





PRESS FORWARD LIKE JOSEPH

By Mackenzie Brown

*Stories from the Prophet Joseph Smith's life
can give you courage.*

It's easy to read stories about Joseph Smith and think that we could never be as strong and faithful as he was. But the truth is that as a person, he wasn't so different from us, and many of the trials he faced were in some ways very similar to what we face today.

What made Joseph so faithful wasn't just his dedication and courage, but also his willingness to press forward with steadfastness in Christ even when things looked bleak. Here are six examples of when Joseph pressed forward when it would've seemed easier just to give up. As you read the examples, think about how you too can press forward through challenges you face in your life.





“If any of you lack wisdom,
let him ask of God.”

—James 1:5

PRESSING FORWARD THROUGH DARK TIMES

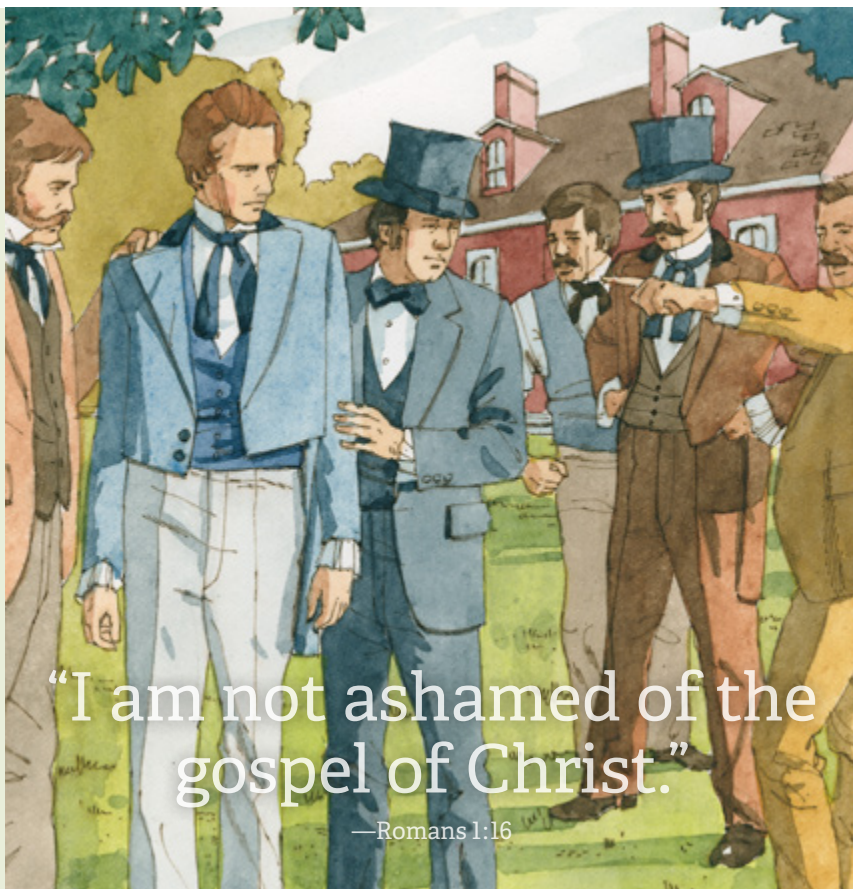
When Joseph was young, there was a lot of confusion and contention about religion. That made choosing a Church really hard. After he read James 1:5, he decided to act in faith and trust that God would answer his prayer. When Joseph went into the grove to pray, he was immediately attacked by a dark force. Joseph explained, “But, exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction . . . , I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head” (Joseph Smith—History 1:16). God the Father and Jesus Christ came, and Their light immediately drove back the darkness.

Sometimes life can feel hard. We might even feel like we’re surrounded by darkness. Joseph’s experience teaches us that light is more powerful than darkness, God is more powerful than Satan, and if we press forward in faith and call upon God for help, He will comfort us, strengthen us, and help us overcome any darkness. (See Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Hope of God’s Light,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 70.)

PRESSING FORWARD THROUGH PERSONAL ATTACKS

After the First Vision, Joseph began sharing his experience with others. To his surprise, many people ridiculed him, mocked him, and basically told him he was deceived or crazy. But Joseph remained true to his testimony. He said, “I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it” (Joseph Smith—History 1:25).

It’s becoming more and more common today for people to mock and ridicule Church members for their faith. But, like Joseph, we can press forward by strengthening our testimony in Jesus Christ. With faith in Him, we can have the courage to stand up for our beliefs, even when they’re not popular (see Romans 1:16).



“I am not ashamed of the
gospel of Christ.”

—Romans 1:16



“A merry heart maketh a
cheerful countenance.”

—Proverbs 15:13

PRESSING FORWARD AND HAVING FUN

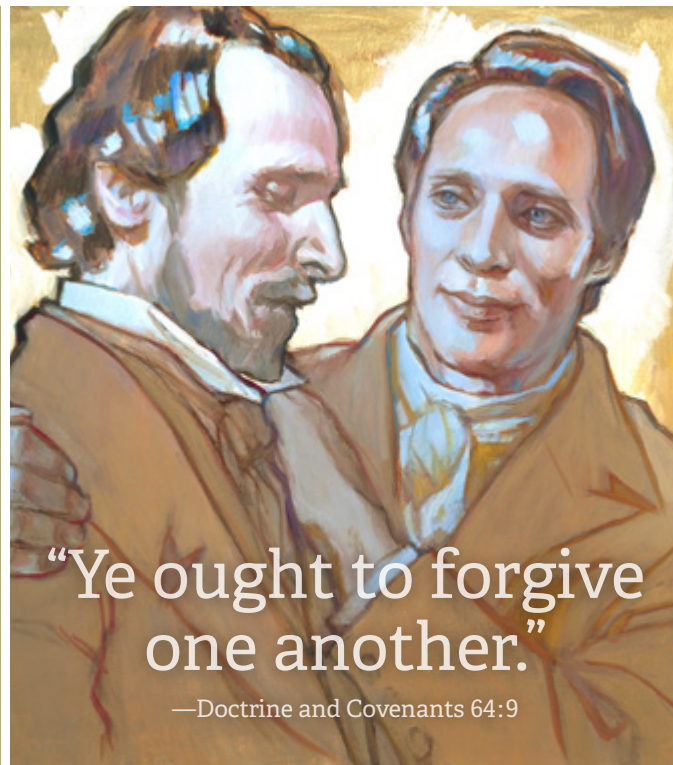
Joseph might have been serious when he preached the gospel, but he also loved to have fun. He described himself as having a “native cheery temperament” (Joseph Smith—History 1:28), which came out when he played pulling sticks and other games—especially with children.

For a lot of youth today, it can be tough to find time to have fun when we are busy with school and homework. Like Joseph, don’t forget to have fun, exercise, and enjoy life! (See Thomas S. Monson, “Finding Joy in the Journey,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 84; see also Proverbs 15:13.)

PRESSING FORWARD AND FORGIVING OTHERS

Joseph admitted time and again that he wasn't perfect, but some of his friends started to doubt that he was even a prophet of God. They apostatized and some even attacked him, like the time when some of the congregation got together with mobs and tarred and feathered Joseph and Sidney Rigdon near Kirtland, Ohio. Through all the betrayals, Joseph never strayed from the teachings of the gospel. Following Jesus Christ's example, Joseph frequently forgave those who persecuted him and showed love to his enemies (see *History of the Church*, 1:261–65).

Like Joseph, we probably have a lot of experience being forgiven by God for our sins, but our progress can stall if we don't forgive others for wrongs they have done to us. As we forgive others, the Lord will guide us, give us peace, and bless us, helping us to press forward with faith, confidence, and joy. (See D&C 64:9–10.)



FRIENDS AT FIRST SHALL BE FRIENDS AT LAST. BY ROSE DATOC DALL; JOHN THE BAPTIST, APPEARING TO JOSEPH SMITH AND OLIVER COWDERY, BY DEL PARSON; JOSEPH REPENTING, BY DAN BURR



PRESSING FORWARD WITH SCRIPTURE STUDY AND PRAYER

When Joseph was translating the Book of Mormon with Oliver Cowdery, they came across a passage of scripture that talked about baptism. The two men felt a desire to be baptized themselves, so they went before the Lord in prayer. Because of their faith, they were visited by John the Baptist and given the Aaronic Priesthood. Joseph and Oliver were then directed to baptize each other and later received the gift of the Holy Ghost (see D&C 13; Joseph Smith—History 1:68–73).

Like Joseph, we can seek answers to our questions by searching the scriptures and praying in faith to know how to apply the teachings. We can receive personalized revelation that applies directly to our lives and can teach us what we need to do to progress in our journey back to Heavenly Father. (See 2 Nephi 32:3, 5.)



“God is merciful; therefore,
repent of that
which thou hast done.”

—Doctrine and Covenants 3:10

PRESSING FORWARD AND REPENTING

When Joseph began translating the Book of Mormon, Martin Harris was his scribe. Martin’s wife didn’t believe in the golden plates, so Martin begged Joseph to allow him to take the first 116 pages of the manuscript home to show his wife. Joseph asked the Lord several times for permission and was told no twice before a final yes.

Martin borrowed the pages but eventually lost them. As a result, Joseph was rebuked by the Lord and lost the privilege of translation for a season. But, after he repented and learned a valuable lesson about obedience, he was again granted the ability to translate (see D&C 3, 10).

Like Joseph, we sometimes make mistakes. Sometimes we “[fear] man more than God” (D&C 3:7). God gave us the gift of His Son so that we, too, could repent. As we repent and turn back to God, He will forgive us and help us fulfill our missions (see D&C 3:10.) **NE**

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**You’re Probably More Like
Joseph Than You Think**

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