands. I was worried, so I spoke to him about it later. He simply said I was mistaken. Unfortunately, that was the beginning of his lies.

Over time he distanced himself from us more and more. He was no longer approachable and often became angry without provocation. Alcohol, drugs, foul language, and a host of lies were added to the cigarettes. And his behavior toward the family became insufferable.

At first we tried to restrict his activities in order to protect him, but that just brought more resistance. Discipline had no effect. When I



reproached him and challenged him to change, our discussions often became loud arguments that brought more distance between us.

Our fears for our eldest son were hard on my husband and me. We tried to find guidance through prayer, but I felt helpless watching my eldest son choose such a dangerous path. As we

prayed, we felt guided to allow our son more space instead of controlling him with stricter rules. This seemed extremely counterproductive and counterintuitive, but all our previous attempts to stop his behavior had been unsuccessful. So we chose to punish or restrict him only when his actions directly affected our family life.



## RECOGNIZE THE GOOD IN OTHERS

“I offer some final thoughts for those

who love a family member who is not making good choices. That can challenge our patience and endurance. We need to trust in the Lord and in His timing that a positive response to our prayers and rescue efforts can occur. We do all that we can to serve, to bless, and to submissively acknowledge God’s will in all things. . . . With faith we can know that this straying loved one is not abandoned but is in the watchcare of a loving Savior.

“Recognize the good in others, not their stains. At times a stain needs appropriate attention to be cleansed, but always build on his or her virtues.”

**Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “For Peace at Home,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2013, 31.**

Despite trying to follow the Lord’s counsel, we found the situation worsened. I struggled to overcome my self-doubts and discouragement. My husband and I tried to be consistent with family home evening and family prayer, but I was overwhelmed with guilt as I remembered every time we had fallen short and every time I had behaved wrongly toward our son. I cried a lot, slept little, and was sometimes so physically exhausted that I only just managed to function.

Family life as we had known it hardly existed anymore. Family home evenings regularly ended in chaos and arguments. I especially was impatient with my loved ones and loudly let them know.

My husband and I recognized that we couldn’t let our family be ground down by the situation. We decided to continue following the counsel of the Lord and the prophets, so we made an effort to hold spontaneous, informal family home evenings with the children who were willing. But I still couldn’t accept that our eldest son was caught in Satan’s traps. With prayer, fasting, and hope—all that seemed left to us—we cast our burden on the Lord and trusted Him.

The problems got worse. At one particularly difficult time, I asked my husband for a priesthood blessing. I hoped for words of comfort and

encouragement. But the Lord knew my true needs. I was admonished for arguing so loudly with my son. The Lord made me aware that He had never once shouted at me—but I shouted at my children all the time.

In that blessing, I was additionally counseled that I needed to talk to my son about my worries for him instead of reproaching him. I realized that my anger and criticism had actually been a manifestation of my fear for him. I was constantly attacking him, and he defended himself any way he could. I considered ways to change my behavior.

At this time, I was serving as an institute teacher. I found it wasn’t difficult to deal calmly and considerately with the youth at church because I did not have to struggle with the emotions of a mother.

I tried to look at my son not with the eyes of a concerned mother but as an outsider. This strategy, and much prayer and fasting, helped me to rein in my emotions and see my son—who was now almost 18—with new eyes. I was once again able to see his good qualities. I managed to express my feelings and worries to him sincerely and without becoming anxious.

This became a turning point in our relationship. My son and I discussed many things, and I became able to let him bear the consequences of his

behavior on his own. My husband and I merely counseled him and advised him of ways he could solve his problems for himself.

I now know what it means to entrust my children to the Lord. He knows them better than I do. I have learned not to feel accountable for all my children’s decisions. My husband and I discovered that the best help we could give our son was to turn to the Lord and trust in His will and counsel. ■



**By Elder David B. Haight (1906–2004)**

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

## WHAT DOES JESUS MEAN TO US TODAY?

*Elder David B. Haight was ordained an Apostle on January 8, 1976, and served in that quorum until his death in 2004. As an Assistant to the Council of the Twelve, he delivered this address in general conference on April 6, 1974. For the full text in English, see the May 1974 Ensign at [LDS.org](http://LDS.org).*

The Jesus I know and believe in is Jesus the Christ, the Son of God. This witness has been revealed to me by the blessing and influence of the Holy Ghost. I know that He is . . . the Creator of the world and all that is in it, that He is our Savior who loves each of us and who died on the cross for us, who teaches us compassion and forgiveness, the friend of all, healer of the sick, the giver of peace to all who will listen and believe.

Modern man must not be led astray from ancient and latter-day truths—truths and spiritual experiences that occurred when prophets walked and talked with Jesus. What did Jesus mean to the ancient apostles? What did He mean to Peter?

Mark, writing of the events on the morning of the Resurrection, states that Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James were directed by the [two angels] they encountered as they entered the sepulcher, “Go . . . tell his disciples and Peter” (Mark 16:7). They were directed specifically to inform Peter. Peter and John hurried to the sepulcher. Peter entered, saw the neatly folded linen clothes and the handkerchief that had been about His head. Peter was now a personal witness of this great event.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter . . . preached of the glorious gospel and testified of Jesus of Nazareth. People were pricked in their hearts and asked, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). And Peter, with that newly developed depth of conviction, replied, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). Three thousand souls believed and were baptized. They felt of the spirit and power of our Lord’s senior Apostle. Could we ever doubt what Jesus meant to Peter?

I am always strengthened by the fervor and magnitude of John’s conviction. There was never any doubt. He testified: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,

and the Word was God. . . . All things were made by him. . . . In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not” (John 1:1, 3–5). . . .

It may be beyond our own comprehension to realize what Jesus meant to Nephi when the resurrected Christ appeared on the western continent, saying, “Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.” . . .

Then Nephi writes, “The multitude went forth, and thrust their hands into his side, and did feel the prints of the nails in his hands and in his feet” (3 Nephi 11:10, 15). . . . They had been in His presence, and they could testify.

What did Jesus mean to the boy Joseph Smith? The appearance of God the Father and Jesus Christ to the boy prophet in modern times is described in his own words: “I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun. . . . When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*” (Joseph Smith—History 1:16–17). . . .

Spiritual knowledge and spiritual experiences must not and need not disappear from the mind of modern man, because the testimonies of ancient and modern prophets have been recorded for man's own benefit, and today believers testify of these truths. Modern man must replace uncertainties and doubt with a desire to know more of Jesus.

It is our responsibility and glorious opportunity to bear constant testimony of Jesus the Christ. We must testify to

the world of His godship, the actuality of His birth in the flesh of both divine and mortal parentage. He was selected to perform the essential mission of the Restoration and Redemption. This He did—He was crucified and rose from the grave, thus making it possible for every human being to be resurrected through this marvelous Atonement of Jesus, saint and sinner alike.

All can be placed on the pathway to eternal progression. Everyone who accepts Him and is repentant receives

forgiveness of his past sins and the opportunity to gain exaltation. "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Could the mind of man possibly develop a more noble concept for the destiny of man? Jesus Christ is the central figure.

To the question "What does Jesus mean to modern man?" I testify that He means everything. ■

*Punctuation, capitalization, and citations standardized.*



***Modern man must not be led astray from ancient and latter-day truths—truths and spiritual experiences that occurred when prophets walked and talked with Jesus.***

# NEWS OF THE CHURCH

Visit [news.lds.org](http://news.lds.org) for more Church news and events.

## New Visiting Teaching Topics Begin in October

Beginning in October 2013 the Relief Society Visiting Teaching Messages will focus on the divine mission of Jesus Christ and His many roles and attributes.

As we read in *Daughters in my Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society*, “When Jesus Christ was on the earth, He showed us the way we should live.”<sup>1</sup> By studying and focusing on the roles and attributes of the Savior, the sisters in the Church will learn to be like Him<sup>2</sup> and will be able to discuss with the sisters they serve how the teachings and example of the Savior can influence their lives.

The Lord showed us how to minister—how to watch over, strengthen, and teach one another. His was a ministry to individuals, one by one.<sup>3</sup> Visiting

teaching is our opportunity to follow His example.

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, testified that “visiting teaching is part of the Lord’s plan to provide help for people all over the world. . . . ‘He set a pattern in place.’”<sup>4</sup> As visiting teachers, we also remember President Thomas S. Monson’s counsel: “We are the Lord’s hands here upon the earth, with the mandate to serve and to lift His children. He is dependent upon each of us.”<sup>5</sup> ■

### NOTES

1. *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 105.
2. See Moroni 7:48.
3. See *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 105; *Handbook 2: Administering the Church*, 9.5.
4. *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 110.
5. *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 112.

## One Billion Records Now on FamilySearch

By R. Scott Lloyd  
*Church News*

Volunteers around the world indexing (digitizing) the Church’s vast collection of genealogical records collectively reached a major milestone on April 19, 2013. On that date they attained one billion searchable records added to the Church’s FamilySearch website in less than seven years.

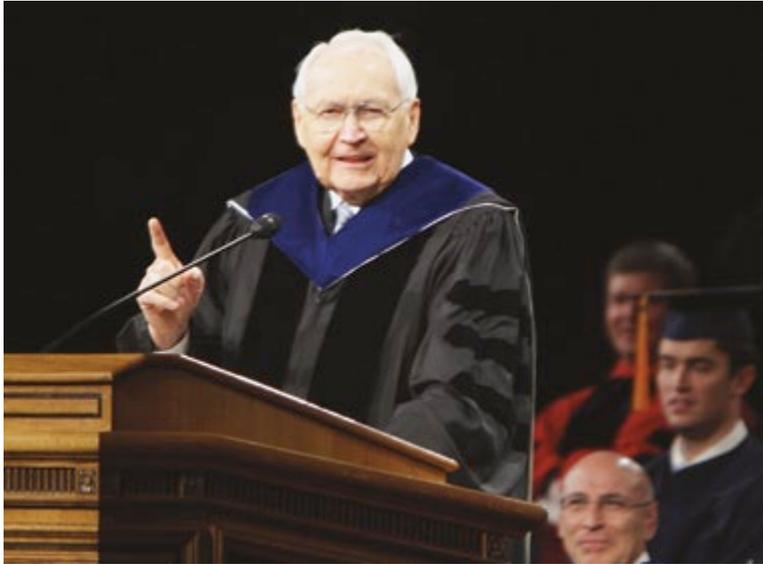
Volunteers have been extracting or indexing records in earnest since 1978, but in September 2006 the Family History Department launched a major innovation inviting virtually anyone anywhere to log on to the site and sign up to participate in the indexing project.

“The documents are drawn primarily from a collection of 2.4 million rolls of microfilm containing photographic images of historical documents from 110 countries and principalities,” explains a wiki entry on the FamilySearch site. “The documents include census records, birth and death certificates, marriage licenses, military and property records, and other vital records maintained by local, state, and national governments.” ■



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PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY D. ALBRED



**Elder Perry Tells University Graduates to Keep Life Balanced**

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke at commencement exercises for Brigham Young University In Provo, Utah, USA, in April 2013. He spoke of the need for finding balance in life and emphasized the need to provide time for family, time for work, time for study, time for service, time for self, and especially time for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

He counseled the graduates to live providently. “One of the most important lessons you will ever learn is the security and peace that comes from living within your means,” he said.

He also stressed the importance of establishing a Christ-centered home. “Daily prayer and scripture study should be a part of every Latter-day Saint home,” he said. “Make the gospel of Jesus Christ a vital, active part of your life.”

**Elder Nelson Visits Asia North Area**

From February 23 to March 3, 2013, Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles visited the Asia North Area. Elder Nelson said that no matter where he goes in the world, his message is the same. “We are here to teach and testify of the Lord Jesus Christ and His gospel restored,” he told members in the area. “Ours is a message of peace and joy, of strengthening families, bonding husband and wife, children to their parents, and people to their ancestors . . . that they can all enjoy eternal life in the presence of God when their sojourn on earth is over.”

In addition to meeting with priesthood leaders and members throughout the area and a special district for military personnel in Okinawa, Elder Nelson also met with two local government officials in Japan.

**Conference Is Coming**

General conference is approaching once more, the time when Church leaders share with members the word of the Lord. As the Lord said, “Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38). Here is an experience from the April 2013 general conference:

**Conference on the Sea of Galilee**

Some 60 students from the Brigham Young University Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies gathered on the shore of the Sea of Galilee last April to watch the Sunday morning session of general conference. A live Internet broadcast of the meeting was projected on the side of a shed located a short distance from the water. The students were in Galilee as part of a 10-day trip to the region. They recognized and appreciated the significance of the event.

Jennie Smithson, one of the students, said that it was a wonder “to be instructed by latter-day prophets and apostles while imagining ancient apostles being instructed on these exact same shores by Christ Himself.” ■

***View from the BYU Jerusalem Center.***



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# *my* Prayers *of* Gratitude

*As we struggled financially, I felt that we had so many needs to pray for. Could I really focus my prayers on just gratitude?*



By Christie Skrinak

Years ago my husband and I purchased a home we adored and spent a lot of time and money fixing it up. Eighteen months later, the economy took a dive. We had to spend our hard-earned savings on a hefty mortgage and a slew of unforeseen expenses.

Months of trials and financial hardships went by. We hit a particularly difficult month of home and auto repairs, medical bills, and a decrease in pay. Our savings quickly disappeared.

I remember praying, asking over and over again for the things we needed. Consumed by stress, I found it difficult to care properly for our children and our family's needs as I was falling into depression and despair. Still, I continued to pray, seeking comfort and knowing prayer to be the anchor keeping me from falling further into darkness.

After months of praying for help, I began thinking of ways to pray more fervently. The Spirit brought to my mind counsel from priesthood leaders and scriptures that taught the importance of expressing gratitude to Heavenly Father. These promptings helped me realize that I needed to express deeper appreciation for my blessings and ask less for the things my family and I needed. I decided that I would try for one week to let go of my daily pleadings and express only gratitude in my prayers.

It was difficult. I felt my family had so many needs. I felt as though I was letting my family down by not asking for the blessings we so desperately needed. How would the Lord bless me when I didn't ask?

Despite my nervousness about it, I tried. I soon realized that my prayers were no longer monotonous pleadings. I regained the ability to recognize the needs of others and see beyond my problems to the blessings that were still mine. My gratitude was drawing me closer to the Savior, comforting me in ways I could not have received otherwise.

A scripture kept coming to mind: "If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little

faith?" (Matthew 6:30). This scripture humbled me as I continued to pray. Through gratitude, I was learning more about true humility.

As the week progressed, my prayers changed from "I thank Thee for food, clothing, and shelter" to "I thank Thee for the family that Thou hast preserved and kept well, for the protection Thou dost continue to afford us. I thank Thee for the provisions Thou wilt continue to bless us with." I also remember praying, "I thank Thee for our dependence upon Thee, for Thy mindfulness of us, and for the pathway Thou art preparing for us to escape this bondage, whatever it may be." Somewhere along the line, my prayers became prayers of not just gratitude, not just humility, but of faith also. Without asking for blessings, I was expressing faith that the Lord would provide for us, and my faith was growing exponentially.

During these prayers, my thoughts were often drawn to the sacrifice of the early Saints, and I would ask myself what I was willing to sacrifice. A few more days passed, and we put our beloved home up for sale. The real estate market was severely depressed, but amazingly we were blessed to sell our home. Though we took a significant loss—as we had expected—our family was now in a position to begin building a more firm temporal foundation.

Still, selling our home in such difficult times is not the miracle that I take with me from this experience. The miracle is the faith I developed and the understanding I gained. President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, declared gratitude to be a "saving principle."<sup>1</sup> I think I experienced something of what he was talking about as I turned my heart and prayers to Heavenly Father, receiving comfort, peace, and guidance. My newfound testimony of gratitude is that it inspires humility, humility encourages faith, and faith brings miracles. ■

*The author lives in Nevada, USA.*

**NOTE**

1. See James E. Faust, "Gratitude as a Saving Principle," *Ensign*, May 1990, 85–87.



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

# The Justice and



*I know that we will be with the Savior again, that if we are faithful to Him, we will stand free—unfettered and unencumbered—and that we will recognize in the marks in His flesh something of His bondage and imprisonment and dying sacrifice for us.*

# Mercy of God

It was unlike any other commencement or baccalaureate exercise I had ever attended or in which I had ever participated. There were 44 graduates, all male. They did not have traditional academic robes or caps or gowns. Each man wore a light blue denim shirt and dark blue denim trousers.

The ceremony was not held in a field house or a stadium or even a lovely auditorium. It was held in a modest interdenominational chapel at the Utah State Prison. The graduating class had successfully completed a year's course of Bible study, which was sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints but open to all who cared to participate.

The opening prayer was given by a young man who looked more like a mere boy. He was frightened to death, but he gave a prayer from his heart. He was in prison for 10 years to life on an armed

robbery charge. The closing prayer was given by a man who was 45 or 50 years old and who looked as if he could have been somebody's uncle. He was in for a life term on second-degree murder.

A young man who had been released

from prison had come back to get his certificate and to encourage his colleagues. He said, "Guys, the perspective in prison is really bad. It really looks better on the outside. Try to remember that." Then he turned to the outsiders, to the friends and families who had come,

and said, "You people are a light in a dark place. If it were not for love like yours, we would not be able to get from where we are to where we need to be."

When the service was over, the inmate who conducted said, with some emotion in his voice and a little mist in his eyes, "This is the most auspicious occasion of our year. It's better than Christmas. It's better than



*Let us go to the place of penitence—to the bishop or to the Lord or to those we have offended or to those who have offended us.*



Thanksgiving. It's even better than Mother's Day. It's better because we're enlightened, and that's as close as we come to being free."

Then the gates clanged shut behind my wife and me. That night we went home, and I confess I couldn't sleep. That experience haunted me. In the early hours of that morning, I had feelings and thoughts and a response to imprisonment and freedom (and their relationship to enlightenment and love) that I never had before.

### **The Justice of God**

One impression I had that night is that God is just. Alma said: "Do ye suppose that mercy can rob justice? I say unto you, Nay; not one whit. If so, God would cease to be God" (Alma 42:25). The Apostle Paul said to the Galatians, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

One of my thoughts that followed is that Paul really meant we reap in kind. It came to me again that if we sow thistles, we don't really plan to get strawberries. If we sow hate, we don't really expect to receive an abundance of love. We get back in kind that which we sow.

Then another thought came as I remembered those men in their blue: it's one thing to reap in kind, but we reap, somehow, always in greater quantity. We sow a little thistle, and we get a lot of thistle—years and years of it, big bushes and branches of it. We never get rid of it unless we cut it out. If we sow a little bit of hate, before we know it we've reaped a lot of hate—smoldering and festering and belligerent and finally warring, malicious hate.

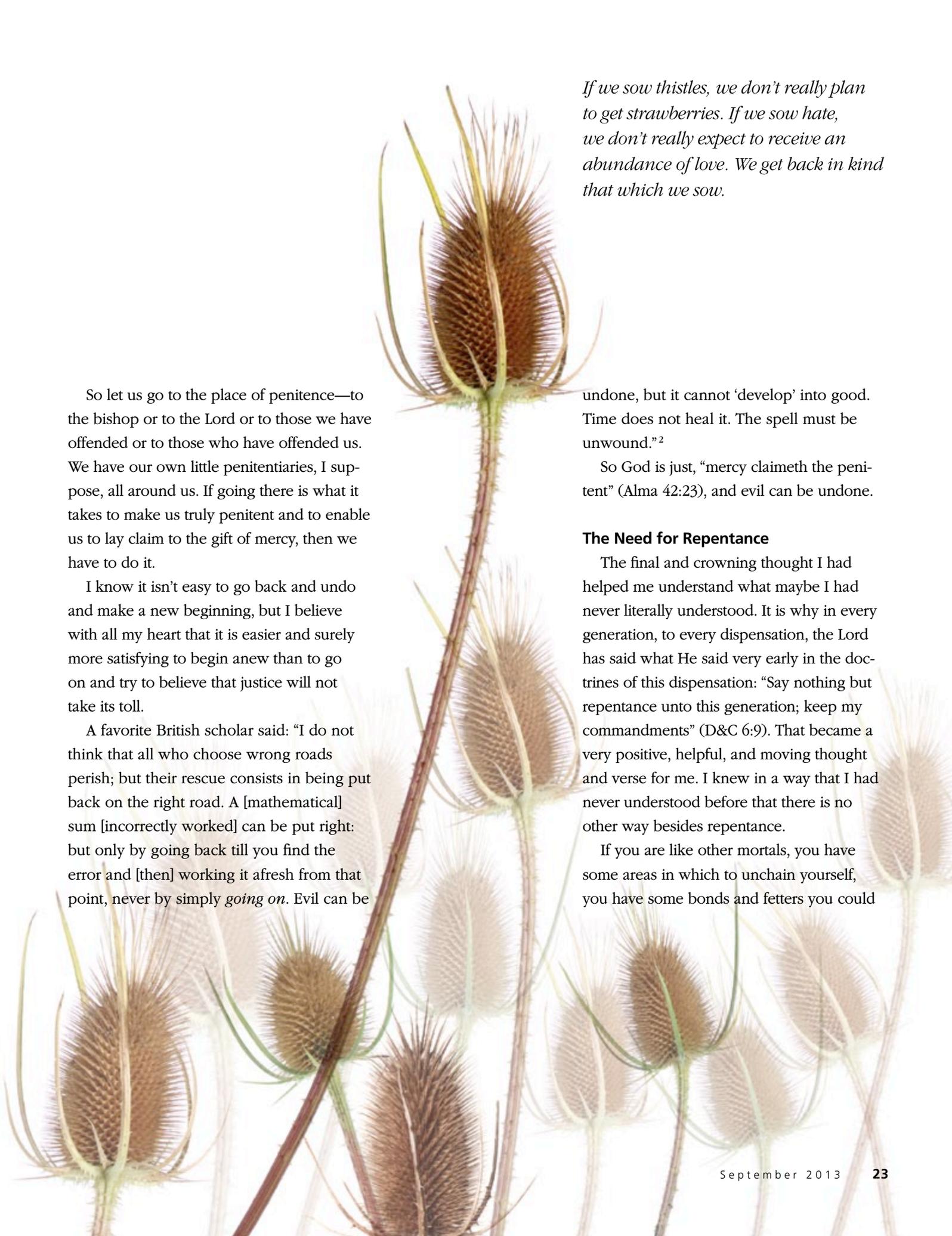
Then, ironically, I had a comforting

realization that my first thought—that God is just—wasn't as painful as it sounded. However frightening it may be that all of us have sinned, however frightening it may be to contemplate a just God, it is infinitely more frightening to me to contemplate an unjust God.

A basic principle of Latter-day Saint doctrine is that we have to know that God is just in order to go forward. One of God's attributes is justice, and we would not have the faith—because of fear—to live righteously or to love better or to repent more readily if somehow we didn't think that justice would count for us, if somehow we thought God would change His mind and decide there was another set of rules.<sup>1</sup> Because we know that God is just and would cease to be God if He weren't so, we have the faith to go forward, knowing that we will not be the victims of whimsy or caprice or a bad day or a bad joke. That assurance is very encouraging.

### **The Mercy of God**

Then I had another thought. How grateful I was that because God is who He is, He has to be a merciful God also. In Alma 42, after Alma had established with Corianton that God had to be just, he declared that that same God would have to be merciful as well and that mercy would claim the *penitent*. Now, that thought was different to me because I had just been to the penitentiary. This thought gave me encouragement: Mercy could claim the penitent. I decided that if those men had to go to the *penitentiary* to take advantage of the gift of mercy—and if by going there, they found the gospel of Jesus Christ or the scriptures or the Atonement—then their imprisonment was worth it.



*If we sow thistles, we don't really plan to get strawberries. If we sow hate, we don't really expect to receive an abundance of love. We get back in kind that which we sow.*

So let us go to the place of penitence—to the bishop or to the Lord or to those we have offended or to those who have offended us. We have our own little penitentiaries, I suppose, all around us. If going there is what it takes to make us truly penitent and to enable us to lay claim to the gift of mercy, then we have to do it.

I know it isn't easy to go back and undo and make a new beginning, but I believe with all my heart that it is easier and surely more satisfying to begin anew than to go on and try to believe that justice will not take its toll.

A favorite British scholar said: "I do not think that all who choose wrong roads perish; but their rescue consists in being put back on the right road. A [mathematical] sum [incorrectly worked] can be put right: but only by going back till you find the error and [then] working it afresh from that point, never by simply *going on*. Evil can be

undone, but it cannot 'develop' into good. Time does not heal it. The spell must be unwound."<sup>2</sup>

So God is just, "mercy claimeth the penitent" (Alma 42:23), and evil can be undone.

### **The Need for Repentance**

The final and crowning thought I had helped me understand what maybe I had never literally understood. It is why in every generation, to every dispensation, the Lord has said what He said very early in the doctrines of this dispensation: "Say nothing but repentance unto this generation; keep my commandments" (D&C 6:9). That became a very positive, helpful, and moving thought and verse for me. I knew in a way that I had never understood before that there is no other way besides repentance.

If you are like other mortals, you have some areas in which to unchain yourself, you have some bonds and fetters you could



be free of, and you have some sins you could repent of. May I isolate just one example: the bondage of ignorance.

What seems to me the supreme initial bond in our lives is simply not to know enough. We learn little clichés early in our lives. Two of them are “Ignorance is bliss” and “What I don’t know won’t hurt me.” Let me say with all the intensity I have that nothing will hurt you *more* than what you don’t know. I believe that we will be indicted for the resulting bondage that we incur and that we will serve some sentence in this life or the next for that which we fail to learn.

Within the tenets of our faith we learn that we cannot be saved in ignorance (see D&C 131:6), that what we learn in this life rises with us in the resurrection (see D&C 130:18), that we have so much the advantage in the world to come if we are knowledgeable (see D&C 130:19), that we are saved in proportion to that which we have

learned,<sup>3</sup> that light and truth forsake the evil one (see D&C 93:37), that the glory of God is intelligence (see D&C 93:36), and on and on. At one time early in this dispensation, the entire Church, collectively, was indicted. The Lord says in section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

“And I now give unto you a commandment to beware concerning yourselves, to give diligent heed to the *words* of eternal life.

“For you shall live by every *word* that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God.

“For the *word* of the Lord is truth, and whatsoever is truth is light, and whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ” (verses 43–45; emphasis added).

The beginning of coming ultimately into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is where section 84 takes us, is the *word*.

“If ye abide in me, and my *words* abide in you,” the Lord declared in His ministry, “ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7; emphasis added).

*I know it isn't easy to go back and undo and start again and make a new beginning, but I believe with all my heart that it is easier and surely more satisfying to begin anew than to go on and try to believe that justice will not take its toll.*

## The Importance of Freedom

If we had to pick a theme for our existence—the existence we know now, not our past in premortality and not what lies ahead—that theme would have to have something to do with the quest for true freedom. We know that an important part of the great Council in Heaven was spent in teaching us how we might progress toward complete freedom. The Father’s course was one of agency and choice—the freedom to err but ultimately the freedom to succeed. As many safeguards as possible and all the powers of the universe were brought to bear to guarantee our freedom to exercise our agency and return to our celestial home. These safeguards include the fulness of gospel truths and the Atonement of the Savior Jesus Christ.

We really do experience bondage and prison when we are not free. I almost wish I had been imprisoned sometime in my life so I could make this statement very dramatic. I wish I could talk like Peter or Paul and have the angels come to startle the guards and open the prison gates (see Acts 12:5–11; see also 16:25–26) or like Alma and Amulek and have the prison walls crumble (see Alma 14:23–29) or like Joseph Smith, who could write what may be the most sublime scriptural literature of our dispensation out of the very heart and center of a dingy, dismal, dreary prison (see D&C 121–23). We thank God that we live in such a time as we do, when the President and prophet of our Church does not need to live in fear of imprisonment and when we are not, at least politically and physically, required to go into bondage or into slavery. But there are other kinds of bonds and there are other kinds of

prisons in our lives that we need to destroy. All that we came here to do, we need to do.

I believe with all my heart that if we can repent of our sins, if we can be charitable with the sins of others, if we can take courage toward our circumstances and want to do something about them, the living Father of us all will reach down and, in the scriptural term, “bear [us] up as on eagles’ wings” (D&C 124:18).

I have been borne on eagles’ wings. I know with all my heart that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ. I know that Jesus leads this Church, that it is His Church, that He is the chief cornerstone, around which the foundation of living apostles and prophets is laid. I know that we will be with the Savior again, that if we are faithful to Him, we will stand free—unfettered and unencumbered—and that we will recognize in the marks in His flesh something of His bondage and imprisonment and dying sacrifice for us. I know that we must repent of our sins and that God has to be just, but I take great delight in the scriptures and in the words of the living prophets that where sin abounds, grace may much more abound and that “mercy claimeth the penitent.” ■

*From a fireside address, “Borne Upon Eagles’ Wings,” delivered on June 2, 1974, at Brigham Young University. For the full text in English, go to [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).*

For more on this topic, see D. Todd Christofferson, “Redemption,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2013, 109; and Craig A. Cardon, “The Savior Wants to Forgive,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2013, 15.

### NOTES

1. See *Lectures on Faith* (1985), 50–54.
2. C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce* (1946), viii.
3. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 266.

*Joseph Smith wrote what may be the most sublime scriptural literature of our dispensation out of the very heart and center of a dingy, dismal, and dreary prison.*



# Christlike Mercy

*The mortal ministry of the Savior provides us with practical examples of how we can be merciful.*

By Randy L. Daybell

When the Prophet Joseph Smith and Martin Harris lost 116 pages of the Book of Mormon translation, they received a severe rebuke from the Lord (see D&C 3:6–8, 12–13). Joseph lost the privilege of translating for a time and grieved over his disobedience.<sup>1</sup> After he humbled himself and petitioned the Lord for forgiveness, the Savior assured Joseph, “Remember, God is merciful; . . . and thou art still chosen, and art again called to the work” (D&C 3:10).

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, taught: “Christ is our exemplar. In His teachings [on mercy] as in His life, He showed us the way. He forgave the wicked, the vulgar, and those who sought to hurt and to do Him harm.”<sup>2</sup>

The scriptures show that mercifulness is one of the Savior’s supernal qualities. Jesus taught, “Blessed are the merciful” (Matthew 5:7), and “Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful” (Luke 6:36).<sup>3</sup> Mercy is defined as compassion and includes feelings and acts of sympathy, kindness, forgiveness, and love. Our capacity for mercy is often brought forth when we become aware of the unusual and distressing circumstances of others. Jesus Christ demonstrated an infinite capacity for mercy. He “could not look into men’s faces without being pained by their confusion, their perplexity, and their misery. . . . Whenever he saw men fainting and scattered abroad like sheep having no shepherd, his heart was moved with compassion on them.”<sup>4</sup>

The following principles from accounts in the New Testament illustrate how the Savior extended mercy and how we may choose to be merciful to others.

## **Jesus showed mercy by not blaming others.**

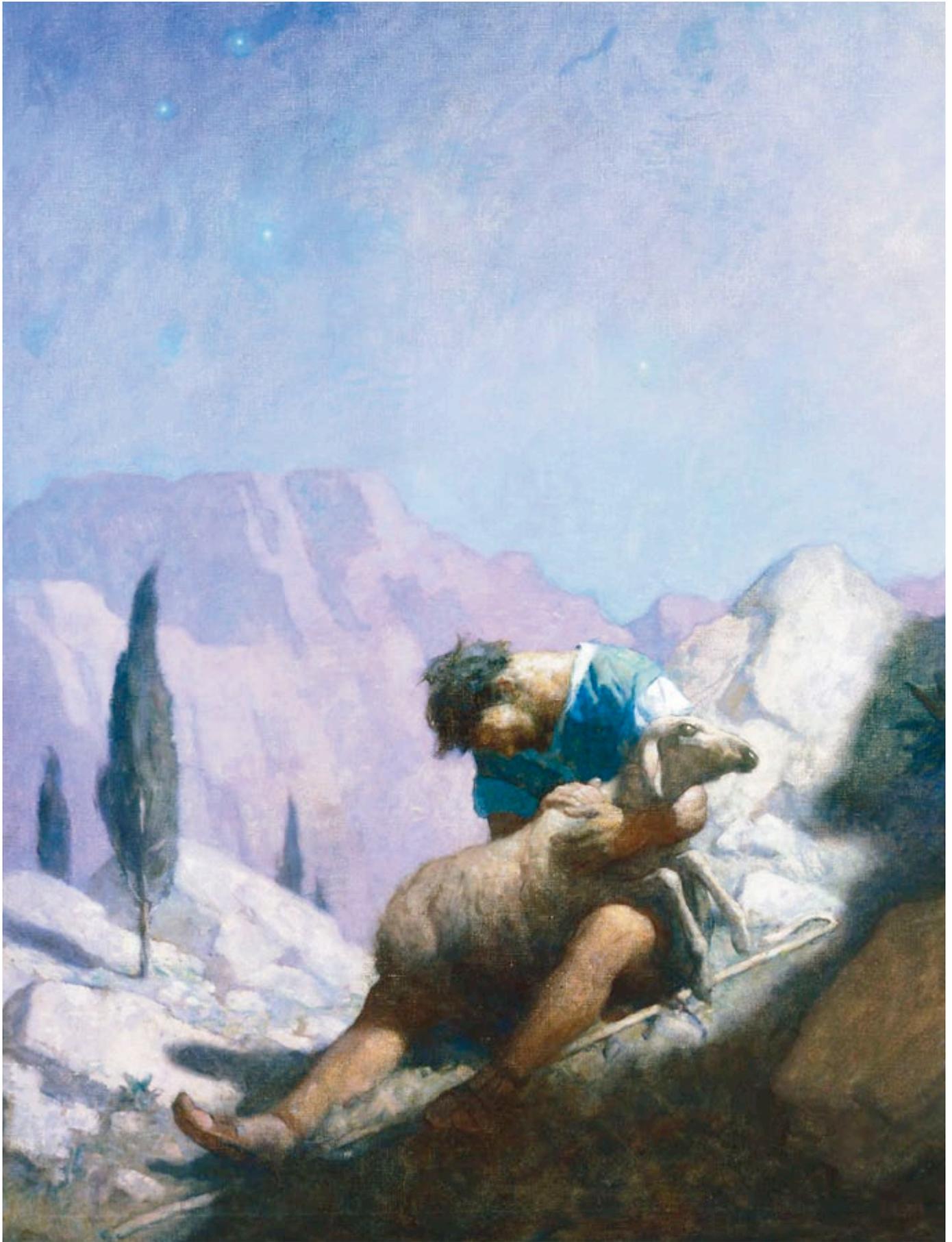
At the Last Supper, hours before the betrayal, Judas Iscariot ate the Passover meal with the other disciples. When Jesus announced, “One of you shall betray me,” the disciples, including Judas, asked Him, “Is it I?” (Matthew 26:21–22). Jesus responded to Judas, “That thou doest, do quickly” (John 13:27). Then at the entrance to the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus and Judas again met. Judas said, “Hail, master” and greeted the Savior with a kiss (Matthew 26:49), to which Jesus asked, “Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?” (Luke 22:48). Jesus’s reply, while not relieving Judas of the consequences of his actions, does not lay blame upon him but rather appeals to Judas’s sense of right and wrong.

After Jesus had endured at the hands of Roman soldiers hours of imprisonment, beating, whipping, marching through the city, and carrying and being nailed to a cross, He mercifully looked upon His captors and pled, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

## **Jesus showed mercy by choosing to love rather than condemn.**

Early in His ministry, Jesus stopped to rest and refresh Himself at a well in Samaria during one of His journeys. A woman came to the well to draw water, and the Savior engaged her in conversation. She was astonished that He would speak with her, “for the Jews [had] no dealings with

*“Whenever [the Savior] saw men fainting and scattered abroad like sheep having no shepherd, his heart was moved with compassion on them.”*



the Samaritans.” But He overlooked the traditions that devalued her in others’ eyes. He taught her about the living water of the gospel, and He testified to her, “I that speak unto thee am [the Messiah].” (See John 4:3–39.)

During the closing days of His Perea ministry, Jesus passed through the city of Jericho on His way to Jerusalem. A short, wealthy man named Zacchaeus climbed a tree to get a look at the Savior as He walked by. Jesus noticed him and invited Himself over to Zacchaeus’s house. Some of Jesus’s disciples complained when they saw this, saying that Jesus “was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.” But Jesus saw the goodness in Zacchaeus and said, “This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.” (See Luke 19:1–10.)

### **Jesus showed mercy by giving others many opportunities to repent and be forgiven.**

Early in His ministry, Jesus returned to His hometown synagogue in the city of Nazareth, where He had worshipped many times. He read to those who had gathered for the Sabbath a prophecy from Isaiah about the Messiah. He then plainly testified to them that He was the Messiah. The people in the synagogue were “filled with wrath” at His words, and they “thrust him out of the city . . . that they might cast him” off a cliff. (See Luke 4:16–30.) Jesus’s lifelong friends had become His enemies. Some time later, Jesus ventured to Nazareth again and taught the people. And even though they were again offended by Him, He had tried twice to help them understand. (See Matthew 13:54–57.)

The leaders of the Jews were the Savior’s most bitter enemies. They sought to kill Him because He threatened their traditions. Yet Jesus repeatedly urged them to repent and be reconciled to the truth. The scriptures record at least 10 major sermons that Jesus directed specifically at these leaders where He identified their sins and invited them to repent.

### **Jesus showed mercy by avoiding bitterness.**

Jerusalem was the site of the Savior’s eventual suffering and death. He could have become resentful and angry

toward the city and its people; instead He often expressed sadness at their wickedness and refusal to repent.

Days before His Crucifixion, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. A multitude of followers rejoiced, placing their garments on the ground in front of Him and praising God. (See Luke 19:28–38.) But Jesus knew that the loyalty of the people in Jerusalem would not last. As He looked over the city during His last week, the Savior wept, saying, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, . . . and ye would not!” (Matthew 23:37; see also Luke 19:41–44).

Mere days later, the crowds turned on Jesus and clamored for His execution. As the Savior was led away to be crucified, “a great company of people, and of women, . . . also bewailed and lamented him.

“But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children” (Luke 23:27–28). Despite His public humiliation and intense personal suffering at the hands of the people in Jerusalem, the Savior did not become bitter against them and expressed sadness that they refused to repent.

### **Jesus showed mercy by helping others in need.**

During one of His journeys, Jesus approached the city of Nain, where He saw “a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow” (Luke 7:12). Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles describes the ensuing miracle in his book *Jesus the Christ*: “Our Lord looked with compassion upon the sorrowing mother, now bereft of both husband and son; and, feeling in Himself the pain of her grief, He said in a gentle tone, ‘Weep not.’ He touched the stretcher [and] . . . addressing the corpse He said: ‘Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.’ And the dead heard the voice of Him who is Lord of all, and immediately sat up and spoke. Graciously Jesus delivered the young man to his mother.”<sup>5</sup>

Jesus performed numerous other miracles for people during times of need. He healed a leper, calmed the sea,



**Jesus performed numerous miracles for people during times of need. He healed a leper, calmed the sea, and raised Jairus's daughter from the dead.**

and raised Jairus's daughter from the dead. He made whole an infirm man at the pool of Bethesda, healed a deaf man with a speech impediment, and cleansed 10 lepers. Each was in desperate need.

The Savior has marked the path to follow. We can strive to be merciful by not blaming others, choosing to love rather than condemn, giving others many opportunities to repent, avoiding bitterness, and helping others in need. The more we recognize and remember the many mercies extended to us through Jesus Christ, the more we will learn to extend mercy to others.

President Uchtdorf has counseled: "There is enough heartache and sorrow in this life without our adding to it through our own stubbornness, bitterness, and resentment. . . . We must let go of our grievances. . . . *That is the Lord's way.*"<sup>6</sup>

When the resurrected Lord visited the Nephites in the Americas, He taught the people. And when it came time for Him to leave, Jesus "cast his eyes round about again

on the multitude, and beheld they were in tears. . . .

"And he said unto them: Behold, my bowels are filled with compassion towards you.

"Have ye any that are sick among you? . . . Bring them hither and I will heal them, for I have compassion upon you; my bowels are *filled with mercy*" (3 Nephi 17:5–7; emphasis added). His mercy is infinite. He will bless us with the divine gift of mercy if we will come unto Him (see Moroni 10:32). ■

*The author lives in New York, USA.*

For more on this topic, see Dallin H. Oaks, "Followers of Christ," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2013, 96.

#### NOTES

1. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2011), 69–71.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "The Merciful Obtain Mercy," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2012, 76.
3. The Greek word in Matthew 5:7 is *eleémón*, meaning *compassionate*. The Greek word in Luke 6:36 is *oiktirmón*, also meaning *compassionate*.
4. Charles Edward Jefferson, *The Character of Jesus* (1908), 154.
5. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 33rd ed. (1977), 252.
6. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "The Merciful Obtain Mercy," 76–77.

# How Is Doctrine Established?

By LaRene Porter Gaunt  
Church Magazines

*Doctrine comes today as it did anciently—through divine revelation to prophets.*

As Latter-day Saints, “we believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God” (Articles of Faith 1:9).

Of the relationship between revelation and doctrine, Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “In the Church today, just as anciently, establishing the doctrine of Christ or correcting doctrinal deviations is a matter of divine revelation to those the Lord endows with apostolic authority.”<sup>1</sup>

Just as revelation is the means by which doctrine comes to prophets, seers, and revelators, each of us can also receive our own

confirmation that the doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ are true. This personal revelation comes through prayer, scripture study, and the witness of the Holy Ghost. We show that we accept the doctrine of Jesus Christ by repenting, being baptized, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and continuing to follow the laws and keep the covenants of the gospel throughout our life.

The following flowchart, based on Elder Christofferson’s April 2012 general conference address, shows how doctrine is established.<sup>2</sup> ■

#### NOTES

1. D. Todd Christofferson, “The Doctrine of Christ,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2012, 86.
2. See D. Todd Christofferson, “The Doctrine of Christ,” 86–90.

*The First Presidency*



*The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles*



## REVELATION OF DOCTRINE COMES FROM JESUS CHRIST

When revelation is doctrine for the whole Church, it comes to only the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (see Amos 3:7; D&C 1:38; 28:2).

### REVELATION MAY COME BY . . .

#### HIS OWN PERSON

God appeared to Moses and showed him the workmanship of His hands (see Moses 1:1–9; see also Joseph Smith—History 1:15–20).

#### HIS OWN VOICE

The Lord spoke to Nephi and commanded him to build a ship to bring his family to the Americas (see 1 Nephi 17:7–8).

#### THE VOICE OF THE HOLY GHOST

This type of revelation is communicated Spirit to spirit. The New Testament Apostles received a confirmation through the Holy Ghost that they should not require new converts to keep the law of Moses (see Acts 15:5–29).

#### MESSENGER

The messengers Moses, Elias, and Elijah appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and each committed the keys of his dispensation to the Prophet (see D&C 110:11–16).

### REVELATION MAY COME TO . . .

#### THE PRESIDENT OF THE CHURCH INDIVIDUALLY

The prophet and President of the Church can receive revelation individually that becomes doctrine when it is sustained by the united voice of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (see Acts 10; Official Declaration 2).

#### PROPHETS ACTING IN COUNCIL

The disciples in the Americas prayed to know what they should name the Church. Christ appeared to them and answered, “Whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name; therefore ye shall call the church in my name” (3 Nephi 27:7).

*Righteous role models can greatly bless teens during one of the most critical stages of their lives.*



# TODAY'S YOUNG MEN NEED Righteous Role Models

By Hikari Loftus  
Church Magazines

**I**n high school, Todd Sylvester had two goals: to be great at basketball and to be known as the biggest partier in the school.

At the age of 14, Todd started drinking and using drugs. He was not a member of the Church, and his parents did not teach him, as he describes it, “one way or another” regarding his behavior. Over the years, his drug addiction and alcoholism ruined his once-promising basketball career and sent him down a path that left him contemplating suicide.

Unfortunately, elements of Todd’s story can be seen in the lives of many young men today, even among members of the Church. However, Todd didn’t have something young men of the Church have: righteous role models. Adult Church leaders can be a great blessing to teens during one of the most critical stages of their lives. Because of his background, Todd, who joined the Church at age 22, now tries to be a positive role model to youth in his ward.

Brother Sylvester’s turnaround came when, during his darkest hour, he uttered a simple prayer: “God, I need help.” A month and a half later, a longtime friend, who is a member

of the Church, called him up and said, “Todd, I felt prompted to tell you that we need you on our side. . . . You’re going to help a lot of people, especially the youth and kids.”

A few years later, after his baptism and temple marriage, Brother Sylvester was called to serve in the Young Men program—a calling that would lead him to 14 years of serving the young men.

Using his past as motivation to help the young men he was called to serve, Brother Sylvester found a way to relate to the struggles he saw the boys go through. “I think most kids are afraid to talk about when they are struggling,” he says. “But I shared my story with these kids every year. I think because of that, they felt comfortable coming to me saying, ‘Hey, I’m struggling with pornography or drinking or suicidal thoughts.’” Brother Sylvester could support them as they worked on repenting, which included visits with the bishop.

Leaders who listen and provide loving feedback to youth during critical times can create powerful connections that help shape a young person’s identity. Mat Duerden, an assistant professor at Brigham Young University who received his PhD in youth development, says,

“Adolescence is [when individuals] develop a sense of personal identity: values, beliefs, roles, etc. That is an exploratory process. Part of that process is getting feedback from peers or parents or other adults, and it can be really powerful if it is a respected and valued adult.”

Brother Duerden continues, “The most effective mentoring roles are built on common respect for each other and the youth’s feeling that there is someone who really cares about him no matter how he dresses or speaks.”

“Most boys long to have a relationship with their dads,” says Brother Sylvester. “If they don’t have that, the next best thing is to be able to have a male adult figure they can talk to, bounce ideas off, and not be judged, ridiculed, or criticized because of their problems. I wasn’t there to replace their dads, but I wanted to be there so they could talk to me in a way that is healthy.”

“It is important to have shared experiences with the youth so you are on the same playing field. Instead of standing on the sidelines, you need to actively participate. There is real power in shared experiences.

“All members should be engaged with youth, regardless of their calling.”

**Mat Duerden, assistant professor, Brigham Young University**

While adult Church leaders can play a critical role in helping mentor a teen, prophets and apostles have said that the primary role models for youth are their parents. For example, Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: “Fathers, you are the primary model of manhood for your sons. You are their most meaningful mentor, and believe it or not, you are their hero in countless ways. Your words and your example are a great influence on them” (“Fathers and Sons: A Remarkable Relationship,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 47).

None of the strong relationships that Brother Sylvester created with the young men were immediate; he had to cultivate those relationships through years of service. Of the 20 young men he taught, 17 went on to serve missions. At least 5 of them had no intention of serving before interacting with Brother Sylvester.

“The reason why I had such success with these boys is that they knew I absolutely loved them,”

Brother Sylvester says. “They knew it—not because I said it but because I acted it. I

really focused on their having a relationship with their Savior. I just felt that was the key for them to get through everything and to move forward in life and be successful.”

By helping young men develop a relationship with the Savior, Brother Sylvester hoped that their testimonies would lead them toward serving missions, being married in the temple, and raising a righteous family. “That is the plan of happiness,” he says. “That is why [helping the youth] is important.” ■



## SUCCESS STORIES

The following young men had positive role models who made a difference in their lives.

### I Never Missed Sacrament Meeting Again

**A**s an adolescent, I went through the normal trials of those that age. In addition, I had a father who was not active in the Church, so my mother was my only reference point in the gospel. Though I may not have realized it, I needed a priesthood holder to emulate.

Heavenly Father placed in my path a man who still, to this day, exercises great influence on me. His name is Paulo César dos Santos.

I recall one Sunday when I did not want to go to church. I wanted my mother to leave me in peace. I told her that she could go on ahead to church and I would get ready and go a little later. I did not go but stayed home and watched a race on TV. After a while, though, I heard Bishop Paulo's familiar voice calling from the gate. He patiently talked to me, and I reluctantly went to sacrament meeting.

This experience had a lifelong effect on me, and I have never missed a sacrament meeting since.

Vinicius Elias Barbosa Jardim, São Paulo, Brazil

### He Saw Me as a Child of God

**T**hroughout my youth in Missouri, USA, Blaine Bartholomew, a member of the stake Young Men presidency, was a good friend to me at activities. However, I never took his friendship or advice to heart. It wasn't until I became 18 that a deeper relationship truly began. He watched me struggle and continue to fall, and as my bishop at the time, he tried to counsel me and lead me back to the path of righteousness. Eventually I fell into drugs and alcohol, and after moving away, I continued on that downward course.

When I returned home, I remembered Blaine and the love he had for me. He willingly continued that friendship and made me a part of his family. He became not only a friend but also a second father. Many times when I was drunk or under the influence of drugs he took care of me.

I am older now and cherish my relationship with Blaine. His constant encouragement, love, and support have meant more than he can know. He has never doubted my potential as a child of God. Now I am trying to overcome my sins and pride and am on the verge of making covenants I never imagined I would be able to make. I am grateful that Heavenly Father raised up such a man to be an example for me.

Name withheld, Utah, USA



# Still

## A CLARION CALL

*Prophets and apostles declare that “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” is even more relevant today than when it was first issued.*

**By Richard M. Romney**  
Church Magazines

In a world where marriage is imperiled and traditional families are attacked, one document in particular provides clarity and guidance. Prophets and apostles say “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” applies as much or more today as when it was issued in 1995.<sup>1</sup>

### **A Modern Title of Liberty**

The proclamation on the family remains “a clarion call to protect and strengthen families,” according to Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.<sup>2</sup>

Our world is similar to the deteriorating Nephite society in the Book of Mormon, and Elder Ballard encourages Latter-day Saints to “make [the proclamation] a banner not unlike General Moroni’s ‘title of liberty,’ and to commit ourselves to live by its precepts.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Critical to Happiness**

The world promotes many diverse paths to happiness. But modern prophets assert that the greatest possibilities for happiness exist in celestial marriage.<sup>4</sup>

If we live and act upon our knowledge that families can be eternal, Elder Ballard

promises that “we will attract the world to us. Parents who place a high priority on their families will gravitate to the Church. . . .

“Our family-centered perspective should make Latter-day Saints strive to be the best parents in the world. It should give us enormous respect for our children, who truly are our spiritual siblings, and it should cause us to devote whatever time is necessary to strengthen our families. Indeed, nothing is more critically connected to happiness—both our own and that of our children—than how well we love and support one another within the family.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Strength beyond Your Own**

Elder Ballard counsels families everywhere to get a copy of the proclamation and to align themselves to its teachings.

“Be the very best and act the very best you can. God will give you strength beyond your own as you strive daily to fulfill the most sacred mortal responsibility He gives to His children. Listen to the voice of the Spirit and the counsel of the living prophets. Be of good cheer. God did not place you on earth to fail, and your efforts as parents



Find and share the proclamation on the family at [lds.org/topics/family](https://lds.org/topics/family).

will not be counted as failure unless you give up.”<sup>6</sup>

### Hope for Eternal Life

The family proclamation teaches that families can endure forever. Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles teaches that “while salvation is an individual matter, exaltation is a family matter. . . . When a family is sealed in the temple, that family may become as eternal as the kingdom of God itself.”<sup>7</sup>

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, explains that our families are “fundamental not only to society and to the Church but also to our hope for eternal life.”<sup>8</sup>

### A Warning ahead of Its Time

President Eyring warns that the consequences for ignoring the teachings in the family proclamation “will be more disastrous than simply lack of peace in this life or absence of happiness.”<sup>9</sup>

The proclamation is prophetic, he says, because it warns against the very things that have undermined families in recent years.

He quotes the prophetic warning and call to action with which the proclamation ends:

“We warn that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God. Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.”<sup>10</sup>

### An International Document

When President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) introduced the family proclamation at the general Relief Society meeting on September 23, 1995, he said its purpose was to “warn and forewarn”<sup>11</sup> the world against deviating from its standards. Since then, the document has been published in many languages, has been repeatedly discussed in general conference, and is displayed in meetinghouses and homes internationally. It is a prophetic proclamation provided by a loving Heavenly Father to give guidance to His children—guidance that was never more needed than it is today. ■

#### NOTES

1. See M. Russell Ballard, “What Matters Most Is What Lasts Longest,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 41.
2. M. Russell Ballard, “What Matters Most Is What Lasts Longest,” 41.
3. M. Russell Ballard, “What Matters Most Is What Lasts Longest,” 42.
4. See Russell M. Nelson, “Celestial Marriage,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 92–94.
5. M. Russell Ballard, “What Matters Most Is What Lasts Longest,” 42.
6. M. Russell Ballard, “The Sacred Responsibilities of Parenthood,” *Liahona*, Mar. 2006, 17; *Ensign*, Mar. 2006, 33.
7. Russell M. Nelson, “Celestial Marriage,” 92, 93.
8. Henry B. Eyring, “The Family,” *Liahona*, Oct. 1998, 23; *Ensign*, Feb. 1998, 18.
9. Henry B. Eyring, *Liahona*, Oct. 1998, 23; *Ensign*, Feb. 1998, 18.
10. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
11. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Stand Strong against the Wiles of the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 100.

## SERMON BEHIND THE PULPIT

As my family sat a few rows behind the deacons one sacrament meeting, all I could think about before the opening hymn was that one of the deacons had failed to properly tie his long tie and correctly tuck in his wrinkled shirt. I thought someone should have helped him out. After all, when passing the sacrament, deacons should be an example of the Savior in action and dress.

The meeting proceeded, and I forgot about him. After the deacons had passed the sacrament, the talks began. The second speaker was the young man's mother. She spoke of her conversion, of her trials growing

up, and of her struggles as a single mother. It was a wonderful talk that left her in tears. She took her seat on the stand and continued to cry as the ward choir gathered to sing.

Just then her son, with his crooked tie and untucked shirt, stood and walked to the stand. He hugged his mother and crouched beside her to comfort her. Tears came to my eyes as the scene played out before me; I was touched beyond words. But then realization dawned, and I hung my head. Sitting in my crisp double-breasted suit, with my perfectly tied tie and polished black shoes, I realized I had truly missed something

in preparing for the sacrament.

The young man and his mother came down from the stand and sat together as the choir began to sing. I sat there, unable to listen to the music because the sermon taught by this deacon flooded my heart with a message of Christlike charity.

He had performed his act with tenderness and care. There was not the slightest sign of embarrassment on his young face—only pure love. The subsequent messages over the pulpit that day were good, but I will always remember the sermon behind the pulpit. ■

Jeff Fullmer, Idaho, USA

With his crooked tie and untucked shirt, he stood and walked to the stand. He hugged his mother and crouched beside her to comfort her.



## TWO NEW DEACONS

Some years ago I had the privilege of serving as deacons quorum adviser. In our quorum we had three active deacons, all of whom were called to be part of the quorum presidency.

In one of their meetings, this young presidency decided they wanted at least two of the less-active deacons in their quorum to begin attending Church meetings and activities. They prayerfully set a date—a Sunday six weeks away—by which to achieve their goal. They prayed for success in this sacred endeavor and prayerfully pledged to do the following:

- Pray together regularly.
- Fast together.
- Visit each deacon on the roll.
- Plan activities so that any returning deacons would enter a well-structured program.

The presidency felt that these goals were the will of the Lord, so they moved forward with faith and confidence.

During the following weeks, these three young men did what they had promised, expecting that their prayers would be answered. They prayed together, fasted together, visited the less-active deacons and invited them back, and prepared activities, believing that they needed to be prepared for an increase in attendance.

Despite their diligence, no deacons returned—not to church or to any other activity. The date approached, and though

they were disappointed that members of their quorum were not returning to church, the young men remained confident that Heavenly Father would answer their prayers.

The Sunday of their goal arrived, and none of the young men whom the presidency had reached out to came to church. But the bishop announced during sacrament meeting that two 12-year-old young men who had been investigating the Church

would be baptized that evening.

What a blessing it was for these two new members of the Church to join a quorum with such a presidency. And what a blessing it was for the presidency to see their efforts and prayers answered so directly and to learn that the Lord keeps His promises.

Such was the excitement in the quorum that one member of the presidency said, “Let’s do this again.” ■

Anthony Poutu, New Zealand

During the following weeks, these three young men prayed together, fasted together, and invited the less-active deacons back to church.



## HEAVENLY FATHER'S LOVE

Some time ago our friends asked if their son, John, and his girlfriend could stay at our place for a weeklong visit. John is less active, and his girlfriend is not a member of the Church. We let her have our son's room and gave John a couch in the living room.

Before they arrived, we prayed to Heavenly Father, asking how we should present ourselves to them—as teachers, parents, or simply friends? The answer came that we needed to follow the promptings of the Spirit and help them spiritually.

Every evening my husband, son, and I sit down to study the scriptures.

On the first evening with our guests, we felt that we should not invite them to study with us. But the next evening before scripture study, John shyly knocked on our door and said, “Mary is afraid to ask, but she would like to know if we can join you.”

We swung open the door, invited them in, and began studying the Book of Mormon together. Mary had never read scriptures before and did not know whether she believed in God. She admitted that when she came to our home, she had been afraid we might make her take part in something religious she did not understand.

To make Mary feel comfortable, my husband told her about the plan of salvation, the Savior Jesus Christ, Joseph Smith's First Vision, and the Book of Mormon. She talked with us until midnight.

The next day, John and Mary joined us for a discussion with the missionaries. I will never forget the spirit that filled the room. After a simple discussion, we talked about the nature of our Heavenly Father. Then Mary asked why God allows suffering if He loves us, a question I had pondered for a long time.

Several days earlier I had received a letter from a friend who had miscarried her third child, so Mary's question touched my heart. I testified that times of happiness and joy occasionally cannot teach us as deeply and eternally as times of personal tragedy. I told Mary that grief can temper us just as fire tempers iron. If we remain true to God while passing through trials, our faith will grow.

It was an unforgettable discussion. Afterward we sat silently while the Spirit testified of our Heavenly Father's love. When Mary looked up, her eyes were bright and full of tears.

I do not know what will happen in the coming years, but I know for certain that the understanding I saw in Mary's eyes that day will help her throughout her life and may help lead her to her Heavenly Father. ■

Anna Nikiticheva, Russia



John shyly knocked on our door and said, “Mary is afraid to ask, but she would like to know if we can join you for scripture study.”

# HE BLESSED MY SOUR NOTE

My ears burned bright red with embarrassment as my teenage son, Derek, and I finished singing “Be Still, My Soul”<sup>1</sup> in sacrament meeting. I had not properly warmed up my voice before the meeting began, and as a result, when I tried to reach a high note, my voice cracked badly.

I slid back onto my bench, feeling uncomfortable despite supportive looks from my smiling wife, assuring me that I had not ruined the spirit of the meeting.

After the closing prayer I headed for my car to retrieve a lesson manual. A sister in our ward stood near the door, sobbing. A friend supported her with an arm around her shoulder. As I passed by, the weeping sister called my name and expressed her appreciation to me for choosing the hymn we sang and for performing it in a way that touched her deeply.

She explained that she had given birth to a stillborn baby several days earlier and had battled anger and despair ever since. As Derek and I sang the hymn, she had felt the Spirit wrap her aching soul in a peaceful, comforting warmth. It had filled her with the hope she needed to bear her cross of grief.

I awkwardly mumbled thanks and headed out the door, feeling blessed and humbled by her words. As I reached the car, I remembered a devotional address by Kim B. Clark, president of Brigham Young

University–Idaho. He had said, “When we act in faith in [Jesus] to do His work, He goes with us” to serve others and “blesses us to say just what they need to hear.” He also taught that “what we actually say and actually do may feel a little awkward or not very polished. . . . But the Savior takes our words and our actions and He carries them through His spirit unto the hearts of the people. He takes our sincere but imperfect effort and turns it into something that is just right, indeed, into something that is perfect.”<sup>2</sup>

Tears of gratitude filled my eyes as

I returned to the meetinghouse. The Lord had blessed an unpolished musical number and carried its message perfectly into the grieving heart of a young sister to comfort her sorrowing soul. In addition, the Lord used this touching experience to carry into my heart a much deeper understanding of a profound gospel principle. ■

Randy Lonsdale, Alberta, Canada

## NOTES

1. *Hymns*, no. 124.
2. Kim B. Clark, “Love by Faith” (Brigham Young University–Idaho devotional, July 29, 2010), [www.byui.edu/Presentations/Transcripts/EducationWeek/2010\\_07\\_29\\_Clark.htm](http://www.byui.edu/Presentations/Transcripts/EducationWeek/2010_07_29_Clark.htm).

I had not properly warmed up my voice before the meeting began, and as a result, when I tried to reach a high note, my voice cracked badly.





# HIS GRACE IS Sufficient

*How does God's grace  
really work?*

By Brad Wilcox

A young woman once came to me and asked if we could talk. I said, “Of course. How can I help you?”

She said, “I just don’t get grace.”

I responded, “What is it that you don’t understand?”

She said, “I know I need to do my best, and then Jesus does the rest, but I can’t even do my best.”

I said, “The truth is, Jesus paid our debt in full. He didn’t pay it all except for a few coins. He paid it all. It is finished.”

She said, “Right! Like I don’t have to do anything?”

“Oh, no,” I said, “you have plenty to do, but it is not to pay that debt. We will all be resurrected. We will all go back to God’s presence to be judged. What is left to be determined by our obedience is how comfortable we plan to be in God’s presence and what degree of glory we plan on receiving.”

Christ asks us to show faith in Him,

repent, make and keep covenants, receive the Holy Ghost, and endure to the end. By complying, we are not paying the demands of justice—not even the smallest part. Instead, we are showing appreciation for what Jesus Christ did by using it to live a life like His. Justice requires immediate perfection or a punishment when we fall short. Because Jesus took that punishment, He can offer us the chance for ultimate perfection (see Matthew 5:48; 3 Nephi 12:48) and help us reach that goal. He can forgive what justice never could, and He can turn to us now with His own set of requirements (see 3 Nephi 28:35).

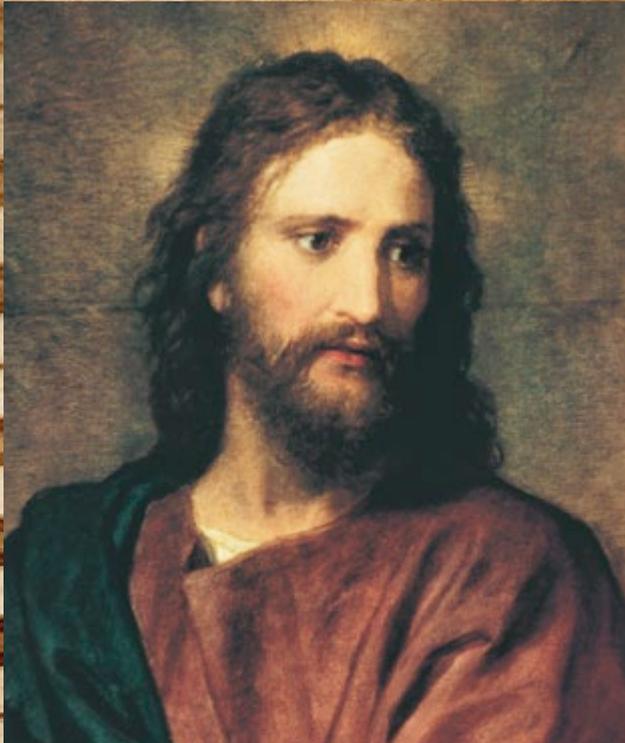
## Grace Transforms Us

Christ’s arrangement with us is similar to a mom providing music lessons for her child. Mom pays the piano teacher. Because Mom pays the debt in full, she can turn to her child and ask for something. What is

it? Practice! Does the child’s practice pay the piano teacher? No. Does the child’s practice repay Mom for paying the piano teacher? No. Practicing is how the child shows appreciation for Mom’s incredible gift. It is how he takes advantage of the amazing opportunity Mom is giving him to live his life at a higher level. Mom’s joy is found not in getting repaid but in seeing her gift used—seeing her child improve. And so she continues to call for practice, practice, practice.

If the child sees Mom’s requirement of practice as being too overbearing (“Gosh, Mom, why do I need to practice? None of the other kids have to practice! I’m just going to be a professional baseball player anyway!”), perhaps it is because he doesn’t yet see with Mom’s eyes. He doesn’t see how much better his life could be if he would choose to live on a higher plane.

In the same way, because Jesus has paid justice, He can now turn to



***When we understand grace, we understand that the blessings of Christ's Atonement are continuous and His strength is perfect in our weakness.***

us and say: "Follow me" (Matthew 4:19); "Keep my commandments" (John 14:15). If we see His requirements as being way too much to ask, maybe it is because we do not yet see through Christ's eyes. We have not yet comprehended what He is trying to make of us.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, "The repenting sinner must suffer for his sins, but this suffering has a different purpose than punishment or payment. Its purpose is *change*" (*The Lord's Way* [1991], 223; emphasis in original). Let's put that in terms of the child pianist: The child must practice the piano, but this practice has a different purpose than punishment or payment. Its purpose is change.

The miracle of the Atonement is not just that we can live after we die but that we can live more abundantly (see John 10:10). The miracle of the Atonement is not just that we can be cleansed and consoled but that we can be transformed (see Romans 8). Scriptures make it clear that no unclean thing can dwell with God (see Alma 40:26), but no unchanged thing will even want to.

The miracle of the Atonement is not just that we can go home but that—miraculously—we can feel at home there. If Heavenly Father and His Son did not require faith and repentance, then there would be no desire to change. Think of your friends and family members who have chosen to live without faith and without repentance. They don't want to change. They are not trying to abandon sin and become comfortable with God. Rather, they are trying to abandon God and become

comfortable with sin. If the Father and the Son did not require covenants and bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost, then there would be no way to change. We would be left forever with only willpower, with no access to His power. If Heavenly Father and His Son did not require endurance to the end, then there would be no internalization of those changes over time. They would forever be surface and cosmetic rather than sinking inside us and becoming part of us—part of who we are. Put simply, if Jesus didn't require practice, then we would never become Saints.

### Grace Helps Us

“But don't you realize how hard it is to practice? I'm just not very good at the piano. I hit a lot of wrong notes. It takes me forever to get it right.” Now wait. Isn't that all part of the learning process? When a young pianist hits a wrong note, we don't say he is not worthy to keep practicing. We don't expect him to be flawless. We just expect him to keep trying. Perfection may be his ultimate goal, but for now we can be content with progress in the right direction. Why is this perspective so easy to see in the context of learning piano but so hard to see in the context of learning heaven?

Too many are giving up on the Church because they are tired of constantly feeling like they are falling short. They have tried in the past,

### KEY IDEAS

- We are saved through the grace of Christ, who paid the price of our sins.
- Our works, such as repentance and keeping the commandments, do not save us, but they *are* requirements set by the Savior to help transform us.
- God's grace is divine power to help us with all of our shortcomings and is available to us at all times.

but they continually feel like they are just not good enough. They don't understand grace.

There should never be just two options: perfection or giving up. When learning the piano, are the only options performing at Carnegie Hall or quitting? No. Growth and development take time. Learning takes time. When we understand grace, we understand that God is long-suffering, that change is a process, and that repentance is a pattern in our lives. When we understand grace, we understand that the blessings of Christ's Atonement are continuous and His strength is perfect in our weakness (see 2 Corinthians 12:9). When we understand grace, we can, as it says in the Doctrine and Covenants, “continue in patience until [we] are perfected” (D&C 67:13).

Grace is not a booster engine that

kicks in once our fuel supply is exhausted. Rather, it is our constant energy source. It is not the light at the end of the tunnel but the light that moves us through the tunnel. Grace is not achieved somewhere down the road. It is received right here and right now.

### Grace Is Sufficient

The grace of Christ is sufficient (see Ether 12:27; D&C 17:8)—sufficient to cover our debt, sufficient to transform us, and sufficient to help us for as long as that transformation process takes. The Book of Mormon teaches us to rely solely on “the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah” (2 Nephi 2:8). As we do, we do not discover—as some Christians believe—that Christ requires nothing of us. Rather, we discover the reason He requires so much and find the strength to do all He asks (see Philippians 4:13). Grace is not the absence of God's high expectations. Grace is the presence of God's power (see Luke 1:37).

God's grace is sufficient. Jesus's grace is sufficient. It is enough. It is all we need. Don't quit. Keep trying. Don't look for escapes and excuses. Look for the Lord and His perfect strength. Don't search for someone to blame. Search for someone to help you. Seek Christ, and, as you do, you will feel the enabling power and divine help we call His amazing grace. ■

*From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on July 12, 2011. For the full text in English, visit [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).*



**By Elder D. Todd Christofferson**  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

# STEPS TO HAPPINESS

*Commandments are not given to restrict but rather to make possible what we truly desire and what our Heavenly Father, who loves us, wants for us.*





SUNDAY LESSONS  
 This Month's Topic:  
 The Commandments

JOIN THE  
 CONVERSATION



Throughout September you'll be studying about the commandments in your priesthood quorums and Young Women and Sunday School classes. You may want to think about some commandments that your peers often struggle with. What blessings have you or others received by following those commandments? Brainstorm ways you could testify of those blessings to people around you, and follow the Spirit to know what to say and when to say it. You could role-play some examples during a family home evening or share your testimony during a Sunday School lesson.

At times, some people get confused, thinking that the commandments are restrictions or limitations that complicate life, that take away opportunities or happiness or the pleasures of life. In reality, the commandments protect us and guide us to happiness. They are not to restrict but rather to make possible—to allow us to achieve in this life and in the next—what we truly desire and what our Heavenly Father, who loves us, wants for us.

They are like a flight of stairs. Each step may represent one commandment, and with each commandment that we obey, we can move upward. Then, if we understand the essence of the commandments, we want more. We don't feel resentment regarding the commandments; we want more in order to be able to progress more. And a Heavenly

Father who loves us gives unto us according to our desires. If we desire it, He is going to give us more commandments in order to facilitate our progress.

So, young people, please don't complain about the commandments. Don't say, "I don't want any more," but rather say, "Yes, more, more. I want to progress. I want to be happy. I want to be like my Heavenly Father. And the commandments show me how to do so. They open up the pathway before me and also protect me from evil and the things that destroy happiness—and sometimes they even protect life itself."

I hope that you're convinced. We have to do all things necessary to keep the commandments, even if it seems we are all alone as we do so. ■

*From an address given to youth in Salta, Argentina, in November 2011.*

For more information on this topic, see Thomas S. Monson, "Obedience Brings Blessings," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2013, 89; and L. Tom Perry, "Obedience to Law Is Liberty," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2013, 86.



# What's So **GREAT** about the **GREAT** and **SPACIOUS BUILDING**?

By Dennis C. Gaunt

**A**bbey is excited about going to the prom but wishes her new dress were just a little more like the dresses her friends will be wearing. She thinks her friends will look more glamorous and sophisticated in their sleeveless dresses than she will in her modest dress, and she worries she'll stand out.

Nate is hanging out with his friends one evening when one of his buddies brings out some cans of beer and passes them around. When Nate refuses at first, saying, "I can't," his friends begin to laugh and tease him. Nate doesn't want his friends to think he's not cool, so he considers taking a few sips of beer just to get his friends to stop laughing.

Do these situations feel familiar? Like Abby and Nate, we each come to crossroads in our lives where different choices are laid out before us like pathways. At these difficult and important decision points, sometimes we're afraid to stand up for what we believe because we're afraid we'll stand out.

Abby and Nate are experiencing firsthand some of the difficulties

described in Lehi's vision of the tree of life. In that vision, we learn that two of the main reasons people leave the strait and narrow path are that they are blinded by the allure of temptation (see 1 Nephi 8:23; 12:17) and that they are embarrassed by the mockery from those in the great and spacious building (see 1 Nephi 8:26–28). Let's examine these two parts of Lehi's vision to see if we can not only understand them better but also learn from them to find the strength to stand up and stand out for what is right.

## Walk This Way

The problem with the temptations of the world is that they're just so *tempting*, aren't they? As President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) said: "Whoever said that sin was not fun? . . . Sin is attractive and desirable. . . . Sin is easy and has a big company of pleasant companions."<sup>1</sup>

As much as we hate to admit it, many of those other paths often look appealing. Some paths veer off suddenly in exciting directions, while others curve away so subtly that for

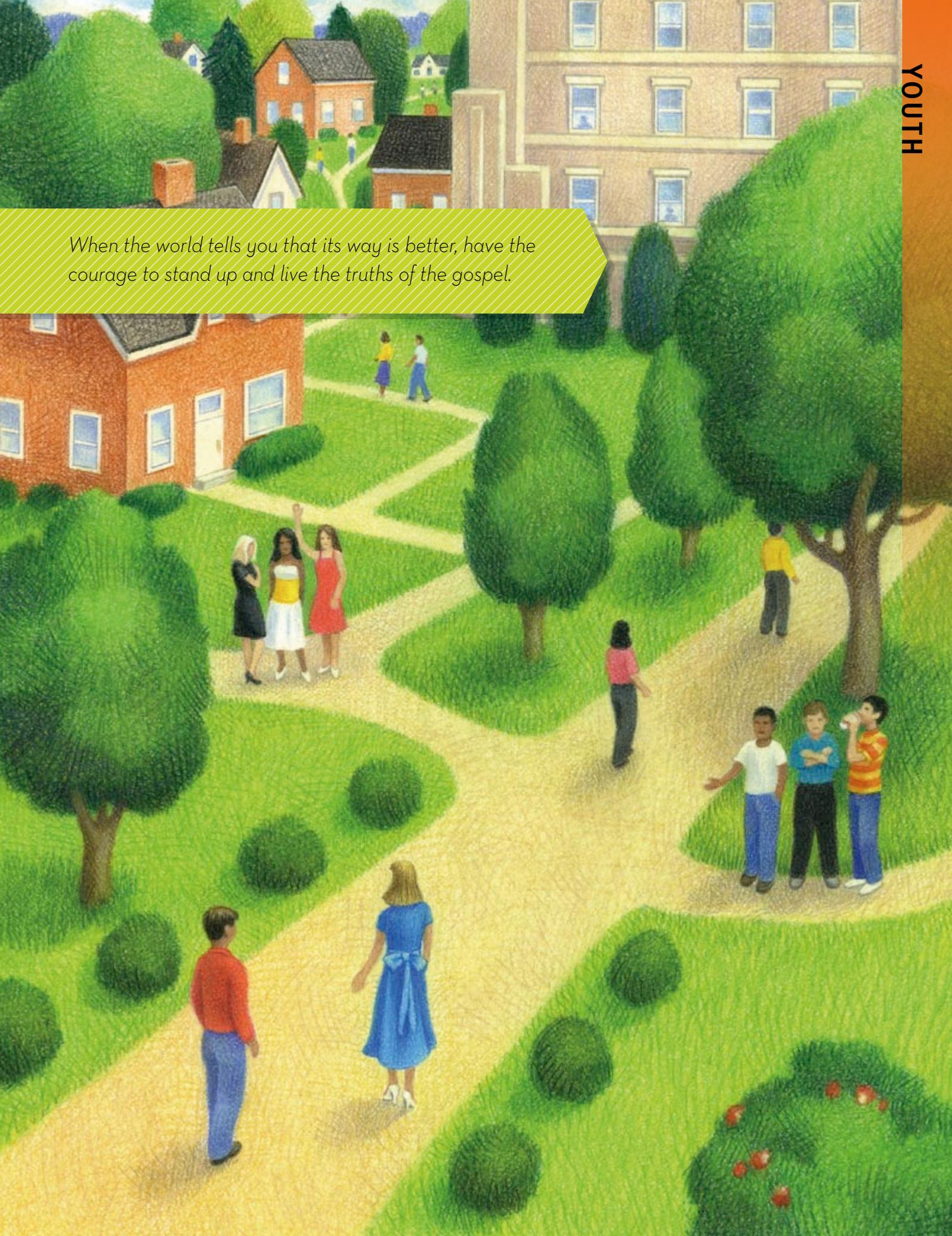
a while they appear to run parallel to the gospel path. Some are glamorously carpeted in red and echo with applause. Others appear to be paved with gold and jewels.

The appeal of the great and spacious building itself is very similar. After all, some of the richest, most popular, most attractive, and most powerful people in the world live there! Who wouldn't want to hang out with, act like, and dress like those people? They often appear to be having a much better time than the rest of us who are trying to stay on the gospel path.

Much like our friend Abby, the more attention we give the residents of the great and spacious building, the more we might feel jealous or frustrated or even angry. We might think it doesn't seem fair that they should have so many nice things while we're trying to stay on the path to the tree of life.

Satan knows that one of the best ways to get people to leave the gospel path is by tricking them into believing that it's too hard, boring, or

*When the world tells you that its way is better, have the courage to stand up and live the truths of the gospel.*



## STANDING FOR WHAT WE BELIEVE

To watch a video about standing up for what we believe and to listen to youth explain why they choose to keep their standards, visit [youth.lds.org](http://youth.lds.org) and look for the videos “Dare to Stand Alone” and “I Choose to Be Pure” under Featured Videos (available in English, Portuguese, and Spanish).

old-fashioned to stay on the path. He doesn't care which of the other paths we take—any path will do—so long as it's not the gospel path.

### “How Does That Fruit Taste?”

Mocking the faithful is a favorite activity at the great and spacious building. President Thomas S. Monson has said: “Increasingly, some celebrities and others . . . in the public eye have a tendency to ridicule religion in general and, at times, the Church in particular. If our testimonies are not firmly enough rooted, such criticisms can cause us to doubt our own beliefs or to waver in our resolves.”<sup>2</sup>

It seems as though no matter where we go in life, whether in person or online, there will be an open window from the great and spacious building nearby with someone ready to point a finger and laugh at the things we value. We have probably all experienced this mockery at different times, and it can be very painful. We know we should react in a Christlike manner, but it's not always easy. Nobody likes to be laughed at or have deeply held beliefs belittled. Like Nate, we might sometimes respond with a phrase like “I can't—I'm Mormon,” only to hear others laugh even harder.

### “I Can't . . .”

Have you ever noticed how mockers always tend to focus on the word *can't*? As in, “Why *can't* you drink that?” “Why *can't* you go shopping with me on Sunday?” or “Why *can't* you have sex before you're married?”

This focus on the word *can't* may cause us to feel powerless. It may feel as though we're weak and spineless. It may feel as though

we're helpless victims of an impersonal God who has locked us up so that we don't have any fun.

This tactic is very, very old. In fact, Satan has been using it from the very beginning. When God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, He told them, “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat” (Moses 3:16). Do the words “every tree” sound like a restriction to you? While God told Adam and Eve that there were specific consequences for eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, He never physically restricted them. They had the whole garden to themselves and were told, “Thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee” (Moses 3:17). That sounds like freedom to me!

So it's interesting that when Satan comes along later he says, “Yea, hath God said—Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (Moses 4:7). Essentially, Satan was asking, “Why *can't* you eat the fruit of that tree?” in the same mocking tone that comes from the windows of the great and spacious building. Satan focused on the one thing that God had attached consequences to, and he made it sound as though God wanted to deprive Adam and Eve. Satan twisted God's words, adding lies in the effort to convince them to follow him instead of God. In the end, partaking of the fruit had been part of the plan all along. And God provided a Savior to give Adam and Eve and all their children the chance to grow and return home.

### “I Won't!”

And what is it we're really saying when we say, “I can't—I'm Mormon”? Are we really saying, “I wish I could, and if I weren't

**THE POWER TO CHOOSE**

"Because [the children of men] are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon" (2 Nephi 2:26).



Mormon, I totally would"? I once had a friend who used to joke about all the things he'd like to do if he weren't a member of the Church. The problem was, I couldn't always tell if he was joking.

Rather than focusing on *can't* and *don't*, we would be much better off if we used the word *won't*. As in, "I won't—I'm Mormon." Using *won't* instead of *can't* changes the focus of the phrase and shows that we are empowered to choose for ourselves. By saying, "I won't," we're saying, "I'm *choosing* not to do that, not because I'm a blind follower or because I'm restricted but because I believe in agency and accountability and I *want* to do what's right. I am choosing to act and not be acted upon" (see 2 Nephi 2:14, 26).

Using "I won't" instead of "I can't" is also a monumental act of courage. It doesn't take any courage to follow the crowds down the various paths of the world. Anyone can do that. Standing up for the truth shows real faith. Standing out from the world takes real courage. It shows that we are truly using our agency and really thinking for ourselves. The people in the great and spacious building are always referred to as a nameless crowd, a faceless mob. In the end, their words are hollow and meaningless. By faithfully exercising our agency, we can find the courage to say, as did Lehi and the brave and faithful members of his family, "We heeded them not" (1 Nephi 8:33).

Amid an increasingly wicked world, those who stand up and walk

the gospel path truly do stand out. But they are not alone. As President Thomas S. Monson has invited us, "May we ever be courageous and prepared to stand for what we believe, and if we must stand alone in the process, may we do so courageously, strengthened by the knowledge that in reality we are never alone when we stand with our Father in Heaven."<sup>3</sup> ■  
*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

**NOTES**

1. Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle* (1972), 229.
2. Thomas S. Monson, "Dare to Stand Alone," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 60.
3. Thomas S. Monson, "Dare to Stand Alone," 67.



BE A  
**LIGHT**  
TO YOUR FRIENDS



**By Elder Benjamín  
De Hoyos**  
Of the Seventy

I grew up with the same friends for the first 12 years of my life. We were neighbors. We went to the same schools and attended each other's birthday parties. I sometimes ate at their homes, they came to mine, and we had fun together. But when we became teenagers, things began to change. They were not members of the Church, and they swore, they smoked, and they drank alcohol. They had a completely different view of the law of chastity than I did.

I thought about the problem carefully, and then I talked to my father about what to do. He said, "You have to decide. These good friends are different from you. Before you couldn't tell, but now there's a very big difference."

I trusted my father's counsel. My friends knew I was a member of the Church, so when I decided not to always go everywhere they went, they understood. Eventually, we spent less and less time together even though we were still friendly.

It was a trial for me to leave my friends, but I knew that it was important to maintain the principles of the gospel in my life. I thought about Alma's counsel to his sons when he taught them to have faith in God. He said, "Whosoever shall put their trust in God shall be supported in their trials" (Alma 36:3).

One of the things that helped me get through this hard time was going every week to Church activities, including Mutual. I also kept myself busy with dancing, sports, and youth conferences.

I made a new friend who was not a member of the Church, and he sometimes invited me to go to parties. These parties were the same day as Mutual, so I told him, "I'm sorry. I would like to go, but I have other plans."

He asked what I was doing. I told him, "I'm going to Mutual."

"What's Mutual?" he asked.

I explained that we had a lot of fun activities at Mutual and that I was serving as a counselor in the presidency. After I turned down three invitations to his parties, he said, "Invite me to Mutual."

So he came with me, the missionaries taught him, and he was eventually baptized.

I invite you to make decisions now so that you can be a light to your friends. One thing you can do is attend seminary. Your seminary teachers do *their* part; they put forth a lot of effort in preparing lessons for you. Seminary will be even more of a blessing to you when you do *your* part: read the assignments, pray and fast, receive and accept the teachings. Learning takes place when both parties do what they need to do.

When I was in high school, one of my friends invited me to a party and said, "Let's go ask my father if we can borrow his car." His father did not want to let him borrow the car. Then, when his father saw me, he said, "OK, I'll let you borrow the car, but only if Benjamín will drive."

This man knew that my family and I were members of the Church, that we didn't drink alcohol, and that I would be a safe driver.

The reaction of my friend's father helped me appreciate my parents' teachings and the example they set. At home we had family home evening and family prayer. Sunday was a day of rest for us. These types of things were the gospel in action for us, and we enjoyed it a lot. My father often invited other members of the Church to come to our house to talk about the gospel on Sunday afternoons. We ate together, we talked about the gospel, and we shared a close friendship.

Prepare now to build your own strong future families. You do that when you are active in learning about the gospel. Remember that if you will put your trust in God; have daily, fervent prayer; read the scriptures; keep yourselves clean; and work on your Duty to God or Personal Progress, you will be protected from harm, will be a light to your friends, and will find joy in your life. ■

# TO THE POINT

Where I live, you're considered boyfriend/girlfriend after one date.

How can a person  
**casually date  
different people**  
without getting a reputation  
as a promiscuous or  
dishonest person?

This is a significant challenge for many Latter-day Saint youth all around the world. They are counseled to “avoid going on frequent dates with the same person” so that they do not develop serious relationships at a young age (*For the Strength of Youth* [booklet, 2011], 4). But in the culture of much of the world, the invitation for a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship often comes even before a first date; and likewise, just one date can imply an exclusive relationship with an expectation of commitment. In such a culture, going on dates with different people appears to violate the “relationship” and can give you a reputation as a promiscuous or dishonest person. So what should you do?

First of all, make sure everyone knows your belief in and commitment to the Lord's standard of chastity and sexual purity so that there is never any doubt about your character and behavior. Next, you can actively work to change the dating culture around you for the better by speaking up for the Church's guidelines. If people question you about your dating standards, ask them why, if they aren't looking to get married anytime soon, they feel the need to have such emotionally and physically intimate and exclusive relationships at such a young age.

Invite them to join you on a group date so that they can see the fun they can have while avoiding the needless moral dangers and emotional drama of teen romance. And let them know about the guidance and counsel we have been given by living prophets and apostles. ■





## Why do young men start home teaching when they're 14 but young women start visiting teaching when they're 18?

In a revelation given at the time the Church was organized in 1830, the Lord declared, “The teacher’s duty is to watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them” (D&C 20:53). Besides teachers in the Aaronic Priesthood, this duty is shared by priests and by those who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood (see D&C 20:45–52). Home teaching is one way they fulfill this duty by accepting specific assignments from priesthood leaders. Visiting teaching, although similar, has a slightly different purpose, providing an opportunity for Relief Society sisters to strengthen and teach one another through assignments from the Relief Society presidency (as approved by the bishop or branch president). Young women (especially class presidencies) should, of course, seek to strengthen and support one another in a variety of ways, but they are not assigned to make monthly visits to specific people. ■

## What are the physical fitness requirements to serve a mission?

Serious physical challenges or medical limitations can prevent some people from performing missionary duties effectively and can negatively affect their companions’ service as well. Such people do not normally serve missions. For example, those who need a wheelchair or crutches or cannot perform daily tasks without the aid of others are not recommended for missionary service. And being significantly overweight can cause a person to have serious difficulty with the daily rigors of a mission, so priesthood leaders may ask some people to lose weight before they recommend them for service. Regarding general fitness, one guideline might be that you should be able to walk about six miles (9 km) a day without difficulty.

If you have any questions about any of these matters, your bishop or branch president can give you answers and guidance. ■

## When should I start paying fast offerings and making other donations?

If you have a source of income and a willing heart, you can start giving fast offerings at any age. Of course, when you earn money, the Lord has commanded that you pay tithing on your earnings. In addition, “a proper fast day observance includes . . . giving a generous fast offering to help care for those in need” (*For the Strength of Youth* [booklet, 2011], 39). Just because your parents pay for your family’s food doesn’t mean you can’t make a contribution of your own if you feel prompted when your family fasts each month. Remember, although you are young, regardless of the amount of the contribution, what matters most is the fact that you are obeying the Lord’s commandments and selflessly helping to bless others. You as well as others will be blessed through your sacrifice. And if you feel inspired and are able to do so, you may also consider consulting with your parents and making donations to other Church funds listed on the Tithing and Other Offerings slip. ■



**By Rosemary M. Wixom**  
Primary General President

# The **INFLUENCE** of **MUSIC**

*An experiment with mice shows us how much the music we listen to can affect us.*

**W**hen I ask someone, “What do you remember most about Primary?” the answer is often, “The music.” The words to Primary songs never leave us—they are embedded in our hearts. Take, for example, the following Primary songs. Can you complete each phrase?

“I’m trying to be . . .”

“Heavenly Father, are . . . ?”

“Book of Mormon . . .”

As you completed each sentence, did you find yourself singing the melody?

If so, it’s probably because music enhances our senses, touches our emotions, and creates memories. So it’s no wonder that we celebrate temple dedications with a cultural event where youth participate in uplifting music and dancing. These events let us “make a joyful noise unto God” and “sing forth the honour of his name” (Psalm 66:1–2).

## **Music Always Affects Us**

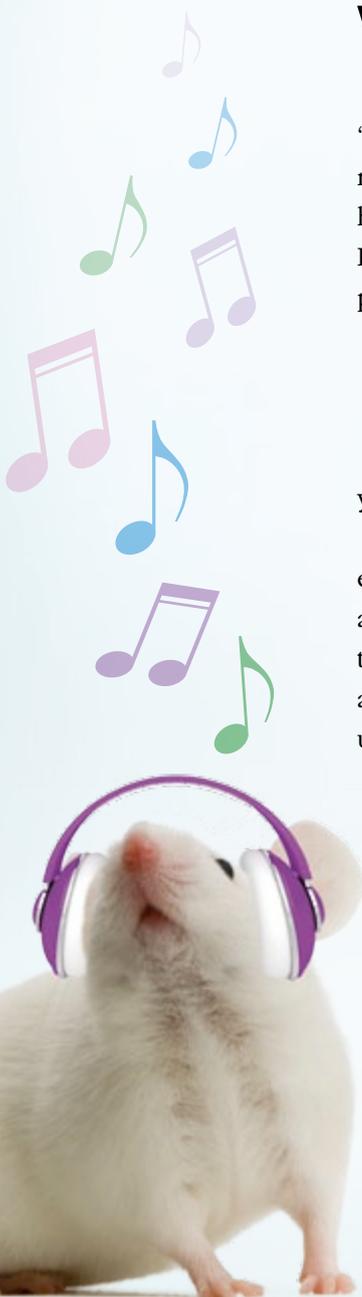
*For the Strength of Youth* teaches that “music has a profound effect on your mind, spirit, and behavior.”<sup>1</sup> Music can enrich your life in so many ways, but it can also be dangerous. President Thomas S. Monson said: “Music can help you draw closer to your Heavenly Father. It can be used to educate, edify,

inspire, and unite. However, music can, by its tempo, beat, intensity, and lyrics, dull your spiritual sensitivity. You cannot afford to fill your minds with unworthy music.”<sup>2</sup> And it may not matter if you listen carefully to the words or not; words that are put to music are often easily learned and easily remembered.<sup>3</sup> No wonder we are cautioned to “choose carefully the music [we] listen to.”<sup>4</sup>

## **Mice, Music, and Learning**

Your choice of music can also affect your ability to accomplish tasks or to learn. Two researchers explored this relationship by studying the effects of music and rhythm on the nervous system of mice. For eight weeks, one group of mice constantly listened to Strauss waltzes (highly organized and orderly music), while a second heard disharmonious sounds in the form of continuous drumbeats. A third group was raised in silence.

After eight weeks, the mice were placed in a maze to find food. The mice in the second group wandered off with no sense of direction—“a clear indication they were having trouble learning”—and took much longer to find the food than they had at the beginning of the study. The mice exposed “to discordant sounds not only developed difficulties in learning and memory, . . . but they also incurred structural changes in their brain cells.” The researchers’ diagnosis is





very interesting: “We believe that the mice were trying to compensate for this constant bombardment of disharmonic noise. . . . They were struggling against the chaos.”<sup>5</sup>

What could be the “chaos” in some of today’s music—things that might keep you from learning effectively? It may relate to the rhythm and beat of the music (as with the mice) or with the words used or messages presented. President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: “Society is undergoing a subtle, but powerful, change. It is becoming more and more permissive in what it will accept in its entertainment. As a result, much of the music being performed by popular entertainers today seems to

be more intended to agitate than to pacify, more to excite than to calm.”<sup>6</sup>

### Matters of Time and the Spirit

It is not only the rhythm and the lyrics of jarring music that are detrimental. By listening to such music, we also prevent quiet moments that allow us to think clearly and listen to the Spirit. In *The Screwtape Letters*, a popular Christian novel, a character named Screwtape represents Satan and tries to lead good souls to his cause. Screwtape says, “It is funny how mortals always picture us as putting things into their minds: in reality our best work is done by keeping things out.”<sup>7</sup> In essence, Satan knows that he does not always have to fill our minds with bad thoughts if he can just keep us from focusing on things of the Spirit. “If you listen to music constantly, you may not have the quiet time you need for thinking, feeling, and receiving spiritual guidance.”<sup>8</sup>

We need the Holy Ghost with us at all times. For that reason, we should choose carefully the music we listen to and the dances we attend. Let the Spirit be your guide, and when you have doubts about the music you are listening to or the circumstances you are in, have the courage to act so the Spirit can remain with you. ■

### NOTES

1. *For the Strength of Youth* (booklet, 2011), 22.
2. Thomas S. Monson, *A Prophet’s Voice: Messages from Thomas S. Monson* (2012), 77.
3. See Jack R. Christianson, quoted in “Author’s criterion for picking music: does it encourage a proper life style?” *Church News*, May 6, 1989, 5.
4. *For the Strength of Youth*, 22.
5. Richard Lipkin, “Jarring Music Takes Toll on Mice,” *Insight*, vol. 4, no. 14, April 4, 1988, 58.
6. Boyd K. Packer, “Worthy Music, Worthy Thoughts,” *Liahona*, Apr. 2008, 33; *New Era*, Apr. 2008, 9.
7. C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (1982), 20.
8. *For the Strength of Youth*, 23.



FROM LEFT: THINKSTOCK/ISTOCKPHOTO; PHOTOGRAPH OF ROSEMARY M. WIXOM © BUSATH PHOTOGRAPHY; PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT CASEY; THINKSTOCK/COMSTOCK; BACKGROUND: THINKSTOCK/ABLESTOCK.COM



# A PRAYER OF MY HEART

*Raising my standards for the music I listen to helped me love it even more.*

**By Ma. Consuelo N.**

I love music, and my day doesn't seem complete unless I'm listening to it or singing. Lately, my love for music has grown in a different way, and I've learned some things that have changed how I think about and use music.

It started when I read the scripture where the Lord says, "For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads" (D&C 25:12). When I read that verse, I remembered something my mom had taught me. Once, when I was singing the hymns in an inappropriate manner, she reminded me that hymns can be prayers and that I need to sing them properly. I think this verse refers not only to hymns alone but also to any songs we sing with a righteous desire. Imagine what blessings will come upon us, as the scripture says, when we sing songs unto the Lord.

I also learned the importance of listening to good music. After reading this scripture, I started scanning my list of songs and deleting those that were not in harmony with the standards in *For the Strength of Youth*.

I also had to make decisions about music beyond what I had in my own collection. One day when I was in school, a classmate started playing a bad song. I didn't feel good about the song, so I asked him to change it, which he did. I know that each of us can have the same courage in those

situations. And at times when people may not change the music for us, we still have another option: we can go somewhere else.

I know that through good music we can draw closer to our Heavenly Father. Music can edify us, inspire us, invite the Holy Ghost to be with us, move us to righteous actions, and help us withstand the temptations of the adversary (see *For the Strength of Youth* [booklet, 2011], 22–23).

Remember that when we are singing the song of the righteous, we are actually praying to our Father in Heaven. ■

*The author lives in Metro Manila, Philippines.*

## **CHOOSE GOOD MUSIC**

"Music has a profound effect on your mind, spirit, and behavior.

"Choose carefully the music you listen to. Pay attention to how you feel when you are listening. Some music can carry evil and destructive messages. Do not listen to music that encourages immorality or glorifies violence through its lyrics, beat, or intensity. Do not listen to music that uses vulgar or offensive language or promotes evil practices. Such music can dull your spiritual sensitivity."

*For the Strength of Youth* (booklet, 2011), 22.

# LAUNCH YOUR FUTURE

Fuel up with knowledge and see how far  
your learning will take you.



# THROUGH THIN WALLS

*We didn't realize until later that, as we taught one family the gospel, we were also teaching their neighbor next door.*

**By Monica Garcia Adams**

**A**s sister missionaries, we were sharing the gospel with a woman who lived in modest circumstances at the bottom of a large hill near a small city dump on the outskirts of Asunción, Paraguay.

Soledad and her husband, Oscar, lived in one room of a long, narrow house that was actually a series of connected rooms, side by side, with very thin walls. Each room was a tiny residence with one window, one door, one table, and one bed. There were several such buildings in this area, constructed of wood, with a thatched roof and dirt floors. Clay that had been pushed into the crevices kept out some of the cold.

## **Soledad Listened**

Soledad was the mother of three young children, and she was young herself—and overwhelmed. It was all she could do to take care of her home and the daily demands of her children. But she seemed to welcome our visits and to recognize a need for God in her life.

Soledad expressed her thoughts and feelings freely. She had fallen in

love and run away from home with Oscar, even though her parents didn't approve. Neither she nor her husband had any education or a job, and their future was bleak. She wondered if God had abandoned her and if He was punishing them for the poor choices they had made.

Oscar peddled trinkets door to door in an effort to help his family survive. When he had a successful day,

he would buy food and, sometimes, small gifts for the children. But when sales were poor, he would often return home depressed, angry, and drunk.

We felt challenged to help them deal with so many temporal concerns. But we also felt urged by the Spirit to continue loving and teaching them, even though at times their progress was disappointing. After several more visits and after praying sincerely, we



finally felt we needed to give them some time to consider what we had taught, study the Book of Mormon, and pray by themselves.

We explained our concerns to Soledad, and she was upset. She felt we were abandoning her family. She also told us they were expecting a fourth child and didn't know how they would survive. In anger she told us to leave and never return.

### Juan Listened Too

Unknown to us, however, the neighbor next door, Juan, had been listening through the wall to what we had been teaching. He was young, curious, and painfully shy. As he had listened, he had had many questions about the plan of salvation, the Book of Mormon, and repentance. He had even been borrowing Soledad's copy of the Book of Mormon, reading it, and praying regarding all that he had been quietly learning.

Days passed. Juan began to worry when we did not return to teach Soledad and Oscar. Then one night, as a heavy winter storm was brewing, he asked Soledad where we lived and how he could contact us. She said she didn't know, and he began to cry. He bore his testimony to her of the truthfulness of our message and ran out into the stormy night to look for us as rain poured down, turning the streets into muddy rivers.

Hours later, tired and cold, he continued to search. He began to pray as he made his way through the darkness, promising his Father in Heaven that if He would help him find us, he would be baptized and serve Him all the days of his life. In the meantime, Soledad, impressed by Juan's testimony, started praying that we would return. Juan came home but continued to pray and read the

Book of Mormon for the next two days. Soledad also prayed earnestly and talked with Oscar. Together they began reading the Book of Mormon.

### And Heavenly Father Listened

Two days after the storm, as my companion and I knelt in prayer, we felt compelled to return to the tiny little homes at the bottom of the hill. We went immediately, and when we arrived, we were greeted with happy tears and excitement by Soledad, Oscar, their children, and Juan. They told us all that had happened, and from that time on, all of them were eager to learn about the gospel. It wasn't long before Juan was baptized, and Soledad and Oscar soon followed.

I remember wondering why we were so strongly impressed to keep teaching even when Soledad and Oscar weren't responding well. I remember wondering why we felt such an urgency to return when we had been chased away in anger. But as I saw the joy that came into Juan's life and then into Soledad and Oscar's family, I knew that not only was Juan listening through thin walls but that Heavenly Father was listening to prayers from each of us in turn, prayers that came from the heart. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*





**By Elder  
Neil L. Andersen**  
Of the Quorum of  
the Twelve Apostles

# LEARNING FROM LIVING PROPHETS

*Could our attention to the counsel and the teaching of the Brethren be more active, searching, and responsive?*

Of course we love President Thomas S. Monson, the two counselors in the First Presidency, and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. But in acknowledging our love and our loyalty, I would ask, Could our attention to the counsel and the teaching of these Brethren be more active, searching, and responsive?



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

## Four Questions to Ask

Think how you would respond to the following questions:

1. Could you tell me the names of the three members of the First Presidency and the names of each of those who belong to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles? These are the 15 men you and I sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators.
2. If we were to hold up a picture of these Brethren, would you recognize each of them? We rarely pay close attention to someone we do not recognize or know.
3. Could you share with me the counsel given by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles from the last general conference? And could you identify the concerns of President Monson, President Eyring, and President Uchtdorf in the First Presidency Messages of the *Liahona* this year?
4. Perhaps more importantly, could you share with me a recent decision where you changed something in your life because of counsel received from one of these 15 men?

## The Lord's Pattern

The reasons our answers to these questions are so important rests in the calling and responsibility of the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles. Whenever the Lord's Church has been established, the Lord has called prophets and apostles. The Savior said, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you" (John 15:16). To these men, that ordination brings a spiritual power and a solemn responsibility—a power to know and to testify and a responsibility to

**A CONSTANT STREAM OF REVELATION**

“We have the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants; but all these books, without the living oracles and a constant stream of revelation from the Lord, would not lead any people into the Celestial Kingdom of God. . . .

“Of course, these records are all of infinite value. They cannot be too highly prized, nor can they be too closely studied. But in and of themselves, with all the light that they give, they are insufficient to guide the children of men and to lead them into the presence of God. To be thus led requires a living Priesthood and constant revelation from God to the people according to the circumstances in which they may be placed.”<sup>2</sup>

**President George Q. Cannon (1827–1901), First Counselor in the First Presidency, *Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of George Q. Cannon*, comp. Jerreld L. Newquist (1987), 252.**

teach and to bless. It also brings a responsibility and a promise to us all. We have the responsibility to listen and to follow, and we have a promise that blessings will come as we believe and act on their words.

When the Lord called twelve disciples in the Americas after His Resurrection, He taught the people: “Blessed are ye if ye shall give heed unto the words of these twelve whom I have chosen from among you to minister unto you, and to be your servants” (3 Nephi 12:1). In our day, in a very difficult time, the Lord promised the Saints, “If my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place” (D&C 124:45).

This is the Lord’s pattern. He calls 15 men from “the ordinary pursuits of life”<sup>1</sup> and endows them with the keys and power

to guide and direct us. We are not forced to obey; there is no compulsion. But if we will be attentive to their words, if we will be responsive and willing to change our behavior as the Holy Ghost confirms their counsel, we will not be moved out of our place—meaning we will hold fast to the iron rod and will forever remain safely on the path leading to the tree of life. ■

*From a Church Educational System fireside given on March 4, 2007, two years before Elder Andersen was called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.*

**NOTES**

1. Boyd K. Packer, “The Twelve Apostles,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 6.
2. Relative to the importance of living prophets, President Wilford Woodruff said: “If we had before us every revelation which God ever gave to man; if we had the Book of Enoch; if we had the untranslated plates before us in the English language; if we had the records of the Revelator St. John which are sealed up, and all other revelations, and they were piled up here a hundred feet high, the church and kingdom of God could not grow, in this or any other age of the world, without the living oracles of God” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* [2004], 198).

*The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles*



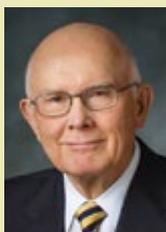
Boyd K. Packer



L. Tom Perry



Russell M. Nelson



Dallin H. Oaks



M. Russell Ballard



Richard G. Scott



Robert D. Hales



Jeffrey R. Holland



David A. Bednar



Quentin L. Cook

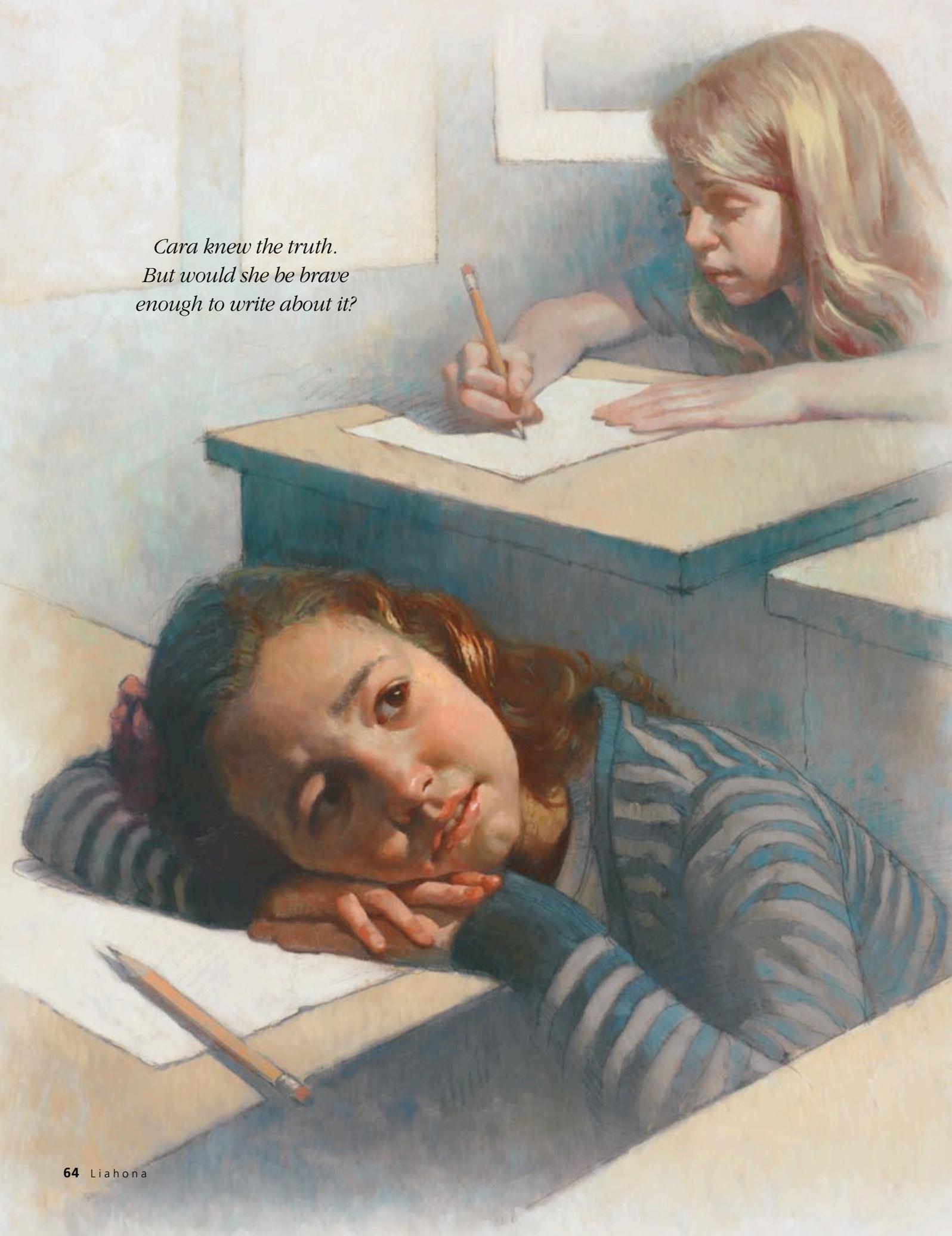


D. Todd Christofferson



Neil L. Andersen

*Cara knew the truth.  
But would she be brave  
enough to write about it?*



# Writing It Right

By Jan Pinborough

Church Magazines

Based on a true story

*“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ” (Romans 1:16).*

Cara put down her pencil and stared at the piece of paper on her desk. It was blank except for her name and a big eraser smudge. “What should I write?” she thought.

Across the aisle, her friend Lily was writing busily. Cara put her head down and rested it on her arm.

Cara really liked her new school. It was in a church building of another religion, and her new class was small enough that her teacher, Mrs. Schmidt, had time to help her with math. Every day after math, Mrs. Schmidt taught a lesson from the Bible. Usually the Bible lessons were a lot like what Cara had learned at home and in Primary.

But a few weeks ago during a lesson about baptism, Mrs. Schmidt had told the class that babies who died before they were baptized couldn't go to heaven. Then she said that one of her own children died right after he was born. When she said that, Mrs. Schmidt looked like she was going to cry.

“But babies who die *do* go to heaven,” Cara wanted to say. If only Mrs. Schmidt knew that, maybe she

wouldn't be so sad anymore. But Cara felt too shy to say anything.

After school, Cara told Mom about what Mrs. Schmidt said. “Knowing that babies go to heaven is one of the blessings we have because of the Book of Mormon,” Mom said. Cara hoped that Mrs. Schmidt would read the Book of Mormon someday. She wished she had the courage to tell her about it.

Now in today's lesson, Mrs. Schmidt had told the class that God, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost are all one person. Cara thought about how Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith in the Sacred Grove. She *knew* that They were two separate people and that each had a body. She was glad she knew that for sure, even before talking to Mom or Dad about it.

But then Mrs. Schmidt had said, “Class, please take out a piece of paper and write about what we have been talking about.”

That's when Cara got a worried feeling in her stomach. She wanted to do the assignment the way her teacher wanted her to. Could she be brave enough to write what she knew was true?

With her head down on her desk, Cara began to say a silent prayer. “Please, dear Heavenly Father, what should I do?”

Almost at once, Cara began to feel calm and peaceful inside. The Holy Ghost whispered that if she wrote what was in her heart, everything would be OK.

Cara lifted her head, picked up her pencil, and began to write.

*Heavenly Father and Jesus are two separate people. They have bodies of flesh and bone like we do. The Holy Ghost is a Spirit who can speak to us in our hearts.*

After writing a few more sentences, Cara put her pencil down. She didn't know what Mrs. Schmidt would think of what she had written, but she felt happy that she had been able to tell her teacher something important and true. ■



President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “The Restoration,” *New Era*, Oct. 2011, 5.

“Be humble and testify of the Restoration of the gospel. . . . Be courageous. Have faith. Do not fear. Trust the Lord.”

# Jesus Is My Shepherd

*Sweetly* ♩ = 86-98

(Simplified)

Words and music by Tammy Simister Robinson  
*a tempo*

*mp* 1. Je - sus is my  
*rit.* 2. Je - sus is my

Shep - herd. I'm His pre - cious lamb. Ten - der - ly He guides me  
Shep - herd. Je - sus knows my name. For His sheep are num - bered;

with His gen - tle hand. Calm are wa - ters where He leads. Green are pas - tures  
each He loves the same. If my ti - ny feet should roam, He would seek to

*rit.* *a tempo* 1.  
where He feeds me. Je - sus is my Shep - herd. He loves me.  
bring me home. —

2. *rit.*  
He loves me. *p* He loves me.

PHOTOGRAPH © ISTOCKPHOTO

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**By Jean A. Stevens**  
First Counselor in the  
Primary General Presidency

# Faithful Examples

*“And a little child shall lead them”  
(2 Nephi 21:6).*

**A**s a member of the Primary general presidency, I love meeting children all over the world. Everywhere I go, I meet wonderful children who are following Jesus Christ and faithfully living the gospel. Often they are leading their families and others in keeping the commandments.

Once a General Authority visited a ward in Hong Kong where people were struggling to support their families.

He told the bishop that the members should pay their tithing.

The bishop was worried. The people barely had enough food and money to meet their needs.

“If they will pay their tithing, the Lord will bless them,” the General Authority said.

The bishop thought for a moment. Then he said, “I will talk to some of the most faithful members of our ward—the Primary children!”

The next Sunday, the bishop visited the Primary. He taught the children about the

law of tithing. He asked them to pay tithing on the money they earned. The children promised they would—and they did!

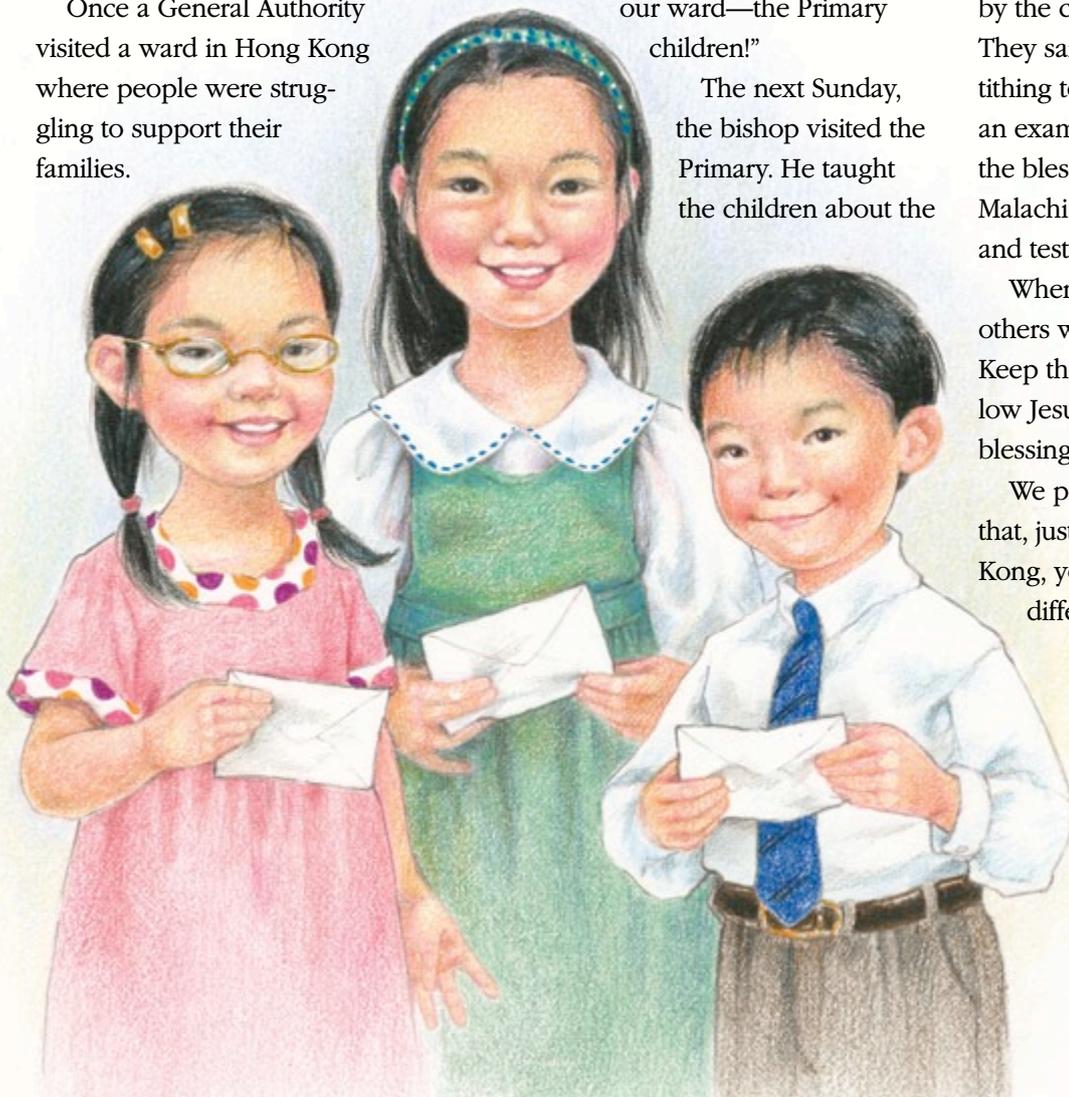
Several months later, the bishop had a meeting with the grown-ups in the ward. He told them that their children had been paying tithing.

“Would you be willing to pay tithing too?” he asked.

The grown-ups were touched by the children’s faithful examples. They said that they would pay their tithing too. Because the children set an example, their families received the blessings they needed (see Malachi 3:8–10). Everyone’s faith and testimonies grew.

Wherever you live, you can lead others with your good example. Keep the commandments and follow Jesus Christ. Then you will be a blessing to your family and others.

We pray for you. And we know that, just like the children in Hong Kong, your example can make a difference for good! ■



# The Nauvoo Temple and Carthage Jail

*Come along to explore these important places in Church history!*

By Jennifer Maddy

**I**n 1841 many of the Saints in Nauvoo were poor. But they knew they needed to build a temple, as the Lord had told them. More than 1,000 men worked to build the temple. Women sewed shirts and cooked for the workers. Many people sacrificed to build the temple. They looked forward to the blessings they would receive there.

## Carthage Jail

Work on the temple stopped in June 1844, when the Prophet Joseph Smith was killed. Joseph and several other men had been taken to Carthage Jail. On June 27 a mob stormed the jail. They shot and killed Joseph and his brother Hyrum.

## Finishing the Temple

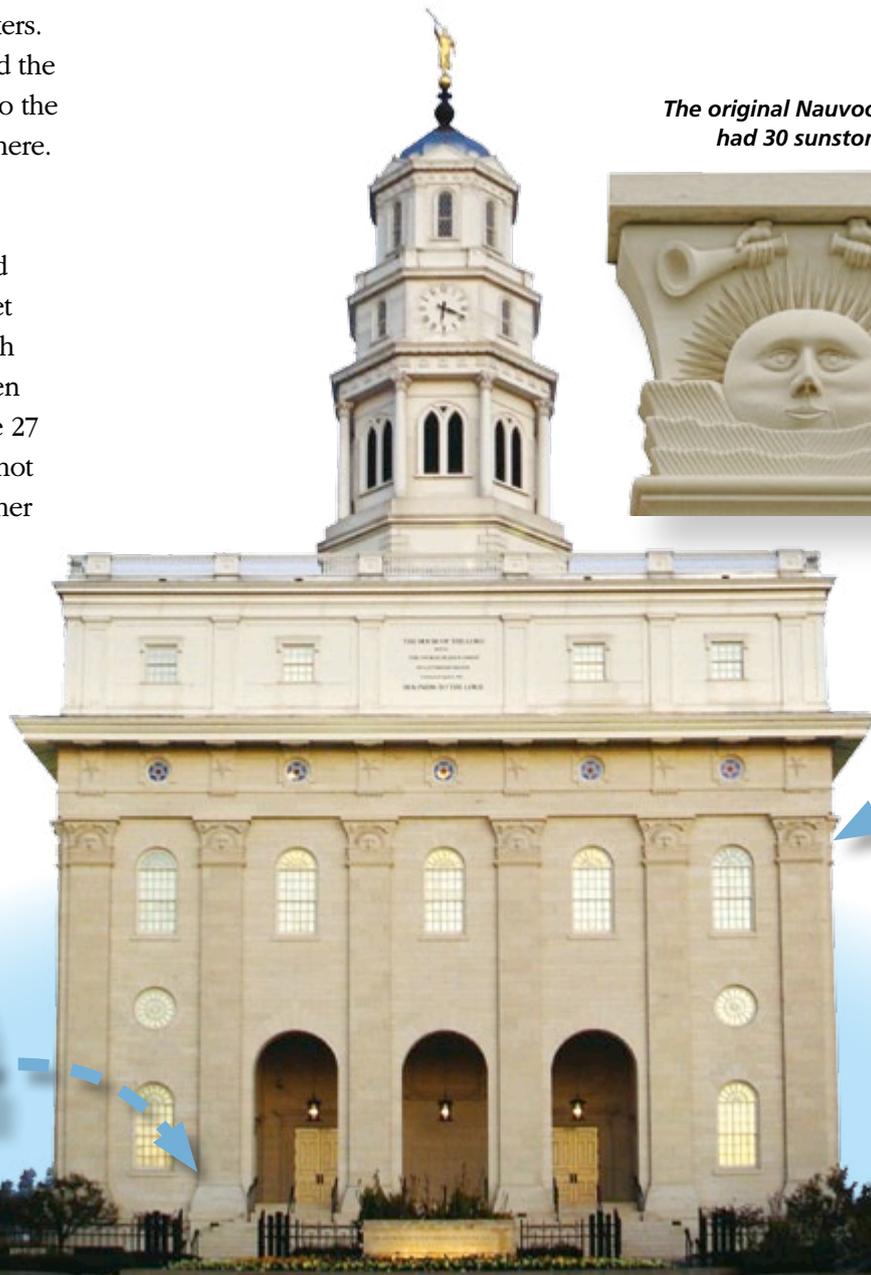
The Saints were brokenhearted that their Prophet was gone. Brigham Young, who was President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, knew the Lord's work

would continue. The Saints finally finished the temple. Church leaders worked in the temple day and night so the Saints could be baptized for their ancestors and be sealed as eternal families.

*The original Nauvoo Temple had 30 sunstones.*



*A crescent moon carved on the outside wall of the temple.*



Statues of Joseph and Hyrum stand in front of Carthage Jail. "In life they were not divided, and in death they were not separated!" (D&C 135:3).



The mob ran up this stairway in Carthage Jail to get to Joseph and his companions.

Joseph and the other men were in the upstairs room at the jail.



### Rebuilding the Temple

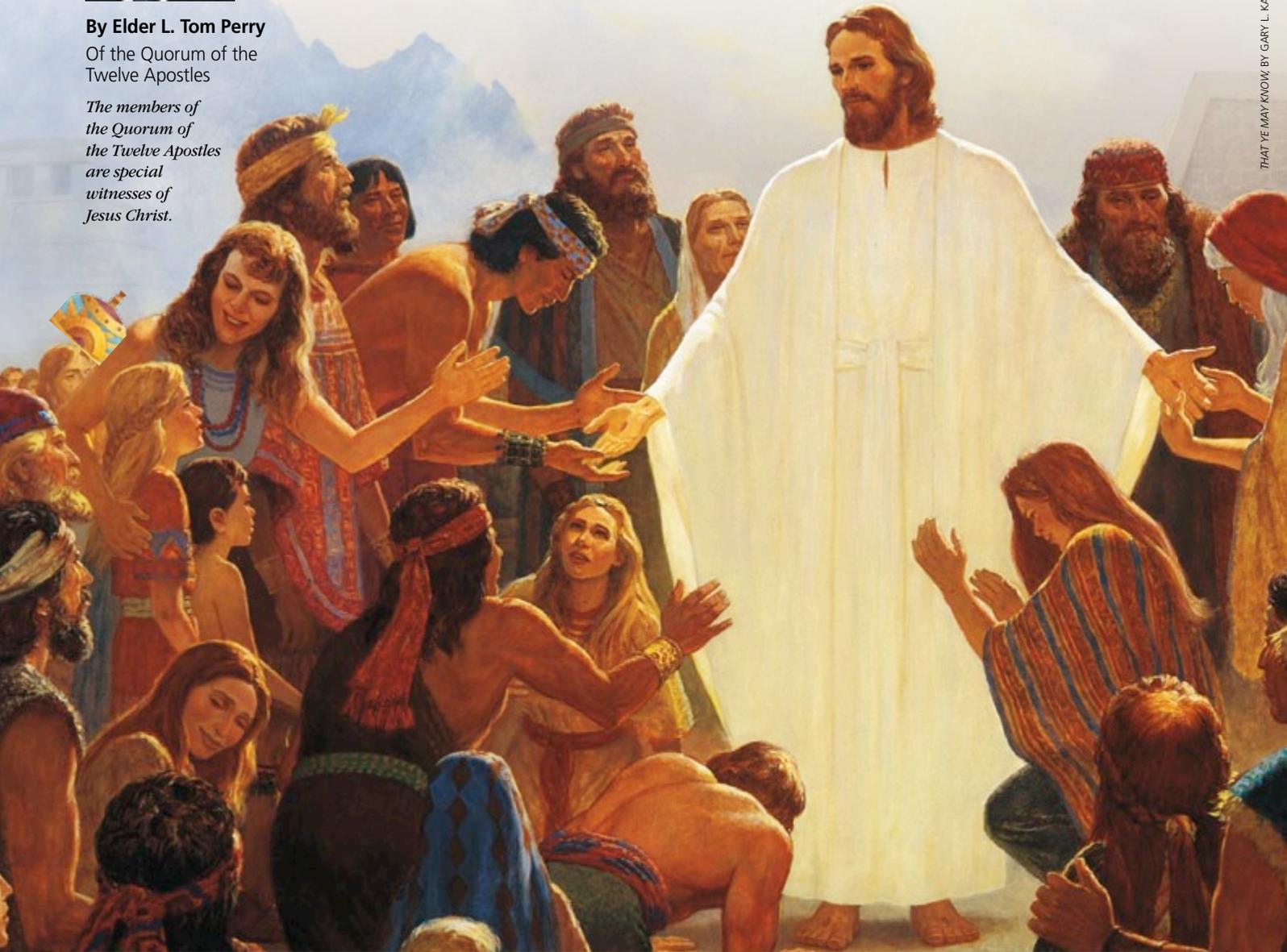
After the Saints left Nauvoo, the temple was destroyed by fire and a tornado. In 1999, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) announced that the Nauvoo Temple would be built again in the same place. Today you can see this beautiful temple just as it looked back in the 1840s. ■



# Why is it important to have both the Bible and the Book of Mormon?

**By Elder L. Tom Perry**  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

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



**Both the Bible and the Book of Mormon are necessary for our salvation.**

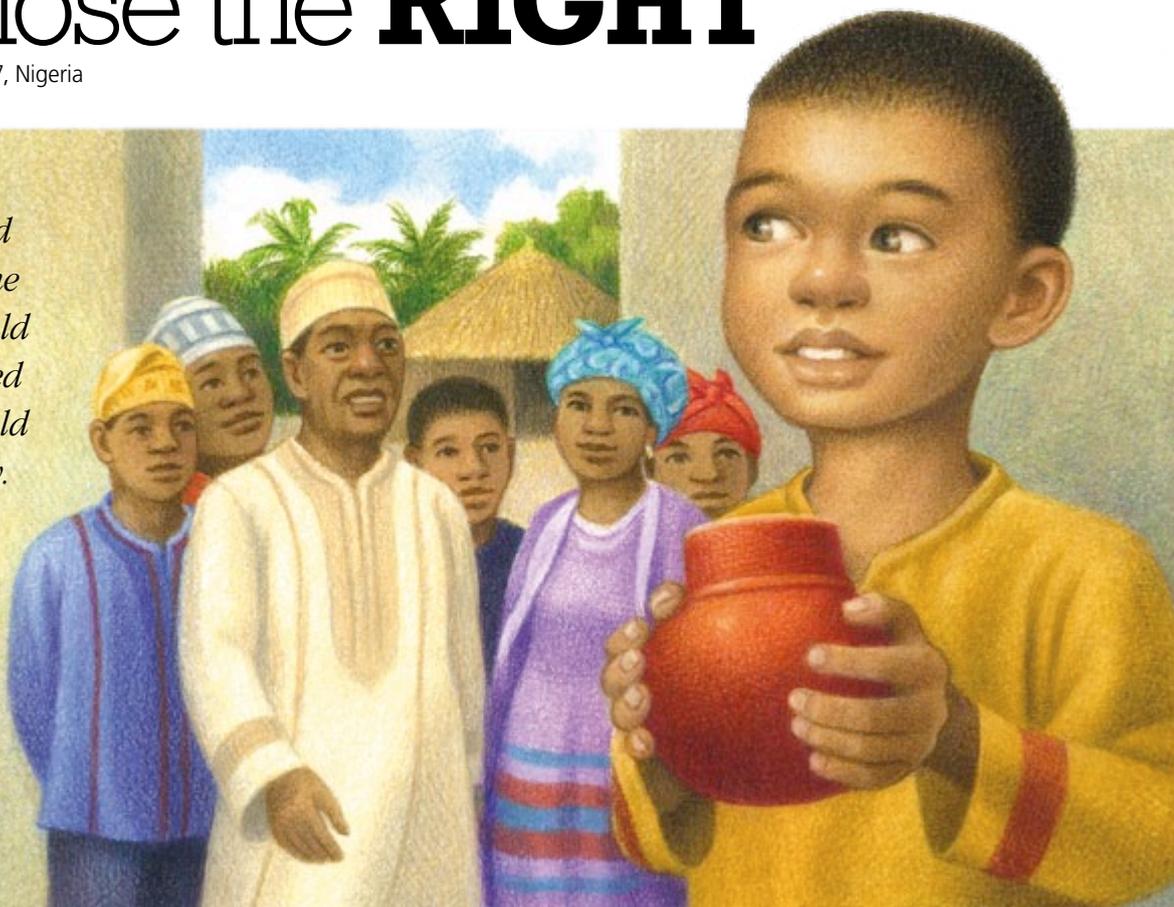
**What a blessing it is to have the account of the mission of our Lord and Savior declared in the Book of Mormon to add a second witness to the doctrine declared in the Bible.**

**Both are necessary for us to teach and learn about the full and complete doctrine of Christ.**

# I Chose the **RIGHT**

By Ekene B., age 7, Nigeria

*If I refused to drink the wine, I could be punished and so could my family.*



*“Learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God” (Alma 37:35).*

**I**went with my family to visit my parents’ village for a New Year celebration. It had been three years since we had visited last, and we were looking forward to seeing friends and family members again. When we arrived, we were happily welcomed.

When New Year’s Eve came, we gathered with others for a traditional ceremony to wish protection, long life, and prosperity to the oldest son of each family. I am the oldest son in my family. I learned that all those

taking part would be expected to drink wine as part of the ceremony.

I was very worried. I knew that drinking the wine would be breaking the Word of Wisdom. But I also knew that if I did not drink the wine, I might be punished for being disrespectful—and my family might be punished too. Then I remembered what my mother had taught me: when you find yourself in a situation you cannot control, you should pray to Heavenly Father and ask Him to help you.

I prayed silently, “Heavenly Father, let Thy Spirit guide me and

help me to do what is right.”

When it was my turn to drink the wine, I was nervous, but I spoke loudly and clearly. “My body is a temple. I will not break the Word of Wisdom,” I said.

The village elder was very surprised. He turned to me and said, “You seem very sure of what you are doing. Please, we would like to hear more of your views.”

My family and I were not punished, and our faith was strengthened. I know Heavenly Father helped me have the courage to choose the right. ■

# OUR PAGE



I love my mother very much and like to help her do dishes. I also pray for my father. I know that Heavenly Father tells us,

“Don’t hit people, don’t call people names, and don’t hurt little animals.”

**Ya-Se C., age 4, Taiwan**



**Prince and his sisters read the scriptures during family home evening.**

During family home evening, I like to give a scriptural thought and say a prayer. I like my Primary friends, and I like raising and caring for pigeons. I would like to go to the Nauvoo Illinois Temple someday, and I want to be a missionary too. I love my family so much! I know the Church is true, and I love the Book of Mormon.

**Prince M., age 9, Philippines**



**Macarena G., age 8, Chile**



**Happy Birthday, by James C., age 5, Peru**



I know that Jesus Christ lives, that He loves us, and that the Church is true. The story of the tree of life teaches that if we follow the gospel, we can be happy.

**Manuelis R., age 5, Venezuela**





**Sarah G., age 6, Guatemala**

**TRYING TO BE LIKE JESUS**

When I came out of the gymnasium at school one day, all my things were dumped out of my backpack, and a toy I had in there was gone. I thought my friend had taken my toy because he had tried to buy it from me earlier that day. I was sad because this meant we would not be friends anymore. That night I prayed that whoever took my toy would understand that it was wrong and would give it back to me. The next day at school my friend gave me back the toy and asked me to forgive him so we could be friends again. I was so happy, and I forgave him. I am grateful the Holy Ghost helped my friend and me do what was right. I know I can pray to Heavenly Father anytime and He will help me.

**Brandon A., age 8, Mexico**



One time my mother and I took my brothers to the airport because they were going on a trip. We encountered a lot of traffic,



When my baptism and confirmation was only a day or two away, I had a fever and was not feeling very good. I did not want

and we were afraid they might miss their plane. My mother wasn't feeling very well either. That's when I said a prayer, and I had faith that it would be answered. We did get my brothers to their plane on time! I know Heavenly Father heard my prayer.

**Sara P., age 11, Italy**

to postpone my baptism. I felt I should go ahead on the appointed day. Many relatives and friends, some who are not members of the Church, came to my baptism. When I was baptized, my fever went down right away, and I felt a lot better. That day I felt the Holy Ghost very strongly. I am grateful that I could be baptized and receive the Holy Ghost.

**Sara M., age 8, Spain**



**Milton with his father on his baptism day.**



**The Primary children of the Monay Ward, Cuenca Ecuador Stake, love learning about the gospel.**

I will always remember the day of my baptism because it was the most important day of my life. That was the day I made a covenant with Heavenly Father. I know that Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, live and that They love me very much. I love going to the temple, even though I cannot go in yet.

**Milton Aarón V., age 10, Ecuador**

# I Will Serve God with All My Heart, Might, Mind, and Strength

One day at recess, Madison saw a girl who was crying because someone had said something mean to her. Madison felt bad for the girl and walked over to comfort her. “Would you like to play with me?” she asked the girl.

That day, Madison served with her heart. She followed the example of Jesus Christ and showed love to someone in need. We can show our love for Heavenly Father by serving others with our heart, our might, our mind, and our strength. We can serve with our whole selves!

How do we serve with our heart? We can serve with our heart by showing

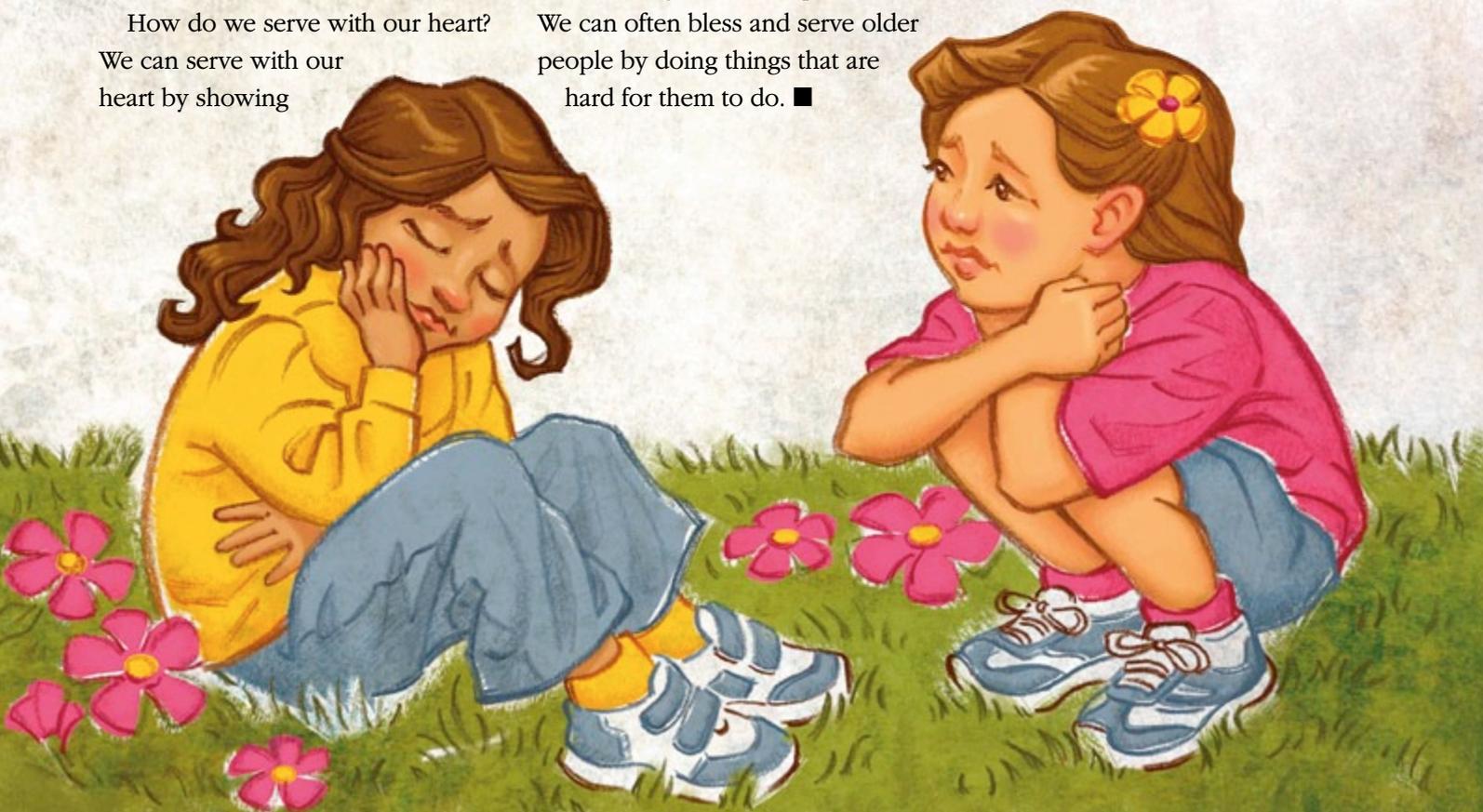
love and kindness to others. We care about what others need. When we serve cheerfully, we are serving with our heart.

How do we serve with our mind? We can serve with our mind by thinking of ways to help others. When we see needs of those around us and think about what we could do to help, we are serving with our mind.

How do we serve with our might and strength? Serving with our might and strength could be doing chores and working hard to help others. We can often bless and serve older people by doing things that are hard for them to do. ■

## LET'S TALK

As a family, decide on some things you could do together as you serve with your whole self. Explain that whenever we serve others, we are serving Heavenly Father.



# SERVING WITH YOUR WHOLE SELF

Choose a way you would like to serve from each of the areas below or think of your own ideas.

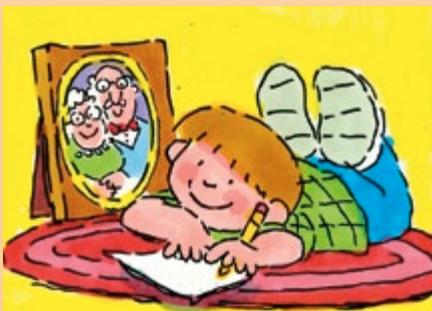
After you have finished with one act of service, color in the shape next to the description.

## HEART



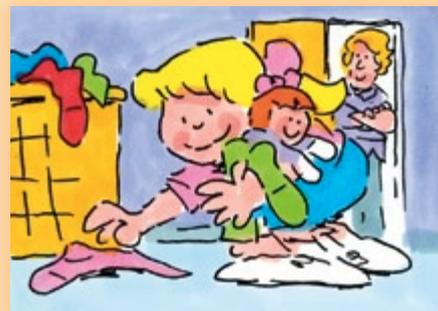
Tell your parents or siblings that you love them.

## MIND



Write a letter to a grandparent.

## MIGHT AND STRENGTH



When your parents ask you to do something, work hard at it.



Do something kind for someone who is alone. Smile at someone.



Offer to help a brother or sister with homework.



Help a brother or sister with a chore.

## SONG AND SCRIPTURE

- "Called to Serve," *Children's Songbook*, 174
- Doctrine and Covenants 59:5



Help plan a family service project.



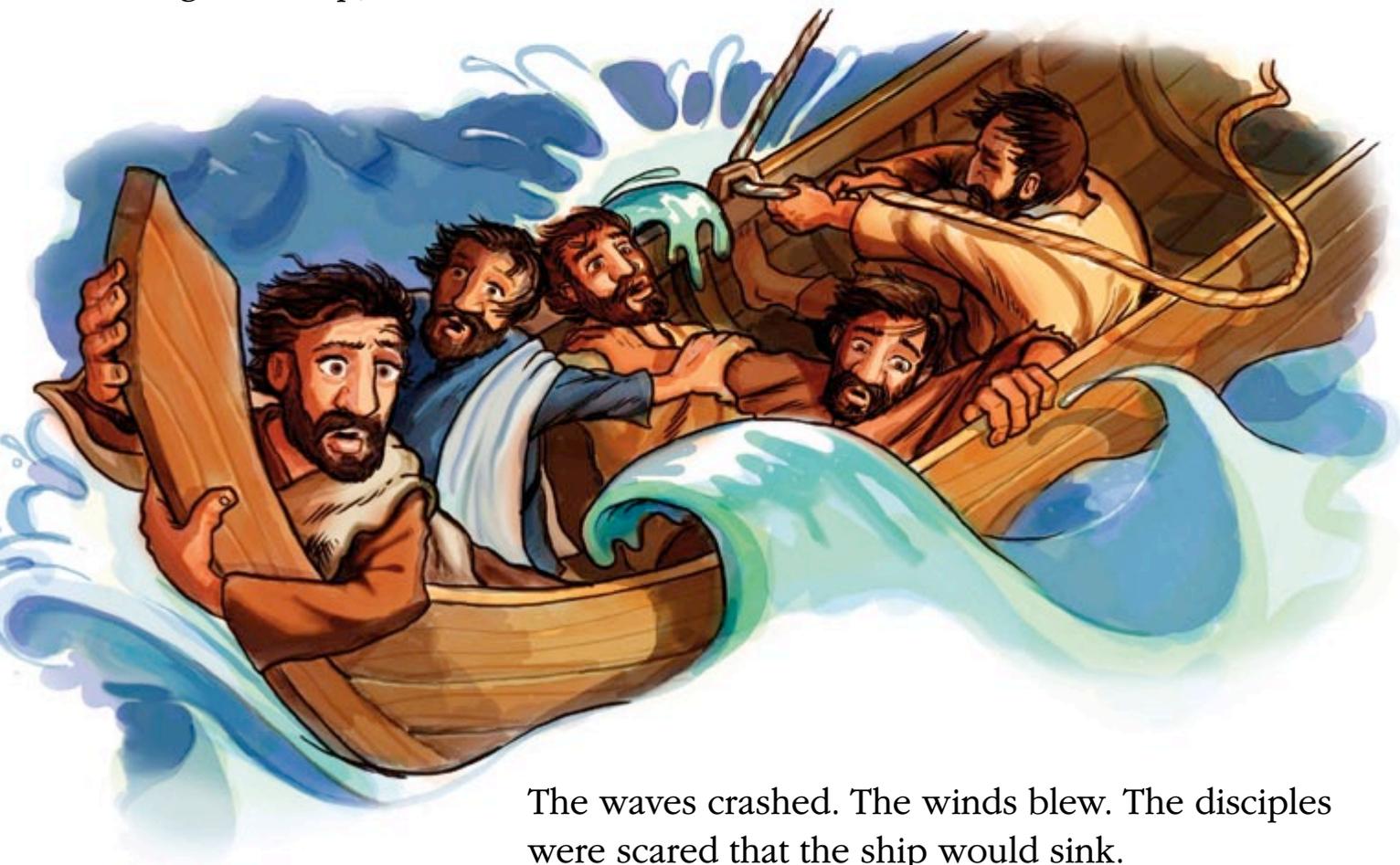
Rake leaves, pull weeds, or do something else to help your family.

# Jesus Calms the Tempest

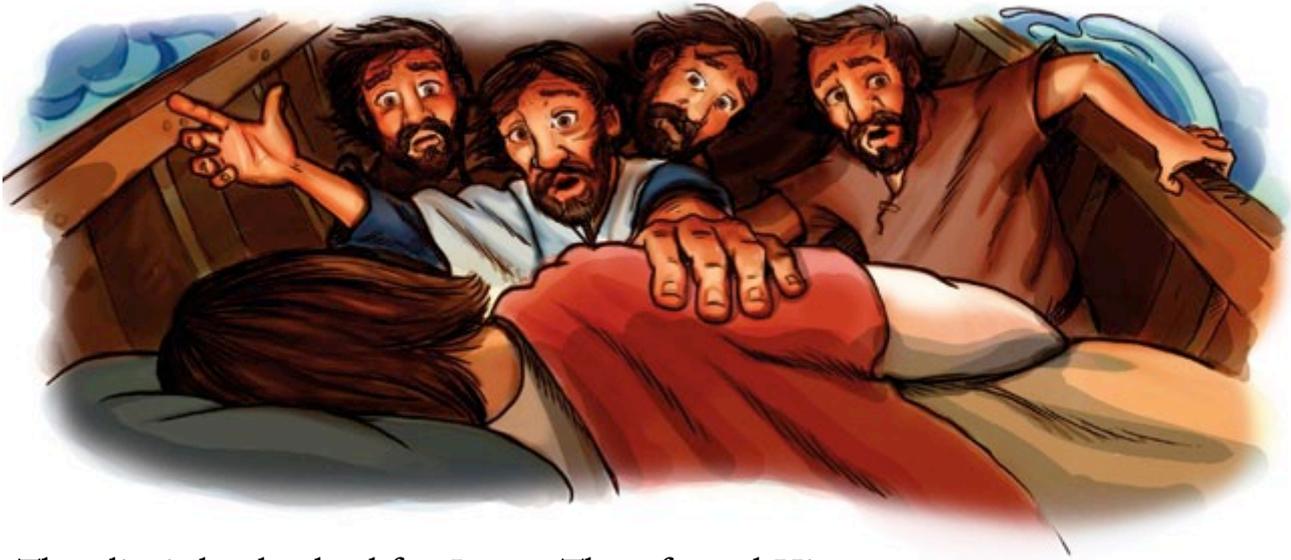
By Charlotte Mae Sheppard, Utah, USA



One day when Jesus and His disciples were sailing on a ship, there was a terrible storm.



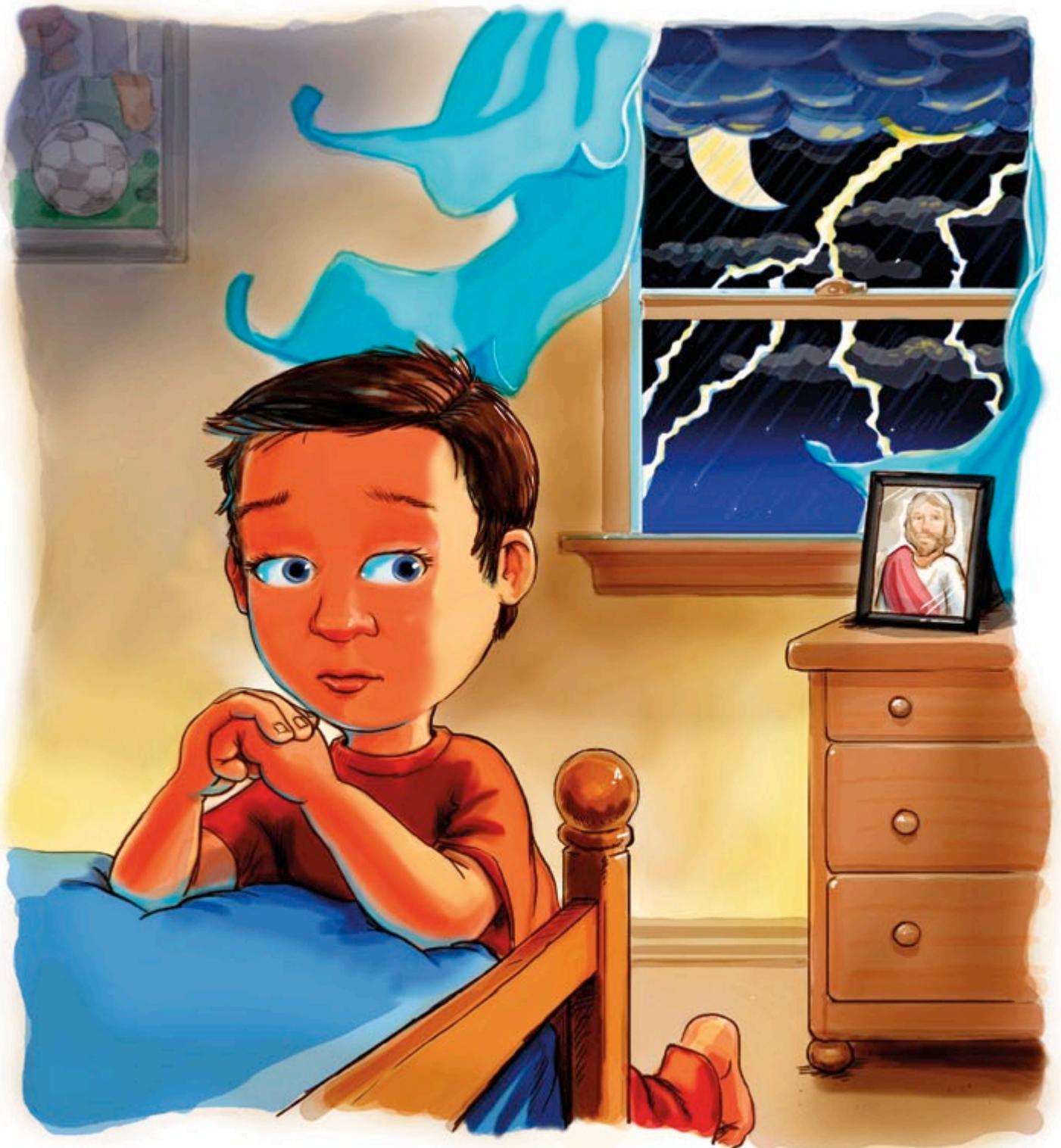
The waves crashed. The winds blew. The disciples were scared that the ship would sink.



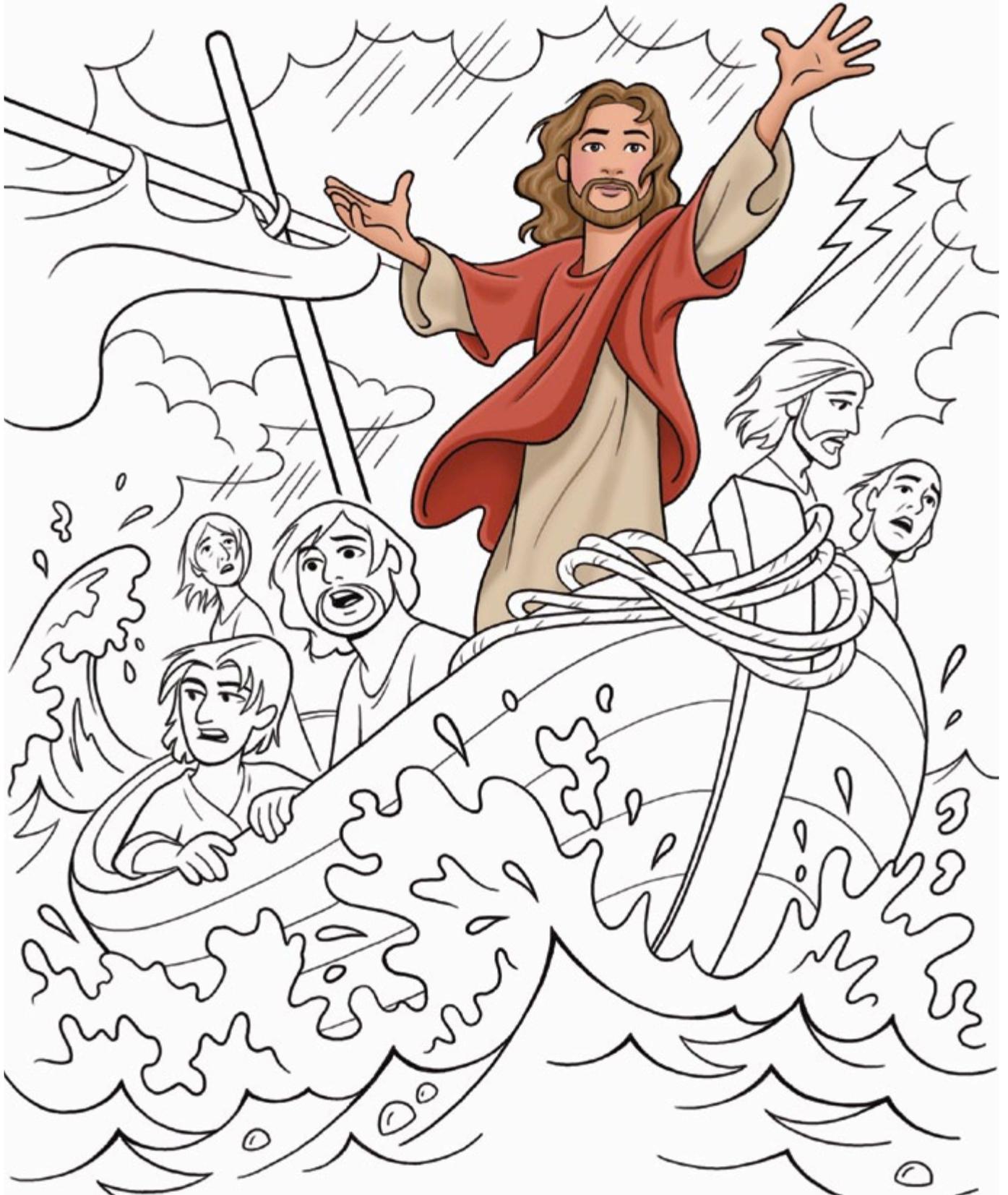
The disciples looked for Jesus. They found Him sleeping. “Save us!” they cried. “Why are ye fearful?” Jesus asked.



Jesus stood up and commanded the storm to stop. The disciples watched as the waves stopped crashing and the winds stopped blowing. The storm had ended, just as Jesus had commanded it to do.



Sometimes when scary things happen, we feel afraid. But Jesus is near. Thinking about Him can help us feel safe and calm. ■



**Jesus Calms the Tempest**

“Then [Jesus] arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm” (Matthew 8:26).

ILLUSTRATION BY JARED BECKSTRAND

# THE LONGEST SACRAMENT MEETING

By Okon Edet Effiong

I love to read Latter-day Saint religious books. And because these books are not readily available in Nigeria, I borrow them from a friend. Desiring to return my friend's books within a few days, I always carry them with me and use spare moments to read.

One Sunday I had a borrowed book with me as I attended sacrament meeting in the ward where I am assigned as high councilor. I read the book while I waited to give the bishop a message from the stake presidency. When the bishop arrived, he asked me to speak to his first counselor since he needed to greet some visitors. After passing the message to the first counselor, I took a seat on the stand.

No sooner had I sat down, however, than I realized my friend's book was gone. With about five minutes before the meeting was to begin—and with the presiding authority seated on the stand—I thought I shouldn't leave. Sick about disappointing my friend, I thus started my ordeal in the longest sacrament meeting I have ever attended.

I hoped that time would pass quickly, but every item on the meeting agenda took what seemed like a lifetime. I was restless, praying silently that God would keep the book safe.



*Sacrament meeting usually lasts for 70 minutes. But one Sunday it seemed to stretch on forever.*

Truly, the talks were not long, but an unreasonable anxiety had taken over my mind. Five minutes before the end of the meeting, I could bear it no more. I passed a note to the first counselor asking if I had left the book by him. I wished he would nod his head yes. He shook it instead.

I did not close my eyes during the benediction but closely monitored the two remaining places where I thought the book might be. Meanwhile, I decided that, if necessary, I would go to the Sunday School classes to announce that I had lost a book.

Surprisingly, however, when sacrament meeting concluded, my feelings had changed radically, and I wasn't worried about the book. The Holy Spirit showed me—in just a few short moments of spiritual enlightenment—that my concerns were misplaced. I learned that what truly mattered was whether or not I would protect those things that God had put into my care. My mind immediately listed what I could remember God entrusting to me: my soul, my family, those I home teach, those I should share the gospel with, ward members I serve, my departed ancestors who need temple work, and so on.

I did find the book after what became an important soul-searching experience. But at the end of the longest sacrament meeting, I also found areas of my life that needed improvement. And I found the commitment to work on the priorities Heavenly Father desires. ■

*The author lives in Lagos, Nigeria.*

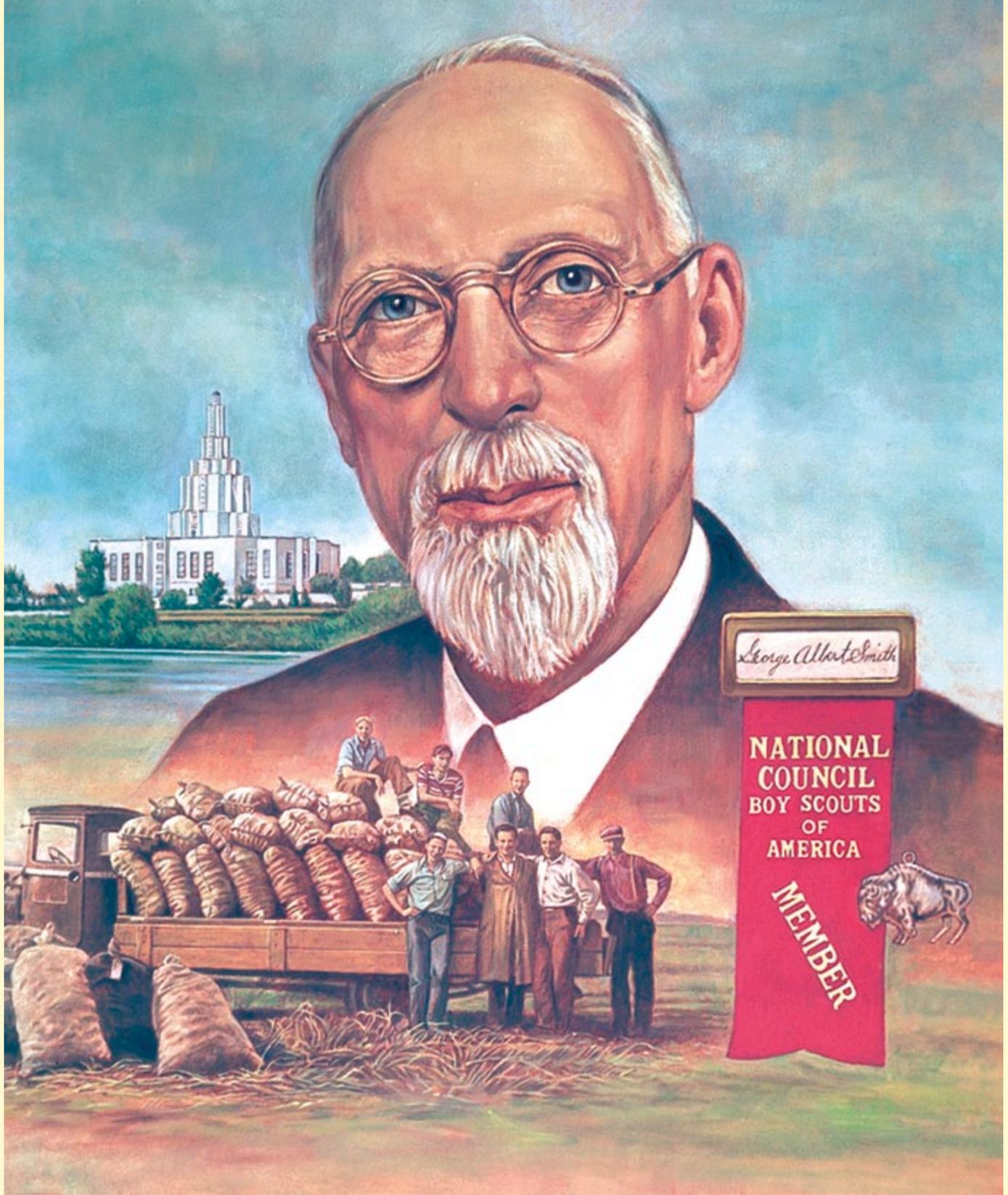


ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT T. BARRETT

## **GEORGE ALBERT SMITH**

**George Albert Smith** was 21 when he was first called to serve the young men of the Church. He became involved with the **Boy Scouts of America**, which honored him for his service. While serving as an Apostle, George Albert Smith was also a leader in several national and international farming organizations. He dedicated the **Idaho Falls Idaho Temple**.



*In his article, “The Justice and Mercy of God,” Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles uses sowing thistles as a metaphor for becoming trapped in sin. “We sow a little thistle, and we get a lot of thistle—years and years of it, big bushes and branches of it. We never get rid of it unless we cut it out.” To read his counsel on how we can repent and lay claim to mercy, see page 20.*