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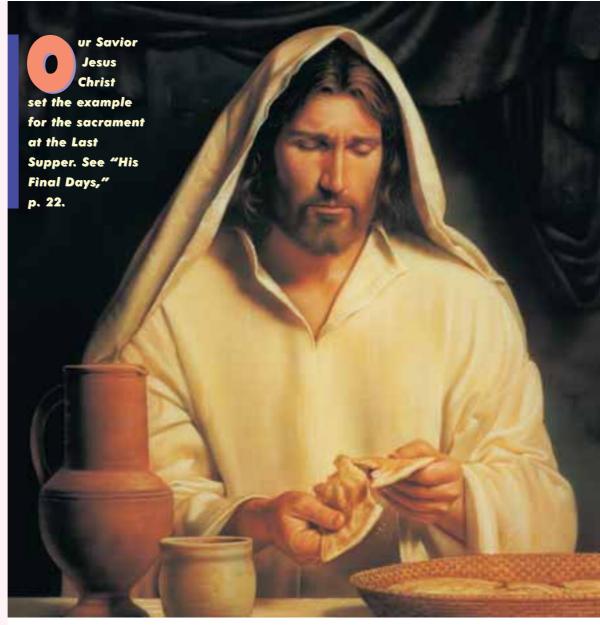
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Front cover: "Not My Will, But Thine, Be Done," by Harry Anderson. See "His Final Days" on p. 22.

Back cover: "Garden of Gethsemane, Israel," by Richard Cleave.







C O N T E N T S

The Message: Because We Have Them before Our Eyes Elder David A. Bednar The scriptures are vitally important as we	2	Peace at Home Name Withheld How to talk peacefully with a family member who believes differently.	28	Quorum of the Twelve: Boyd K. Packer, L. Tom Perry, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin, Richard G. Scott, Robert D. Hales, Jeffrey R. Holland, Henry B. Eyring, Dieter F. Uchtdorf, David A. Bednar
strive to come unto Christ.		What's Up?	30	Editor: Jay E. Jensen Advisors: Monte J. Brough, Gary J. Coleman,
The Perfect Comeback	8	Articles of Faith:		Yoshihiko Kikuchi
Richard D. Hawks		What Abraham's Covenant	20	Managing Director: David L. Frischknecht
The boy who was offended last week		Means to You	32	Editorial Director:
became the one to reach out.		Shanna Butler		Victor D. Cave Senior Editors: Richard M.
Fighting to Find the Touth	10	What does it mean to be a child of		Romney, Larry Hiller Graphics Director:
Fighting to Find the Truth Don L. Searle	10	the covenant?		Allan R. Loyborg
Artur Tomaszewski, the national jujitsu		The Source	37	Managing Editor:
champion of Poland, is now called elder.		William Kim Rawlinson	-	R. Val Johnson Assistant Managing Editor:
		Finding water that eternally quenches		Janet Thomas Associate Editors: Shanna
My Scripture Secret	13	our spiritual thirst.		Butler, Paul VanDenBerghe Editorial Staff: Susan Barrett,
Melissa Domeyer Aina		2		Ryan Carr, Monica Dickinson,
I had no idea reading the scriptures		It's a Twin Thing	38	Jenifer L. Greenwood, Adam C. Olson
could bring so many blessings.		Janet Thomas		Publications Assistant: Sally J. Odekirk
		The Ruesch brothers from North Carolin	а	Editorial Intern:
Q&A:		found that the best person to turn to		Danielle Nye Poulter
•	14	for support was each other.		Marketing Manager: Larry Hiller
Kids at school are always harassing		Mr. Dattle with Assessin	40	Managing Art Director:
and making fun of me because they		My Battle with Anorexia	42	Michael Kawasaki
know I'm a member of the Church.		Katie May Hess I felt hopeless and broken until I		Art Director: Brent Christison Senior Designer: Fay P. Andrus
What's the best way to deal with it?		turned to the Savior for help.		Design and Production Staff: Collette Nebeker Aune, Jane
New Era Poster:		turned to the Savior for help.		Ann Peters, Tadd R. Peterson, Randall J. Pixton, Scott Van
	17	The Extra Smile	46	Kampen
				Printing Director: Craig K. Sedgwick
A Plan for Adam	18	What's in It for You	47	Distribution Director:
Kimberly Cone				Kris T Christensen
It seemed unlikely that one of the cool		We've Got Mail	48	© 2006 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.
guys at school would join the Church.		Do a se		Periodicals Postage Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah, and at additional
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The final week of the Savior's mortal		Lane V. Erickson		POSTMASTER: Send address
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We Have Them BEFORE OUR



As we continue in the process of coming unto the Savior, we will be strengthened and prospered as we consistently and diligently "feast upon the words of Christ."

Applying five principles to your scripture study can help you not only learn more about the Savior but also become more like Him.

Because

BY ELDER DAVID A. BEDNAR Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

ver the past 20 years, Sister Bednar and I have met with tens of thousands of young Latter-day Saints to discuss the doctrines of the restored gospel and to consider the blessings of living correct principles in our daily lives. As we have met with both large and small groups, we typically have invited the youth to ask questions. We have been greatly impressed with their depth of gospel knowledge and the quality of their questions.

Two of the questions that have been posed to us over and over again are these: Why is studying the scriptures so important? How can I make scripture study more edifying and effective?

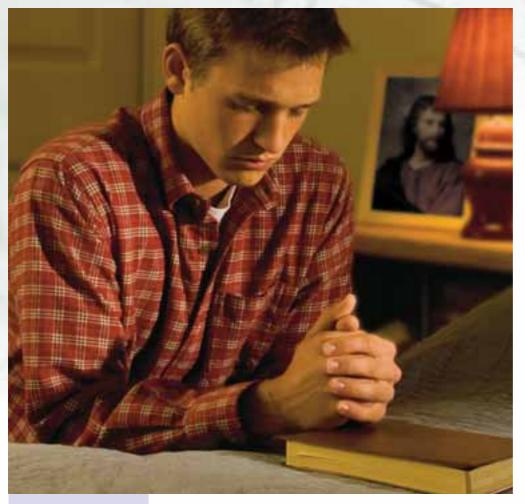
These excellent questions deserve serious consideration by each of us.

Why Is Studying the Scriptures So Important?

The Lord has declared that it is His work and His glory "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). He has established His Church to help in this great work. Accordingly, the grand mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is to "invite all to come unto Christ" (D&C 20:59) and "be perfected in him" (Moroni 10:32). Thus, all that we learn and know and do as disciples of the Savior and as members of His Church is intended to assist us in responding affirmatively to this supernal invitation.

Coming unto Christ is not a single event with a fixed point of beginning or ending; rather, it is a process that develops and deepens during a lifetime. As an initial step in the process, we certainly must obtain knowledge and learn about Jesus and His life, teachings, and ministry. But truly coming unto Him also requires consistent obedience and striving to become like Jesus in our thoughts, motives, communications, and actions. As we "press forward" (2 Nephi 31:20) on the pathway of discipleship, we can draw near unto the Savior with the





be things of the Spirit can be learned only by and through the influence of the Spirit. Each time we begin a session of sincere scripture study, it is helpful to pray not only at the beginning, but to plead for understanding as we study.

expectation that He will draw near unto us; we can seek Him diligently with the hope that we shall find Him; we can ask with confidence that we shall receive; and we can knock anticipating that the door shall be opened unto us (see D&C 88:63).

One of the best ways to draw near unto Him and to both learn about and become more like the Lord Jesus Christ is to consistently study the holy scriptures—to daily "feast upon the words of Christ" (2 Nephi 32:3).

Please notice that I used the word *study* and not the word *read*. Studying and feasting suggest a focus and an intensity that reach far beyond casual reading or quick perusing. Studying and feasting, followed by sincere prayer and steadfast application of the truths and principles we learn, yield personal resolve, spiritual commitment, and

the bright light of testimony. Studying, learning, praying, and appropriately applying gospel truths are all key elements in the process of coming unto the Savior.

The scriptures are vitally important to me as I continue to come unto Christ. To my mind and heart frequently comes a strong admonition from my patriarchal blessing to "study the scriptures at every available opportunity." For decades that simple phrase has provided focus for my gospel study, and the promised blessings of inspiration and direction

associated with that admonition have been realized repeatedly in my life.

I also have been greatly influenced in my study and use of the scriptures by President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973). During my initial missionary training in Salt Lake City in 1971, approximately 300 elders and sisters were blessed to receive instruction from President Lee in the assembly room of the Salt Lake Temple. To be taught by one of the Lord's special witnesses and a member of the First Presidency in such a sacred setting was a most memorable experience for me.

The format for the instruction was quite simple: President Lee invited us to ask questions about any and all gospel topics. I will never forget what I felt as I watched President Lee answer every single question from the scriptures! I knew I would never

have the command of the scriptures that he did, but then and there in the Salt Lake Temple I resolved to study and use the scriptures in my teaching and follow the example of President Lee. And that commitment as a new and inexperienced 19-year-old missionary has blessed my life in ways that cannot be counted or adequately described.

In the following instruction, note the central role of the scriptures in the process of coming to know and rely upon God:

"Search the scriptures—search the revelations which we publish, and ask your Heavenly Father, in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, to manifest the truth unto you, and if you do it with an eye single to his glory, nothing doubting, he will answer you by the power of his Holy Spirit: *You*

will then know for yourselves and not for another: You will not then be dependent on man for the knowledge of God; nor will there be any room for speculation. No; for, when men receive their instruction from him that made them, they know how he will save them."

By the power of the Holy Ghost, each of us can receive a spiritual witness independent of any other person and "know for yourselves" that Jesus is the Savior and our Redeemer.

The scriptures, in essence, are a written "recording" of the voice of the Lord—a voice we feel in our hearts more than we hear with our ears. And as we study the content and feel the spirit of the written word of God, we learn to hear His voice in the words we read and to understand the means whereby the words are given to us by the Holy Ghost. As is explained in Doctrine and Covenants 18:34—36:

"These words are not of men nor of man, but of me; wherefore, you shall testify they are of me and not of man;

"For it is my voice which speaketh them unto you; for they are given by my Spirit unto you, and by my power you can read them one to another; and save it were by my power you could not have them;

"Wherefore, you can testify that you have heard my voice, and know my words."

How important it is for each of us to return repeatedly to the holy scriptures and thereby gain experience and confidence in hearing and feeling His voice. As we regularly study the holy scriptures, "Behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do" (2 Nephi 32:3).

In our process of coming unto Christ, hearing and feeling the voice of the Lord and knowing His words are essential. The Savior taught, "My sheep *hear my voice*, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27;

emphasis added). Thus, hearing His voice precedes properly following Him, "for mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts" (D&C 29:7). Truly, we can receive instruction from Him and follow Him. And the spiritual capacity to hear, to feel, and to follow is available to every member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—and that capacity is strengthened through diligent study of the scriptures.

Why is studying the scriptures so important? Sincere study of the scriptures helps us progress in the process of coming unto Christ and becoming more like Him. Through daily feasting, we can gain a testimony of the gospel truths for ourselves and

learn to hear and follow the voice of the Lord.

How Can I Make Scripture Study More Edifying and Effective?

Understanding and applying five basic principles can help our personal scripture study become more edifying and effective.

Principle 1: Pray for understanding, and invite the help of the Holy Ghost. The things of



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the Spirit can be learned only by and through the influence of the Spirit. Each time we begin a session of sincere scripture study, an earnest and humble prayer in which we petition our Heavenly Father in the name of His Son for the assistance of the Holy Ghost will greatly improve our learning, understanding, and recall. It is helpful to pray not only at the beginning, but to plead for understanding as you study. Also, I find it helpful to express gratitude for what I have been taught as I conclude the session.

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bidden scriptural

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a great deal of

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Principle 2: Work. Gospel knowledge and old-fashioned, understanding come through diligent study of bard work. the scriptures and tutoring by the Holy Ghost. The combination that opens the vault door to hidden scriptural treasures includes a great deal of work—simple, old-fashioned, hard work. A farmer cannot expect to harvest a crop in the fall if he does not properly sow in the spring and work hard during the summer to weed, nourish, and cultivate the plants. In like manner, we cannot expect to reap a rich scriptural harvest unless we pay the price of regular and diligent study. The scriptural treasures we seek in our lives cannot be borrowed or loaned or obtained secondhand. We must each learn to open the vault door by applying the principle of work.

Principle 3: Be consistent. Given the hectic pace of our lives, good intentions and simply "hoping" to find the time for meaningful scripture study are not sufficient. My experience suggests that a specific and scheduled time set aside each day and, as much as possible, a particular place for study greatly increase the effectiveness of our searching in and study of the scriptures.

Principle 4: Ponder. The word *ponder* means to consider, contemplate, reflect upon, or think about. Pondering the scriptures, then, is reverent reflecting on the truths, experiences, and lessons contained in the standard works. The process of pondering takes time and cannot be forced, hurried, or rushed.

The Prophet Joseph Smith provided an important guideline about pondering and reflecting upon the

scriptures. He taught: "I have a key by which I understand the scriptures. I enquire, what was the question which drew out the answer, or caused Jesus to utter the parable?" Thus, striving to understand the question that preceded a particular revelation, parable, or episode can assist us in obtaining a deeper understanding of the scriptures.

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) emphasized a similar approach to studying and pondering the holy scriptures in general and the Book of Mormon in particular:

"If [the Book of Mormon writers] saw our day and chose those things which would be of greatest worth to us, is not that how we should study the Book of Mormon? We should constantly ask ourselves, 'Why did the

Lord inspire Mormon (or Moroni or Alma) to include that in his record? What lesson can I learn from that to help me live in this day and age?' "³

President Benson's teaching helps us to follow the counsel of Nephi to "liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning" (1 Nephi 19:23). Thus, asking questions about and pondering the things we have studied in the scriptures invite inspiration and the assistance of the Holy Ghost.

Principle 5: Write down impressions, thoughts, and feelings. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles frequently has emphasized the importance of writing down spiritual impressions and thoughts:

"You will find that as you write down precious impressions, often more will come. Also, the knowledge you gain will be available throughout your life. Always, day or night, wherever you are, whatever you are doing, seek to recognize and respond to the direction of the Spirit. Express gratitude for the help received and obey it. This practice will reinforce your capacity to learn by the Spirit. It will permit the Lord to guide your life and to enrich the use of every other capacity latent in your being."

Writing down what we learn, think, and feel as we study the scriptures is another form of pondering and a



powerful invitation to the Holy Ghost for continuing instruction.

We are blessed to live at a time when the holy scriptures are so readily available. I pray that we will never take them for granted or treat them casually. We should remember and apply to all of the holy scriptures the teachings of King Benjamin to his sons:

"I say unto you, my sons, were it not for these things [the scriptures], which have been kept and preserved by the hand of God, that we might read and understand of his mysteries, and have his commandments always before our eyes, that even our fathers would have dwindled in unbelief. . . .

"O my sons, I would that ye should remember that these sayings are true, and also that these records are true . . . ; and we can know of their surety because we have them before our eyes.

"And now, my sons, I would that ye should

remember to search them diligently, that ye may profit thereby; and I would that ye should keep the commandments of God, that ye may prosper in the land according to the promises which the Lord made unto our fathers" (Mosiah 1:5–7; emphasis added).

I testify and witness that the holy scriptures are true and contain the word of God. As we continue in the process of coming unto the Savior, we will be strengthened and prospered as we consistently and diligently "feast upon the words of Christ." Indeed, we are blessed because we have them before our eyes. **NE**

NOTES

- 1. "To the Honorable Men of the World," *The Evening and the Morning Star*, Aug. 1832, 22; emphasis added.
- 2. History of the Church, 5:261.
- 3. "The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion," *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 6.
- 4. "To Acquire Knowledge and the Strength to Use It Wisely," *Ensign*, June 2002, 32–34.

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THE PERFECT CONEBACK

BY RICHARD D. HAWKS

What would you do if one of your classmates was offended at a Mutual activity? ne night, while serving as a youth leader in my ward, I arrived at the church and was not surprised to find a group of young men playing basketball in the gym while they waited for opening exercises to begin. I was surprised, however, to see David. He was relatively new in the ward but had already demonstrated that attending Church-related activities was not a normal part of his routine. Coming to a Young Men activity was a big

step.

David did a pretty good job of quietly easing into the group without being noticed—that is, until the basketball rebounded off the rim and went straight at him. He caught the ball and realized it was his turn to take a shot. He dribbled a few times and clumsily threw the ball up toward the hoop. It banged hard off the bottom of the rim and came right back at him, hitting him on the arms he had put up to protect his head. Everyone laughed, and so did David.

The ball then went into the hands of another boy, who mockingly imitated

David's awkward shot. As before, most of the boys laughed, but this time David was not laughing. He had come to be a part of

his priests quorum but had become the brunt of their laughter.

David turned to the exit and walked out.

My heart broke for David. I was not sure what to do, but I knew I needed to try anything to get him to stay. I followed David out the door, trying to think of something to say that might help him have the courage to come back.

As I was walking after David, I was surprised to see Dennis, one of the other priests, run past me and put his arm around David. I do not know what he said, but Dennis must have been inspired, for David's heart was softened and he hesitantly, but willingly, turned around and came back into the church. It was a wonderful moment.

It was only a few weeks later when a similar situation occurred. Some of our ward members, including many of our young men, were practicing for an upcoming theatrical performance. Todd, a priest, was one of the performers. During a rehearsal,

someone mockingly mimicked Todd's performance. He was offended and started walking toward the door dejectedly.

"Oh, no," I thought, "here we go again." I felt compelled to follow him outside and encourage him to ignore the offense and come back.

What happened next was a beautiful surprise.

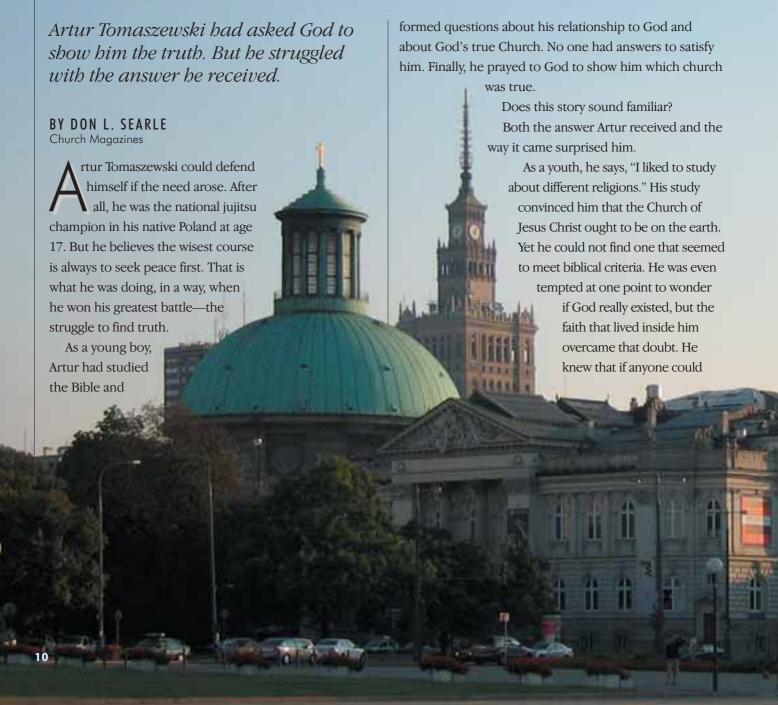
This time it was not Dennis who hurried past me, but David. David, who only a few weeks earlier had been the dejected one, was now the inspired one. He ran up to Todd and, putting his arm around him, pleaded with him to return. Todd accepted the invitation, and within minutes both boys were standing side by side on the stage. David had now successfully convinced

another to stay. As I witnessed this example of the Aaronic Priesthood in action, I was reminded of a statement by Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926-2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "We are so busy checking on our own temperatures, we do not notice the burning fevers of others even when we can offer them some of the needed remedies, such as encouragement, kindness, and commendation. The hands which hang down and most need to be lifted up belong to those too discouraged even to reach out anymore" ("Swallowed Up in the Will of the Father," Ensign, Nov. 1995, 23).





FIGHTINGTO



provide answers, it would be God. There came a time when he was 18 that Artur prayed, specifically asking to be led to the true Church.

Not long afterward, while he was visiting at the home of his aunt, he saw a dusty book sitting on a shelf. It was titled the Book of Mormon. His aunt had received it from some sister missionaries, then had laid it aside and forgotten it.

Artur picked it up and put it back down three times, struggling over whether to read it. No, he would not; he believed only in the Bible. But this book said it was another testament of Jesus Christ. No, this Joseph

Smith story at the beginning was too fantastic. But what if it was true? No, the story in the first 20 pages of the book was simply foreign to all he knew.

Still, what he had read stayed with him all week long. When he returned to his aunt's house, planning to resume reading where he had left off, the book was gone!

It would be some time before Artur received his own copy of the Book of Mormon.

He introduced himself to missionaries on the street in Katowice. When they did not call him immediately as

Below: Elder Artur Tomaszewski (right) and his companion, Elder Ricky Dias, walk down a street in Warsaw, Poland. Patryk Tomaszewski, Elder
Tomaszewski's younger brother,
accepted the challenge to read the
Book of Mormon and learn for himself
whether it is true.

promised (this is a mistake Elder Tomaszewski the missionary does not make now), he decided to seek them out on a Sunday morning at the meetinghouse address on a flyer they had given him.

It happened to be a fast Sunday, and as members bore their testimonies, Artur felt the same feeling of peace and surety

that had stayed with him after his first reading in the Book of Mormon. The feeling was so strong that he wanted to stand and bear his own testimony that the book was true, but he did not know if this would be permitted.

When the missionaries finally gave him his own copy of the Book of Mormon, they asked him solemnly if he would promise to read it and pray for an answer about its truthfulness. Artur laughed. He already knew he could get an answer from God.

He read and he prayed. The answer that came was so strong it seemed to be not only a feeling, but also "like light to my eyes," giving great clarity to the truths he already knew from the Bible. He laughed out loud once more, wondering if the answer about the Church of Jesus Christ could really be this "clear and simple." He had thought it might be some complicated thing. He prayed again to be sure and received the same strong answer, assuring him that God's truths are plain, not complicated.

"When I found out it was true, I went home full of joy," he recalls. But no one wanted to share the joy. His mother and two younger brothers were not interested. His father was antagonistic. After Artur's baptism in 2002, he had almost no support from friends and acquaintances either, except within his branch.

Religious tradition is very strong in Poland. No one could understand why he wanted to leave the dominant faith. Still, he says, his parents' teaching and example were very valuable in preparing him to find the truth. "I'm grateful they did what they knew how to do in teaching me."

Being alone in living the gospel did not break down his



faith. When he determined to serve a mission, he was willing to give up the jujitsu practices and competitions he loved—something that had been part of his life from childhood—to work and save money for a mission. Jujitsu, he says, was an art form for him. "I felt like a painter painting a picture when I

practiced." But working left him no time to practice.

Before leaving his hometown of Mystowice to serve as a missionary, Elder Tomaszewski left a challenge for his younger brother Patryk, who was also deeply involved in jujitsu. "If you want to find out why I'm doing this, why I'm giving up my sport, read the Book of Mormon and pray about it."

Elder Tomaszewski says some of the qualities developed through the discipline of jujitsu have been helpful in the mission field: patience, humility, and the capacity for hard work.

What does he like most about missionary work? "Often when I'm really tired, when I feel like I don't have any strength left and maybe I'm lacking a little in faith, we knock on a door and find someone," he says. Finding someone who wants to listen sometimes makes him so excited he can't sleep.

And what has been his best day as a missionary?

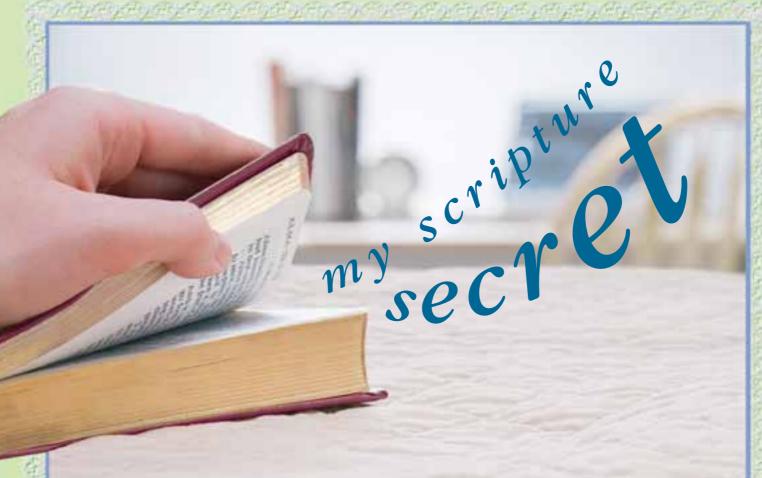
The day he learned that his younger brother had taken his challenge to read and pray about the Book of Mormon. Patryk Tomaszewski also received a testimony.

baptized in August 2004.

He was

Now there are two
Tomaszewskis to share the joy of the gospel. **NE**





BY MELISSA DOMEYER AINA

It's a secret I can't tell you, but you can find out for yourself what it is.

ne of the greatest blessings we receive from being faithful members of the Church is the peace of our Savior. I have felt this peace many times as I have read the scriptures.

I can remember making many goals to complete the Book of Mormon. I made many attempts but would slowly lose interest and then start over again later. It wasn't until my first year in college that I truly "experimented upon the word" (see Alma 32:27). I began getting up at 6:30 every weekday morning and reading for half an hour. Because I had an allotted time, I didn't feel anxious to be done.

I began looking forward to reading the scriptures. After I read, I felt happy and peaceful. My whole day was affected. I could more easily keep a prayer in my heart. The Spirit stayed closer than before. My worries did not disappear, but my days really were happier.

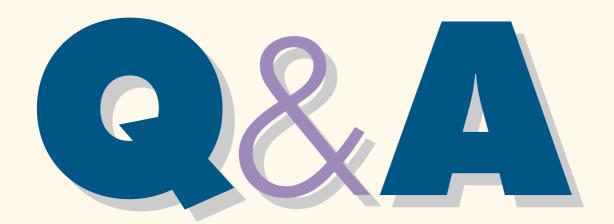
I realized I was gaining a testimony of the scriptures. I had no idea that obeying the commandment to read the scriptures would bring me so many blessings. I felt as though I had been let in on a secret that only scripture readers knew.

Alma taught the way to gain a testimony:

"If ye will awake and arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith, yea, even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you, even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words" (Alma 32:27).

Before I started my experiment, I didn't really understand why we are commanded to read the scriptures, but I had a little faith—faith enough to read for a short time every day. And, as Alma taught, I gained a testimony.

I know there is nothing I can say to let you in on the secret of the blessings of reading the scriptures, because nobody could tell me. But I promise that if you read them, you will be blessed with peace and happiness despite your trials. Give it a try. Experiment. **NE**



"Kids at school are always harassing and making fun of me because they know I'm a member of the Church. What's the best way to deal with it?"

NEW ERA

"Il that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12). The Lord's disciples often have to endure persecution. Think of Nephi, Moroni, and Joseph Smith. The Savior Himself was mocked and "despised and rejected of men" (Isaiah 53:3). Persecution occasionally still exists for Latter-day Saints today.

Two ways to handle this problem are to ignore the harassment or to talk to those who make fun of you. Either way, pray for guidance on how best to respond, and be a good example. You can also ask your parents for advice. If people in your ward or branch have gone through the same thing, they can tell you how they handled it.

You could ignore the harassment if you aren't going to see those kids anymore after school ends. In the meantime, be patient, pray for strength, and try not to let it bother you.

But if you are going to see those kids for a while, consider talking with them about their harassment. Sometimes, those who make fun

- Prayerfully decide whether you will ignore the harassment or talk about it with those who harass you.
- As you stand up for yourself and your beliefs, don't hurt or make fun of those who harass you.
- Try to follow the Savior's example.
 Be kind, patient, and forgiving. Being a good example is a way of sharing your testimony.
- "Blessed are all they who are persecuted for my name's sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (3 Nephi 12:10).

of Church members do so because they don't understand our beliefs. They say things like, "You don't believe in Christ," or, "If you don't drink alcohol, you can't have a good time." In that case, you could let them know that you believe in Jesus Christ and that you are a member of the Church of Jesus Christ. Or let them know that you choose not to drink alcohol, and you can have a good time without it.

When you are harassed, try to follow the Savior's example in the way you react. The Lord didn't get angry or try to get back at those who hurt Him. He loved them and didn't take offense. When you need encouragement, read what the Apostle Peter taught about the Lord's example in 1 Peter 2:20–23.

If you seek the Lord's help in this trial, it can be an opportunity to strengthen your faith and to show those kids a Christlike example. Your life is the symbol of your faith in the Lord, says President Gordon B. Hinckley:



"As His followers, we cannot do a mean or shoddy or ungracious thing without tarnishing His image. Nor can we do a good and gracious and generous act without burnishing more brightly the symbol of Him whose name we have taken upon ourselves. And so our lives must become a meaningful expression, the symbol of our declaration of our testimony of the Living Christ" ("The Symbol of Our Faith," *Ensign*, Apr. 2005, 6). **NE**

READERS



If I were in your place, I would try to bear the humiliation without retaliation, because they do not know what they are doing. I would

try to be a good example and do my best to be exemplary in words and deeds.

Fe'ofa'aki L., 15, Tonga

Take the situation as your opportunity to share the gospel through your example. The Lord admonished us to be patient in afflictions, that we may show forth good examples unto them in Him (see Alma 17:11).

Leah N., 19, Philippines



Never verbally or physically threaten those who may abuse you. Looking back at high school, I could not have made it through some

of the taunting I endured without having a fixed hope in the Lord and love of Him and His commandments. When you walk out the doors on your last day of school, you will never see most of those people again. Make the decision to walk out with your head high and your testimony strong, knowing that you were true to the standards of the Lord.

Samuel B., 19, Québec, Canada

The method I use to solve the problem is to have a strong belief in our Heavenly Father. He may be allowing us to be tested so that we can become stronger. I believe that He loves all His children, and that is why He disciplines us. We should not think too much about what others say, because it may only confuse us or make us scared. However, we should continue to be a good example to our friends. And we should stand firm as a witness in all truth and live our lives according to the standards of what is right.

Apechard S., 18, Thailand



I know how you feel. In my school, the children think that I am strange and that I am "too" good because I never swear or do inappropriate things. I felt very much alone, but

I made friends with some girls who have good hearts, although they are not members of the Church. Today, whenever students need help with something, they come to me because they know that I am a member of the Church, that I would never lie, and that they can trust me.

Ester K., 11, Brazil

You can confront the harassment in simple ways, such as praying for those people and trying to talk kindly with them about our Church and its principles. Always be an example of kindness and charity, and always show them that your faith is stronger than their criticism and mistreatment. I know this will produce results because I have put it into practice, and my classmates



bere is meaning and purpose in our earthly challenges. Consider the Prophet Joseph Smith: throughout his life be faced daunting opposition—illness. accident, poverty, misunderstanding, false accusation, and even persecution. . . . Each of us must go through certain experiences to become more like our Savior. In the school of mortality, the tutor is often pain and tribulation, but the lessons are meant to refine and bless us and strengthen us, not to destroy us."

—Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Faith through Tribulation Brings Peace and Joy," Ensign, May 2003, 17. were able to understand me and respect me as a member of the Church.

Karen P., 18, Paraguay



As members of the Church, we should help those who don't know about the truth. My classmates made fun of me and said things about the Church. I felt bad, but I prayed with

faith and asked my Heavenly Father to help me help them understand. I helped them, and now they support me.

Ricay R., 14, Honduras

I know how it is to get harassed for being a member of our Church. It has been my experience that when you are not ashamed of the gospel and the Church and you stand up for your morals and standards, people recognize that they aren't getting anywhere by making fun of you. Kids who harass you are just unfamiliar with what you are all about. Kelly E., 18, Utah

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

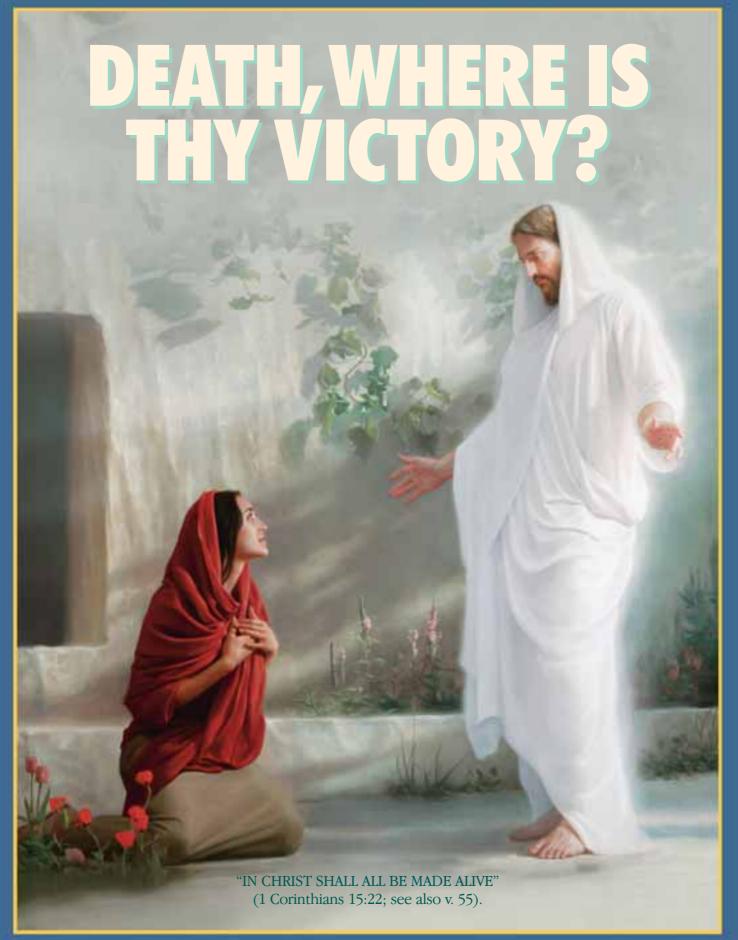
WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Send your answer, along with your full name, birth date, ward and stake, and a photograph (including your parent's written permission to print the photo if you are under 18) to:

New Era, Q&A
50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA
Or e-mail: newera@ldschurch.org
Please respond by May 15, 2006.

QUESTION

"One of my Church friends is not living some gospel standards. I'm worried about him. How can I help?"



PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR; ILLUSTRATED BY SCOTT SNOW

A PLAN FOR ADAM

BY KIMBERLY CONE

I couldn't imagine Adam joining the Church. But the Lord knew how to reach his heart, and I was part of the process.

Even though I saw something different in my friend Adam, I was still scared to share the gospel with him. But I received strength and assurance from Heavenly Father that if I didn't give up on Adam, the Spirit would bring him to baptism.

dam was a cool, popular, good-looking sports captain at our high school in Brisbane, Australia. He was the guy every girl seemed to have a secret crush on. We became friends, and he would often ask me questions about being a Latter-day Saint. He respected my decision not to swear or drink alcohol like the majority of our peers did.

As we got to know each other better, I started to uncover the person underneath Adam's popular, athletic shell. I saw something more in him that I didn't see in most other guys. He had more respect for my beliefs, and he wanted to understand rather than mock my standards. He even stopped drinking and swearing. But I was still a little scared to present the beliefs of the Church openly to him. I was afraid he would think I was preaching or trying to convert him. Although I hoped deep inside that he would someday accept the gospel, I didn't want to scare him away.

Sometimes I took Adam to sacrament meetings, firesides, and other Church activities. One day as we drove home from a fireside, he asked me why I didn't tell him more about the Church. He had felt something stirring inside and wanted to know more, and I

knew I should be doing more to help him.

As time went on, I made a greater effort to explain gospel principles to Adam. He was open and always respectful, but he brushed away the idea of baptism because he knew the contention it would create between him and his parents.

My friends and family thought it was good that I tried to share the gospel with Adam but didn't seem to think he'd ever actually get baptized. I tried to keep him interested in the Church, but I really couldn't see his baptism happening either. Still, my hope that he would someday take that step wouldn't go away. I received strength and assurance from Heavenly Father that if I didn't give up on Adam the Spirit would help him and

bring him to baptism. After high school I moved away, and we went on with our separate lives.

Sometime after I left, Adam
decided to take the missionary discussions. It was a slow and sometimes
difficult process, but Adam
finally decided to join the
Church. His parents' hearts
were miraculously softened. It was like a dream
come true. I wrote
about it in my journal:





HEN THE Holy Opinil SPEAKS



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NEW ERA APRIL 2006

CHRIST CLEANSING THE TEMPLE, BY CARL BLOCH

The last week of Christ's earthly ministry

fter three years devoted to teaching and establishing His Church, the Savior approaches the last week of His time on earth. He returns to Jerusalem knowing He will suffer and die—but that He must if any of His Father's children are to receive immortality and eternal life.

It is the season of Passover. Jerusalem is filled with

pilgrims coming to celebrate the holiday. Little do they know that walking among them, prepared to take upon Himself the burden of their sins, is their God. There has never been a week like this one, nor ever will be as long as the earth shall last.

The art that follows illustrates the final days of the Savior's mortal mission.



First Day

Jesus Christ rides through the city gates at Jerusalem and is greeted by followers waving palm fronds as a welcome to their King. He visits the temple.

"And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest" (Matthew 21:9).

Decond Day

Jesus Christ returns to the temple and drives the moneychangers from the outer court.

"It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Matthew 21:13).

HOSANNAH IN THE HIGHEST, BY ROBERT T. BARRETT



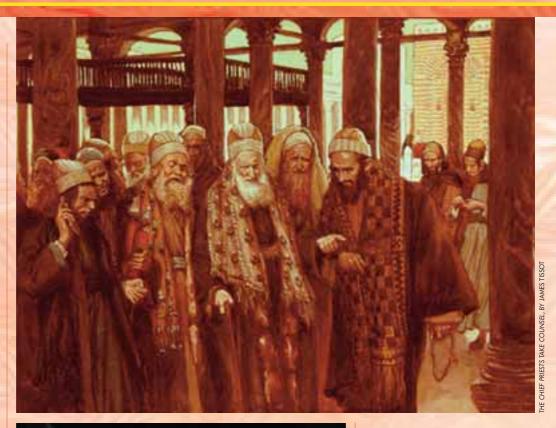
Third Day

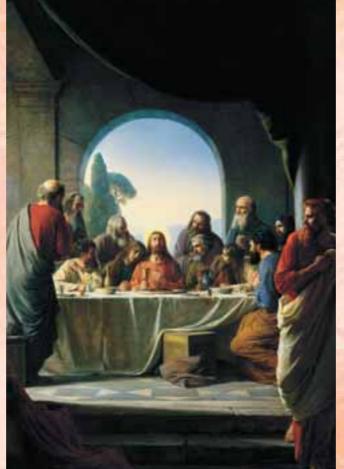
Jesus Christ confronts the priests at the temple who challenge His authority. He condemns them as hypocrites. He also prophesies of His Second Coming and teaches great parables (see Matthew 24–25).

"And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things?"
(Matthew 21:23).



The day is spent outside the city of Jerusalem, perhaps in Bethany. The scriptures do not indicate what the Savior does on this day.



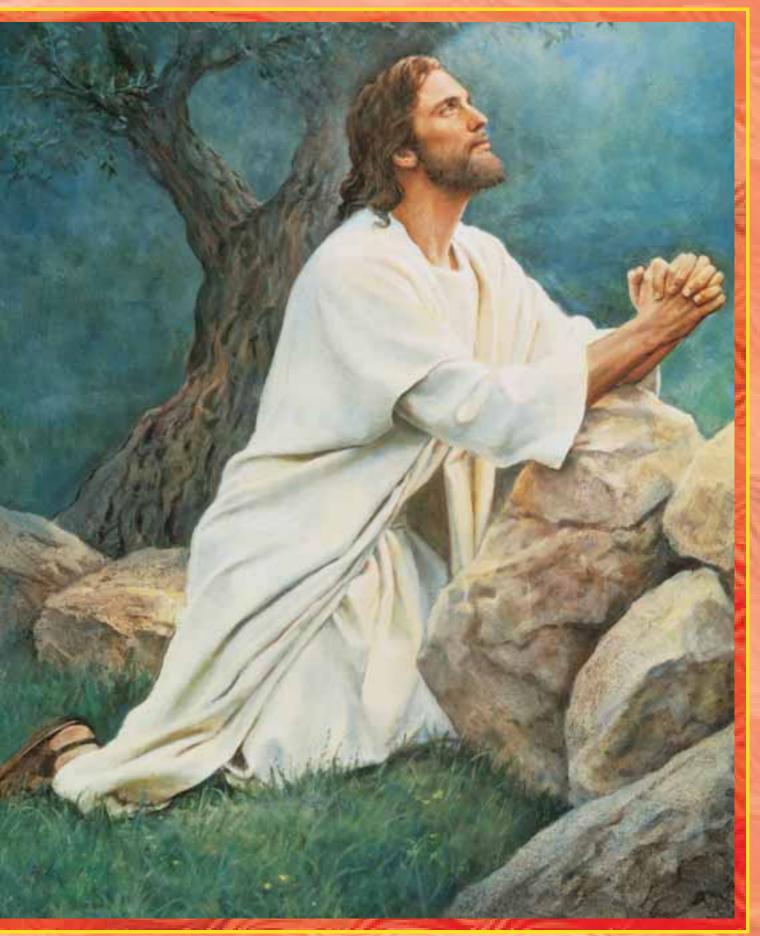


Fifth Day

A supper is arranged for the Passover. Jesus Christ teaches His Apostles about the sacrament. He prophesies of His death and Resurrection and indicates who will betray Him. Then He walks with His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane, where He atones for the sins of all mankind. As He suffers alone the disciples sleep, wakened by the Savior just before Judas comes with soldiers. The soldiers take Jesus to the scribes and elders for trial (see Matthew 26).

"Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee" (John 17:1).

THE LAST SUPPER, BY CARL BLOCH



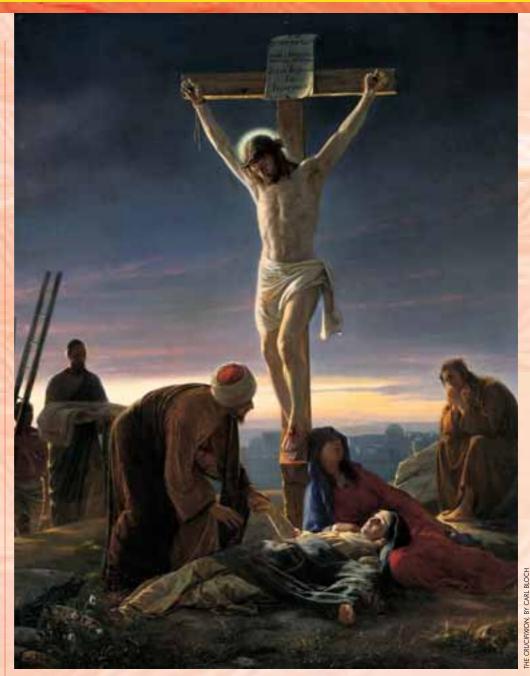
Winth Day

Charged with blasphemy for declaring that He is the Son of God and accused of sedition for claiming to be the king of the Jews, Jesus Christ goes before the Roman governor, Pilate. Although he finds Jesus guiltless, Pilate gives in to the Jewish leaders and sentences Him to death. Jesus Christ is crucified, suffering intense pain and completing His atoning sacrifice. His body is removed from the cross and placed in a tomb (see Matthew 27).

"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost" (Luke 23:46).

Oleventh Day

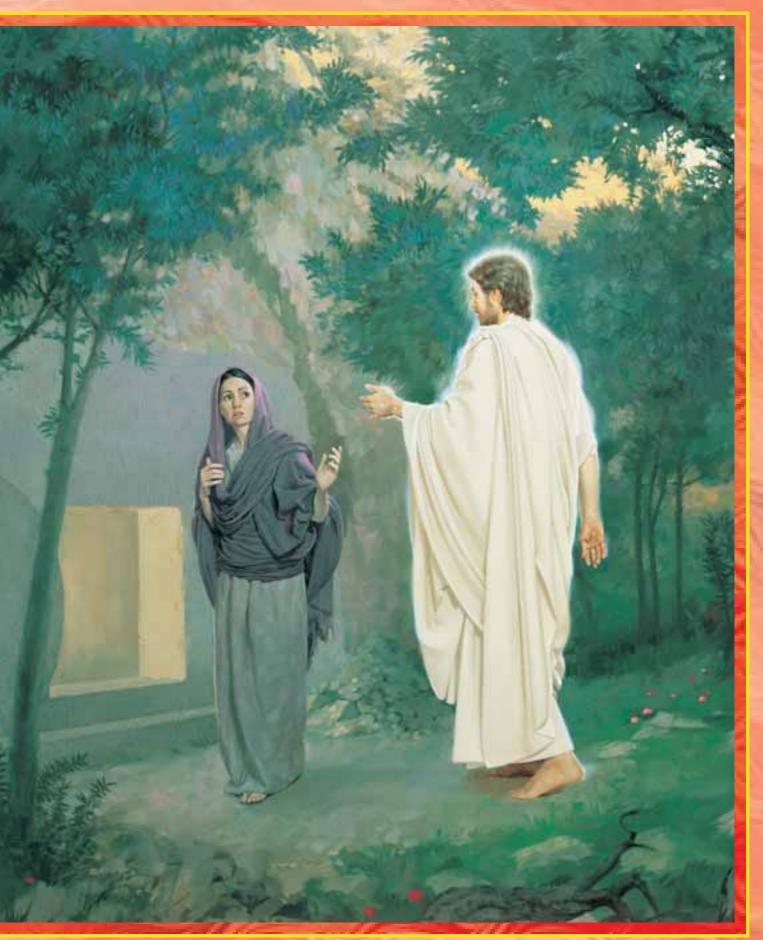
Jesus's body remains in the tomb, but in spirit He ministers to those in the spirit world (see 1 Peter 3:18–19 and D&C 138).



Day of Resurrection

Jesus Christ is victorious over death. On a morning we now celebrate as Easter, He rises from the tomb. On this day, Mary Magdalene is the first to see the resurrected Lord. The disciples also witness that He is indeed risen.

"Jesus saith unto her,
Touch me not; for I am not
yet ascended to my Father:
but go to my brethren, and
say unto them, I ascend
unto my Father, and your
Father; and to my God,
and your God" (John
20:17). NE



PEACE at HOME

My brother and I argued about our differing religious beliefs. I finally learned how to disagree without being disagreeable.

hen I was 12, I never dreamed that I would have to defend my belief in the Church. After all, I lived in a predominantly Latter-day Saint community, and most everyone I knew believed the same things I did. I didn't anticipate the heated discussion I would have with my brother while he was on leave from his military duties. I wasn't prepared to deal with the situation, and I finally left the room crying.

Since then, I've learned a lot about getting along with family members who don't believe the same things I do. Here are some of the things that have helped me keep the peace without compromising my beliefs:

- 1. Remember courtesy. No matter where they stand on religious issues, it is important to treat all family members with kindness and love—serve them, communicate with them, and include them in family discussions and decisions.
- 2. Include family members in all family activities, even if those activities are Church related. For many years my brother refused to have anything to do with our religious activities, but now he wants to be invited to weddings, baby blessings, and other activities. Those with other beliefs still want to feel welcome, even if they don't accept an invitation.
- **3.** Use challenging questions to build your testimony. As hard as it was to answer my brother's questions about the Church, I was determined to know for certain that



what I had been taught was true. I studied the scriptures and asked my Church leaders and parents many questions until I gained a firm testimony of the gospel.

4. Do not avoid religious topics.

Because the Church is so much a part of the life of a Latter-day Saint, avoiding the subject of religion may make family members feel as though you're keeping secrets from them. In your conversations, include personal experiences that relate to the Church.

5. Seek to understand others'

points of view. I used to think my brother was always wrong, but when I started to look at things from his perspective, I was surprised. How would I feel if I couldn't attend my little sister's wedding? How would I feel if I didn't understand some of the language my family members often used? If I were he, I might also sometimes react negatively to such things.



IMPORTANCE OF EXAMPLE

"Our adherence to these divinely given standards

need never be an offensive thing to those about us. We need not contend with them. But if we will pursue a steady course, our very example will become the most effective argument we could ever make in favor of the virtues of the cause with which we are associated."

—President Gordon B. Hinckley, "Contend Not with Others," Ensign, Nov. 1989, 4.

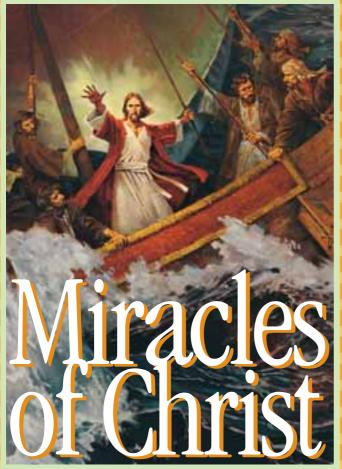
6. Take responsibility for mistakes.

I used to argue with my brother or attack his beliefs. When I was finally mature enough to realize I was in the wrong, I apologized, and my relationship with my brother has never been better. You never need to apologize for your beliefs, just for actions that are not in keeping with the gospel.

7. Avoid contention. The Spirit will not stay where there is contention. If the Spirit is gone, opportunities for learning and growth are also gone.

8. Encourage those of other faiths in their own

religious activities. Although we believe our Church to have the fulness of the gospel, many truths are taught in other churches. And where our views differ, we should still respect the religious views of others. Be as supportive of your family members' righteous and wholesome religious activities as you want them to be of yours. **NE**

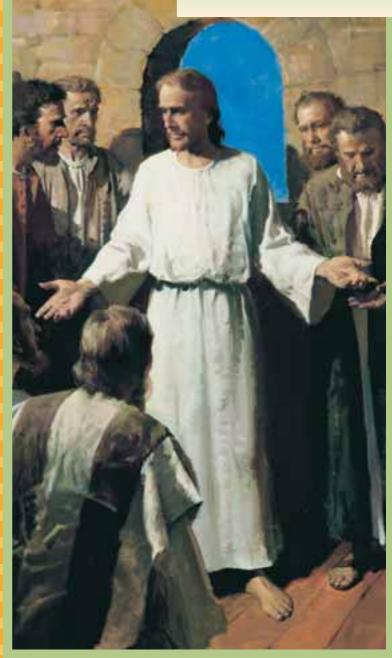


he Savior performed many miracles during His earthly ministry. Here are only a few of them. Try to match the miracle with its scriptural reference.

- 1. Jesus walked on water.
- **2.** He healed ten lepers; only one returned to give thanks.
- **3.** At Nain Jesus raised a widow's son from the dead.
- **4.** At Capernaum Jesus healed a centurion's servant.
- **5.** He fed 5,000 with five loaves and two fishes.
- **6.** In Galilee He healed the son of a nobleman.
- **7.** He calmed the storm at the Sea of Galilee.
- **8.** He healed a man on the Sabbath.
- **9.** He raised Lazarus from the dead.

- **10.** A woman was healed when she touched Jesus's clothing; He also raised Jairus's daughter.
- **A.** Luke 17:11–19
- **B.** John 4:46–53
- **C.** Matthew 8:5–13
- D. John 6:1–15
- **Luke** 7:11–17
- **F.** Matthew 8:23–27
- **G.** John 11:1–45
- **H.** John 5:2–16
- Matthew 9:18–26
- **J.** John 6:16–21

Answers: 1J, 2A, 3E, 4C, 5D, 6B, 7F, 8H, 9G, 10I

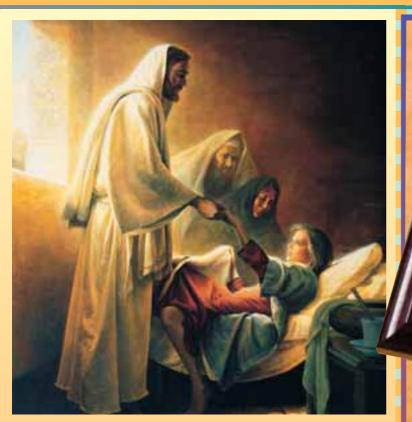


IN A WORD

esurrection: We are all subject to physical death, which is the separation of the spirit from the body. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, all people will be resurrected, which is the reuniting of the spirit with the body in a

perfect, immortal state, no longer subject to disease or death (see Alma 11:42–45).

An understanding and testimony of the resurrection can give you hope and perspective as you experience the challenges, trials, and triumphs of life.



OUR SAVIOR'S LOVE

he author of "Our Savior's Love" (*Hymns*, no. 113), Edward L. Hart, compares the Savior to the perfect light of the sun. The idea for the hymn came to him when he saw people in clothing or fabric stores taking material outside into the sunlight to test the color under the true source of light. He thought, likewise, the only true test of love is to compare it to the Savior's love. Crawford Gates, who put Hart's words to music, suggests reading and pondering the words of this hymn before you sing it. Verse one of the hymn is about the Savior, verse two is about the Holy Ghost, and verse three is about Heavenly Father. The hymn was first published in

1977 in the Ensign

magazine.

o help you focus on this special time of year, consider giving each of your family members a small picture of the Savior as an Easter present. On the back of the picture, write a personal note

including your testimony

of Christ or one of your favorite scriptures about His Resurrection or Atonement. Here are some suggestions: Luke 22:41–44; John 6:51; John 10:17; John 11:25; Romans 6:9; 1 Peter 2:21; 1 Nephi 11:31–33; 2 Nephi 2:7; Mosiah 26:23; Alma 11:42; Mormon 7:5.

"Surely the Resurrection is the center of every Christian's faith; it is the greatest of all of the miracles performed by the Savior of the world."

—President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95), "He Is Risen," Ensign, May 1988, 16. HOLYG HANDOCTORE INCORE 130 VO TORES SINGLE GOOL SHE



ARTICLES OF FAITH

ABRAHAM'S COVENANT

MEANS TO YOU

BY SHANNA BUTLER

Church Magazines

"We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory."

—Articles of Faith 1:10

Does that phrase sound familiar? You probably hear it at church every once in a while, but do you know what it means? Do you know why it's even important?

President Gordon B. Hinckley has said to the youth, "You have taken upon yourselves a covenant in the waters of baptism. This you have renewed each time you have partaken of the sacrament. These covenants will be added to when you are married in the temple. You cannot hold them lightly. They are too great a thing."

Being a child of the covenant means you are a descendant of ancient patriarchs who made covenants with God and whose posterity God promised to bless. Abraham, Isaac, and Israel received great blessings in this life and in

eternity. These same blessings are yours—if you, too, make and keep covenants with God.

What Is a Covenant?

A covenant is an agreement between two people who each promise to do something for each other. The most important covenants we make are with God. God promises eternal blessings, and He sets the terms that allow us to receive those blessings. If we want His promised blessings, we must choose to be obedient to the terms of God's covenants (see D&C 130:21). One of the eternal covenants we make with God is at baptism. If we keep the promises we make at baptism, God promises us remission of our sins and eternal life (see 2 Nephi 31:17–20; Mosiah 18:8–10).

bether you are a literal descendant of Abraham or you are adopted into the House of Israel through baptism, it is your righteousness, not just your lineage, that determines your blessings.

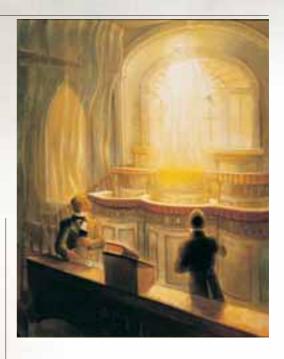
The Savior Jesus Christ made eternal covenants possible. His Atonement allows us to be resurrected and to repent so we can live with Heavenly Father again. Without the Savior's sacrifice, we would not have the priesthood, have the saving ordinances of the gospel, or be able to live eternally with our families.

What Is the Abrahamic Covenant?

God has made covenants with His faithful children ever since Adam (see Moses 6:51-52; Abraham 1:2-3). Abraham was a faithful priesthood holder who inherited God's promises, along with additional blessings that were only offered to his posterity. The main blessing offered to Abraham and his children was the promise of eternal life. Eternal life is more than immortality; it is being able to live in an eternal family and enjoy the life God enjoys. Through obedience to priesthood laws and ordinances, especially eternal marriage, Abraham was promised eternal seed, or posterity (see Genesis 22:17). That posterity includes you and all Church members.

The Lord renewed His promises with Isaac and Jacob, Abraham's son and grandson (see Genesis 26:1–4; 28:10–14; 35:9–13; 48:3–4). Jacob, later named Israel, was the father of the tribes of Israel.

In this dispensation, parts of the Abrahamic covenant specific to salvation and eternal life were renewed with the Prophet Joseph Smith (see D&C 124:58; 132:30–32). The gospel restored to Joseph Smith in the



latter days is called the new and everlasting covenant. After the Savior appeared to the Prophet in the Kirtland Temple, the prophets Moses, Elias, and Elijah returned to restore the keys necessary to gather Israel and to establish and seal eternal families through the priesthood (see D&C 110:11–15). In this and other ways, many promises made to Abraham (see Abraham 2:9–11; Genesis 17:1–10, 19; 22:17) and his children are being fulfilled in these latter days (see 1 Nephi 15:12–18), including the gathering of the scattered Tribes of Israel to their lands of promise.

Other Promises God Made to Abraham

- Abraham and his seed (posterity) would be a great nation and would be as numerous as the stars and the sand.
- All who receive the gospel will be Abraham's seed.
- The blessings of the priesthood will remain with Abraham's seed, and they will bless the families of the earth "with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal" (Abraham 2:11).
- Christ and kings would be born through Abraham's lineage (see Galatians 3:16).
 - This covenant would be eternal.

the Church, we inherit responsibilities of the Abrahamic covenant—including taking the gospel to the whole world.

s members of

Who Is the Seed of Abraham Today?

Everyone who is baptized into the Church is the seed of Abraham. That means you are the seed of Abraham.

Your patriarchal blessing will tell you about your lineage—how you are linked to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—and it will give you guidance on keeping your covenants and describe some of the blessings Heavenly Father promises you for your faithfulness. Whether you are a literal descendant of Abraham or you are adopted into the House of Israel through baptism, it is your righteousness, not just your lineage, that determines your blessings (see Galatians 3:6–9).

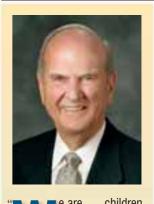
Here Are the Promises God Makes to You

As a worthy member of the Church, you, like Abraham, have been promised many blessings for your faithfulness and obedience and for keeping your covenants. Three of the major blessings promised to you are:

- The blessings of the restored gospel.
- The right to receive the priesthood (see Abraham 2:9–11).
- Eternal life, which includes the blessings of eternal marriage and eternal families.

What You Can Do to Receive the Blessings of the Covenant

To be children of the covenant means you have made certain agreements with God,



of the covenant.
We have received,
as did they of old, the
holy priesthood and the
everlasting gospel. Abraham,
Isaac, and Jacob are our
ancestors. We are of Israel.
We have the right to receive
the gospel, blessings of the
priesthood, and eternal life.
Nations of the earth will
be blessed by our efforts
and by the labors of our
posterity. The literal seed
of Abraham and those who
are gathered into his family
by adoption receive these
promised blessings—
predicated upon acceptance
of the Lord and obedience
to his commandments."



WHRESIN AB CO

EXTRA! EXTRA!

The children of the covenant will bless
"all the families of the earth" with the blessings of the gospel (see Abraham 2:11). To learn more about joys of sharing the gospel, read "Elder, They Will Love You" (New Era, July 2001) by Elder LeGrand Richards (1886–1983) at www.lds.org in the Gospel Library.

and you are entitled to great blessings if you keep your promises (see D&C 82:10).

In return for the blessings
God promised, Abraham's
posterity is under covenant
to take the gospel to all the
nations and families of the
world so they can also enjoy
the blessings of the priesthood.
The Lord told Abraham: "Thou
shalt be a blessing unto thy
seed after thee, that in their
hands they shall bear this
ministry and Priesthood unto
all nations" (Abraham 2:9).
This is part of the covenant you

made when you were baptized and that you renew each time you partake of the sacrament.

"We are a covenant people, and that is a very serious matter," says President Gordon B.

WHAT ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT?

Here are a few things you can do now to honor your covenants and receive the blessings promised to Abraham's posterity:

- Thoughtfully and worthily partake of the sacrament.
- Live worthy of the companionship of the Holy Ghost.
- Serve others with a willing heart.
- Pray daily for opportunities to share the gospel and to bear your testimony.
 - Obey your parents.
- Live worthy of future temple covenants.
- Seek to do Heavenly Father's will in all aspects of your life.

Hinckley. "Each time we partake of the sacrament, not only do we do it in remembrance of the sacrifice of the Son of God, who gave His life for each of us, but there is an added element that we take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ and pledge ourselves to keep His commandments, and He pledges with us that He will bless us with His Holy Spirit. We are a covenant people, and great are the obligations which go with that covenant."2

If we remain faithful to our covenants, our Savior Jesus Christ has made it possible for us to live with Him, with Heavenly Father, and with our families eternally. That is why it is so important to be faithful

children of the covenant. NE

NOTES

- 1. "A Prophet's Counsel and Prayer for Youth," *New Era*, Jan. 2001, 13.
- 2. "Inspirational Thoughts," Ensign, Aug. 1997, 3.





SOURCE BY WILLIAM KIM RAWLINSON

Finding cool water on a hot day taught me how to seek the Savior's refreshment for the thirsty soul.

grew up on a small farm in southwest Utah. To escape the heat, our family would sometimes drive up a nearby canyon where a creek flowed year round. I can still feel the dry desert air blowing in my face in the backseat of the car. As we entered the canyon, the air became cooler and more fragrant.

My favorite place to go was the Big Spring, the major source of the creek. At the base of an almost vertical canyon wall, a steady stream of clear, cool, sweet water burst from a cleft in a large boulder.

I learned how to get a drink by watching my father kneel on a large, flat rock and scoop water from the spring. He would never drink downstream, where the water had been fouled by surface runoff. Near the source, the water would always be pure and clear.

Sometimes when I'm thinking of Christ, I think of that spring. The Lord declared to Jeremiah that He is "the fountain of living waters" (Jer. 2:13). Through His Atonement and Resurrection, Jesus Christ is the source of eternal life. Anyone who has come to Christ thirsting for divine truth knows the refreshment that comes as His Spirit fills the mind and heart. When we immerse ourselves in the scriptures, the testimony and doctrines of Christ flow into us like living water, refreshing our souls and renewing our strength.

This refreshment is lasting. To the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, the Savior promised: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never

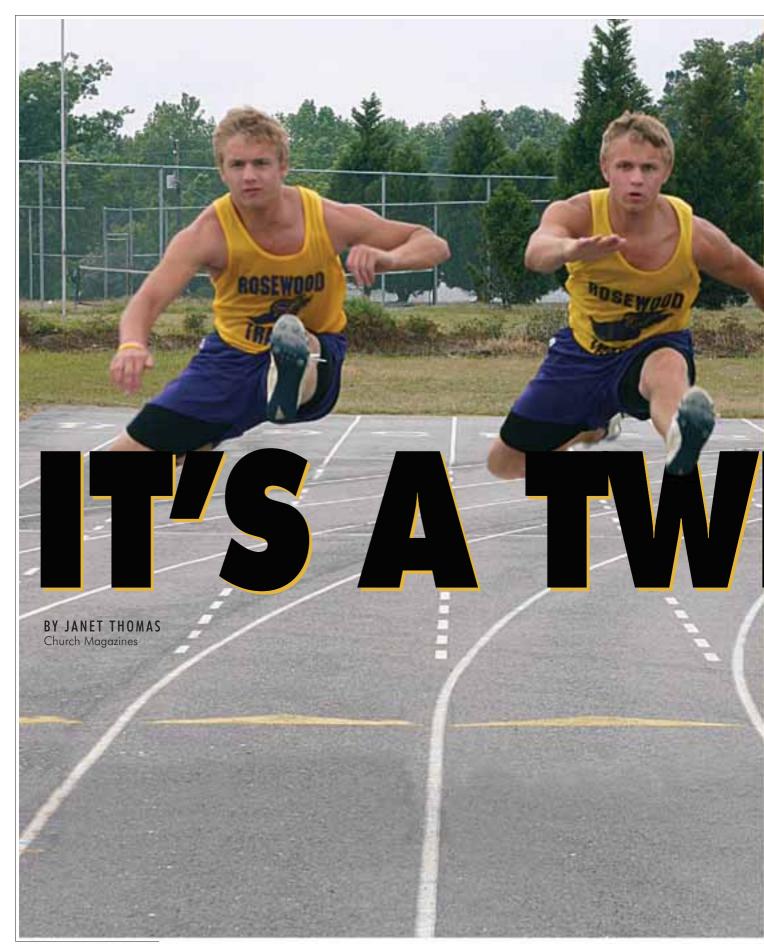
thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:13-14).

As a young boy I learned the difference between the common, muddy water that flowed past my home and the pure, clear water from the stream in the canyon. To obtain the pure water, I had to climb to higher ground. I had to walk the narrow path, and I had to kneel. The pure, clear, sweet water came only at the source of the spring, and it was constant.

We can drink of the living water only as we come out of the world, as we walk the strait and narrow path, as we kneel in prayer, and as we immerse ourselves in the scriptures that witness of the living Savior. As we do so, the Lord will fulfill His promise that within us will be "a

well of water springing up into everlasting life." NE





Two young men who look alike and believe alike are splitting up, but each is stronger because of the other.

hen twins James and Jeremy Ruesch were eight months old, their mother, Lisa, hurt her arm and was not able to care for the two energetic babies during the day while her husband was at work. When babysitters volunteered to help out until she healed, James and Jeremy were split up between two tenders. They screamed the entire time they were apart. Once back together, the babies were quiet and content. After that, Lisa never tried to separate her boys. For 19 years they have rarely been apart, and even then for no more than a day.

Now Jeremy and James are going their separate ways. They left on the same day for their respective mission fields: Jeremy to the Paraguay Asunción North Mission and

A Mirror Image

At first glance, the Ruesch brothers seem identical, although they hate dressing the same. As a child, Jeremy fell against the edge of a table and ended up with a scar near his left eye. That's one sure way of telling them apart, and they often catch people looking for the telltale scar. The other is that Jeremy is left-handed and James is right-handed. Their track coach, however, has taught them to use the same leading leg over the high hurdles, one of the track events in which they excel.

The ongoing joke is that Jeremy is the smart Ruesch and James is the athletic one. It's funny because the difference in their straight-A grades is measured in 10ths, as is the difference in their race times on the track—differences that are hardly noticeable except to them.

Jeremy says, "We are so similar in behavior, in attitude, in common interests, in the way we react to the environment around us. I don't think there are a lot of

James to the Argentina Rosario Mission. Getting to the point where each is prepared and enthusiastic to serve a

mission is part of their life story.

James and Jeremy graduated from high school in Raleigh, North Carolina, but they can't say Raleigh is their hometown. Their father is in the military, so they have had many hometowns as they have moved with him on his different postings. But wherever they have lived with their father, mother, and younger sister, Tori, they have set a fine example of Latter-day Saint values that has affected each school and each group of friends in every town where they have lived.

Their dad, Gary, says it has been one of their accomplishments to move into a new school and raise the level of behavior and language among their classmates.





igh burdles and sprint events are track specialties for Jeremy and James (previous page). The two brothers (above) are called upon to bless the sacrament often in their North Carolina ward. The Ruesch family (right), with the twins on either end, include mother. Lisa; sister, Tori; and father, Gary.

things I could distinguish between the two of us."

James continues, "We are who we are because of each other. We've always had a good friend as well as a brother with the same values. That has helped when we've moved around."

It helps, too, that their outgoing personalities ease the way in making new friends. And they're not afraid to let their new friends know they are members of the Church.

"People are going to ask," says Jeremy,
"What is the difference between your church
and my church? What do you guys believe?
They've been told things about LDS people
by their pastors and parents, but then they
know us. And they know that we're good
kids, and they see the example we are at
school and the decisions we make. They
know some of the things they've been told
can't be true. It doesn't fit us."

James says, "People accept Jeremy and me and know our standards. We're the Mormon twins. For example, we're involved in a lot of athletics. In the locker room it can get kind of sensitive to the ears. Jeremy will say, 'Hey, watch the Mormon ears.' He says it in a joking manner but letting them know that it offends us, and that we don't like hearing

that kind of thing. After a while, people will say, 'Sorry, forgot. Mormon ears.' "

Jeremy continues, "And pretty soon other friends say, when someone else is swearing or taking the Lord's name in vain, 'Hey, whoa, we've got Mormons around. Can't say that around these guys.' "

Their friends learn that there are certain activities in which Jeremy and James won't participate. If they suggest something to do, they might stop and say, "Well, the Ruesches can't because they're Mormon, so we'll do something else."

Day-to-day life offers opportunities for the Ruesches to teach. "When we get to know new people, they find out that we don't drink ice tea," says James. "Because we live in the South, they simply cannot believe we've never had tea, ever, not one sip."

"They find it hard to believe that someone can have such strong convictions," says Jeremy. "We have to explain that our beliefs are a part of our lives. Our values are a priority."

Being an Individual

Jeremy and James have a strong sense of individual worth, but as twins the whole idea of individuality is an interesting one for them to think about. When they are faced with temptations, they only have to glance at each other before one or the other will say what they are both thinking. They know they can rely on each other to make the right decisions.

"I don't know if I really do feel like an individual," says James. "Jeremy and I are best friends for life. I can count on one hand the number of times we've been apart for more than a day. We're always together.

Other guys can call up one friend, and the two of them will hang out. If it's Jeremy and

I, we have to call another friend to come and hang out with us."

"We are who we are because of each other. Growing up, we've each had a great friend with the same values," says James.

But what if you don't have a twin to be there always supporting you and encouraging you to make the right decisions?

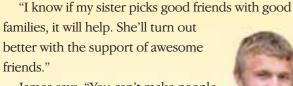
Jeremy and James have some advice, the same advice they give to their 12-year-old sister, Tori.

gospel. Every little thing makes sense. The things I've learned in seminary have been a huge boost to my testimony."

more I study, the more I learn and understand about the

Now the Ruesches are taking their testimonies to the world. They are separated for the first time in their lives, yet they are united in the message they are teaching in another language in other parts of the world.

They are more than willing to dress the same. But more importantly, their message is the same. It's a twin thing. **NE**



James says, "You can't make people like you, but you can make yourself more likable. Be kind to people. Be interested in what they are doing and what they have to say. Talk

to people. Choose friends who will build you up."

A Testimony of Their Own

As Jeremy and James were growing up, they developed strong testimonies of their own. "The faith of a child," says James, "that's where it started. We do family scripture study every morning at 5:45. I owe my parents everything. I've been blessed, and I've tried to do what I know is right. That has built my testimony. I'm taking my testimony to heart, applying it, understanding it, believing it."

"You take seminary," says Jeremy, "and really start studying the scriptures. The



I learned I couldn't beat my problem on my own. I needed the Savior's help.

indsay, what's going to happen to me?"
I asked my sister, as my frail body lay
limp in the emergency room bed.

Lindsay replied through her tears, "I'm not sure, but I think it's time for you to trust in Heavenly Father."

I sat back in my bed while I rested in a state of confusion, worry, and mostly panic. I had finally reached the breaking point.

After five long, difficult years of self-worth issues and depression, anorexia had a firm grip on my whole soul. My worn-out spirit had long given in to destructive thoughts and lost hopes, but it had only been in the past year that my body had succumbed to anorexia's deadly effects as well.

My weight was perilously low and continuing to drop. Astoundingly, I still felt I was "chubby." It was only when I couldn't keep any food down or stand up without losing consciousness that my concerned friends rushed me to the hospital. Within the next few days, my secret had blown up in my face, and my family insisted that I receive treatment.

At first I did not understand the seriousness

of the problem. I had to trust in the love and counsel of others. I couldn't see it in myself because I had years of practice brushing off the worries and advice of others who thought I was losing too much weight. As with many other people suffering from eating disorders, I wasn't willing to see my problem until I was forced to by medical professionals.

I would love to say that once I confronted my problem every day was easier and that all I had to do was eat. However, it was quite the contrary. Every week was filled with doctor appointments, planning meals with a nutritionist, group and individual therapy, and weekly appointments with my bishop. I needed to set aside a time to eat every day, and I learned that I needed to always be accountable to another person for what I ate. I needed to gain the trust of others again, and they needed to gain my trust so I did not feel invaded and constantly questioned about my eating habits.

My biggest problem was that, although I felt the support of many people around me, I thought I had to fight the battle alone.







EXTRA! EXTRA!

For more information about eating disorders, see the following articles at www.lds.org. "Eating Disorders: A Deadly State of Mind" (New Era, Feb. 1993) by Janet Thomas; "The Thinness Obsession" (Ensign, Jan. 1990) by Harold A. Frost; and "Random Sampler: Helping Prevent Eating Disorders" (Ensign, Jan. 1994) by Val Farmer.

For more on turning your trials over to the Lord and being healed, see "Healing Soul and Body" by Robert D. Hales (Ensign, Nov. 1998).

WARNING SIGNS

By Lynn Carol Maynes Program Specialist for LDS Family Services

"What do you want me to do?" I shouted at my therapist. "It's like you want me to be perfect or something! I can't do this! I can't just sit here and tell you why I feel like I'm fat, or why I hate myself. I don't know why. All I know is that I just can't do this anymore! It's not worth it because no matter what I say or do, it'll never be good enough to fix all of this. I'm

My therapist let me cry it out before she said, "You're right. You can't do this on your own, and no matter what *you* do, it won't be good enough. You're never going to be perfect . . ."

just . . . broken!"

She paused to let her final thought sink in and went on to say, "... on your own. The Savior has already won this battle. Hand it over to Him, and He'll heal you. Just hand it over, Katie."

The words pierced my broken heart, and the Spirit filled me and testified that what she had said was absolutely true. My healing process had begun.

Some days were harder than others. On those days, I felt a deeper desire to seek the Lord's help and to plead with Him to rid me of this terrible disorder. I knew He could do it, but I also knew I needed to trust in Him first.

I began to write all my feelings in a small journal that I kept with me throughout the

If you are concerned that you or a loved one could be struggling with an eating disorder, look for some of these signs:

- Intense fear of being "fat"
- A change in weight not related to a medical condition
- Severe dieting, binge eating, or preoccupation with food
- Abuse of laxatives, diuretics, enemas, diet pills, or other related medications
- Evidence of forced vomiting
- Distorted body image, preoccupation with body shape and size
- Obsessive or excessive exercise
- Depressed mood or anxiety
 It is important that you take
 action and get help if you notice
 these symptoms. Eating disorders
 are hazardous to your physical and
 spiritual health. LDS Family Services
 can help. For more information
 please call 1-801-240-2429.

day. The beginning entries contained words like insignificance, intimidation, and frustration. Once the day was through, I would put my book down in front of me, tear out the pages, and pray for those feelings to be recognized and changed. Then I'd throw the pages away and make a new entry of what I felt. Those new entries had words like hope, strength, and love. I had begun to literally and figuratively place my trial and those detrimental feelings at the Savior's feet. That's when the pain began to subside.

As the days became weeks and the weeks became months, I began to feel the companionship of the Spirit. I learned how to distinguish between revelations from the Lord

and the harsh feelings and thoughts of the world. I felt unity within my family as we pulled together to strengthen not only me but one another. Yet, most of all, I developed my friendship, my very best friendship, with my Savior. The calming influence of the Atonement was, and is still, taking place in my life. Although this experience continues to influence my life and will continue for years to come, I now see myself not only for who I am but mostly for who I will become. I know now that this is how our Father in Heaven sees us, and what a sight that is! **NE**





WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU

Mutual Activity Idea

• As a group, plan and assemble 72-hour kits to use in case of a natural disaster or other emergency in your area. With the permission of your bishop and leaders, ask the emergency preparedness specialist in your ward or stake to give you some advice on what kind of things should go in your kits.

Personal Progress or Duty to God

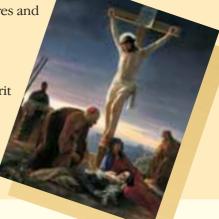
• To fulfill one of the Knowledge experiences in Personal Progress, try reading a book written by a General Authority. Arrange to tell your parents or Young Women leader about the book.

Family Home Evening Ideas

• In the family home evening before Easter, read the scripture and look at the artwork illustrating each day of the last week of the

Savior's life on earth. You can find the scriptures and artwork starting on page 22.

• Learn the song
"When the Holy Spirit
Speaks" on page 21.
Discuss the meaning of the words.



SUNDAY LESSON HELPS

n addition to the Resource Guides (printed in May and November in the *Ensign*), Young Women and Aaronic Priesthood teachers may find these additional resources helpful in enhancing lessons 16–20.

Young Women Manual 1

Lesson 16: Women and Priesthood Bearers

Debra J. Workman, "Believing Is Seeing," *New Era*, Mar. 2005, 24.

James E. Faust, "The Highest Place of Honor," *Ensign*, May 1988, 36.

Lesson 17: The Purpose of Covenants and Ordinances

Shanna Butler, "Articles of Faith: What Abraham's Covenant Means to You," *New Era,* this issue, 32.

R. Val Johnson, "You Have a Birthright," *New Era*, Nov. 2005, 8.

Lesson 18: Temple Marriage—Requirement for Eternal Family Life

Robert D. Hales, "Preparing for a Heavenly Marriage," *New Era*, Feb. 2006, 2.

Thomas S. Monson, "Whom Shall I Marry?" *New Era*, Oct. 2004, 4.

Lesson 19: Personal Records

Idea List: "Jazz Up Your Journal," *New Era*, Jan. 2005, 15. Spencer W. Kimball, "The Angels May Quote from It," *New Era*, Feb. 2003, 32.

Lesson 20: Reach Out to Others

Cindy Shuman, "The Presentation," *New Era*, Mar. 2006, 8. Idea List: "Including Everyone," *New Era*, Jan. 2006, 37.

Aaronic Priesthood Manual 1

Lesson 16: Charity

Richard D. Hawks, "The Perfect Comeback," *New Era*, this issue, 8.

Idea List: "Cooling Your Anger," New Era, Feb. 2006, 9.

Lesson 17: Personal Journals

Idea List: "Jazz Up Your Journal," *New Era*, Jan. 2005, 15. Spencer W. Kimball, "The Angels May Quote from It," *New Era*, Feb. 2003, 32.

Lesson 18: The Word of Wisdom

Gillian Campbell, "Away from the Edge," *New Era*, Mar. 2006, 12.

Rand Packer, "Gulp!" New Era, July 2004, 26.

Q&A (performance-enhancing supplements for sports), *New Era*, May 2004, 16.

Lesson 19: Overcoming Temptation

Poster: "You Are Never Big Enough," *New Era*, Mar. 2006, 17. April Anderson, "Chicken Bones," *New Era*, Aug. 2005, 19.

Lesson 20: Proper Use of Agency

Harold B. Lee, "Your Right to Revelation," *New Era*, Mar. 2006, 18.

Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Your Right to Choose the Right," New Era, Aug. 2005, 4.

Thomas S. Monson, "A Code to Live By," *New Era*, Sept. 2005, 4.



WE'VE GOT MAIL

READ MORE OFTEN

I love your Instant Messages section. I can read experiences and great thoughts of many Latter-day Saints out there. Thank you for making the New Era a great solution for my life. I always look forward to the Idea List section. Reading it helps me to be a better person every day. The *New Era* helps me to follow the Savior and provides a way to be active at Church. I love all the articles and promise myself to read more often in the future.

Jeanene May E., Philippines

LIVING PROOF

I really appreciated the story of Kimberli Lingard, "Living Proof" (Nov. 2005). It inspires me to love my family and my brother and sister more. It teaches me about the importance of family and the power of family prayer. Now I know how great the love of God is for His children. He helps us when we need Him. Sister Cheryl Cortes, Philippines Angeles Mission

I'M SO GRATEFUL

I'm so grateful for this magazine because it seems like everything contained in it is meant for me. Every time I read it I feel the Spirit of the Lord. I just can't stop reading from it, even if I need to stop and eat. I was especially touched by the article "599 Baptisms" (Aug. 2005). It gave me the desire to do family history for my ancestors. Please keep up the good work.

Brian P., Zimbabwe

UPLIFTED

I wanted to thank you for the November 2005 New Era. Whenever I read the New Era I feel happy. It lifts me up when I'm down. I feel closer to Heavenly Father.

Gloria L., Uganda

"The New Era helps me to follow the Savior

and provides a way to be active at Church."

GAME OVER

Thank you for the "Game Over" article (Aug. 2005). I really liked what it said about violent video games, and it has helped me to be more choosey about what games I play. I am glad to know that I can play video

> games and still observe Church standards.

Nicholas H., Idaho

GOOD EXAMPLE

Thank you for the story "This Recruit Does Not Swear, Sir!" (Oct. 2005) about the Mormon marine who was at boot camp. I have been studying about the U.S. Marines and military life this past year, and I know that to say "no" to a drill sergeant could mean severe punishment; you could even be discharged. I am 15 and I live in an area where there are not many Latter-day Saint youth my age.

I hear a lot of profanity from other people. I am grateful that there are people who stand up for the right even in hard situations.

Jordan D., Arizona

RACE TO THE MAILBOX

Thank you so much for what you put in your magazine. My sister and I always try to beat each other to the mailbox. The New Era gives me just enough uplift to last for the month. I love it. I especially enjoy reading the Q&A section. Many of my questions have been answered because of it. Candice M., Utah

We love hearing from you. Write us at the following address. Please include the names of your ward and stake (or branch and district).

New Era We've Got Mail 50 E. North Temple St. Rm. 2420 Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA

Or e-mail us at

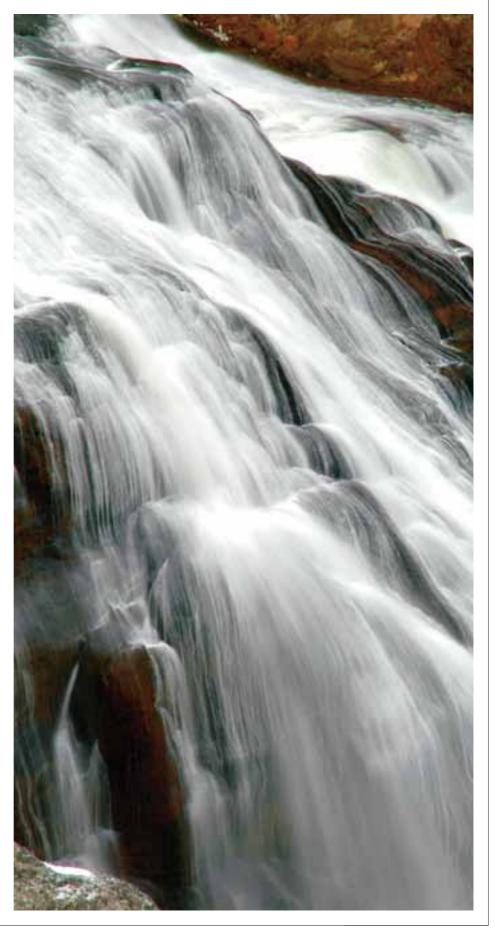
newera@ldschurch.org

Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.



WATER BY SALLY HUNTER MYLER

Water,
tourist of the world,
perhaps falling,
 in droplets, crystal clear.
Or floating upward, unnoticed,
forming puffs of steamy white clouds,
 drifting over deep blue oceans,
finally bursting into soft, fluffy snow,
 falling onto tall, majestic
 mountains,
 or in low, sleeping valleys,
and glistening, sparkling, pure,
 in moonlight's glow.





which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray"

(Mark 14:32).

See "His Final Days," p. 22.