

THE **New Era**

AUGUST 2012



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OF YOUTH, p.18**

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Prepress: Joshua Dennis

Printing Director: Craig K. Sedgwick

Distribution Director: Evan Larsen

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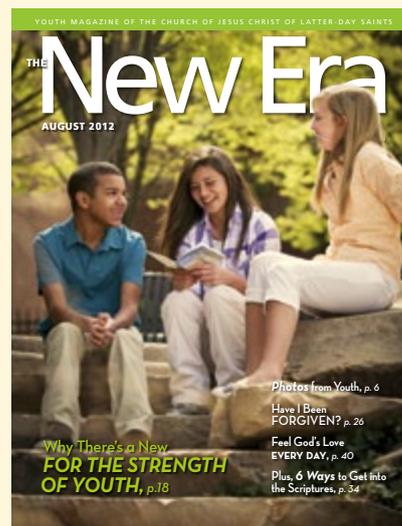
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THE MONTHLY YOUTH MAGAZINE
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OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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Cover: The Young Men and Young Women general presidents discuss the new *For the Strength of Youth* booklet. See page 18.

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I love, I cherish the noble word duty.

President Monson on

DUTY



By President Thomas S. Monson

Keep the Commandments

[President Monson, reflecting on the teachings of President J. Reuben Clark, Jr. (1871–1961), who served as a counselor in the First Presidency with three presidents of the Church:]

“It was my great privilege to know President Clark rather well. I was his printer. On occasion, he would share with me some of his most intimate thoughts, even those scriptures around which he tailored his teachings and lived his life. Late one evening I delivered some press proofs to his office situated in his home at 80 D Street here in Salt Lake City. President Clark was reading from Ecclesiastes. He was in a quiet and reflective mood. He sat back from his large desk, which was stacked with books and papers. He held the scriptures in his hand, lifted his eyes from the printed page, and read aloud to me: ‘Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.’ (Eccl. 12:13.) He exclaimed, ‘A treasured truth! A profound philosophy!’ Through the years that conversation has remained bright in my memory. I love, I cherish the noble word *duty*.”¹

Focus outside Ourselves

“To find real happiness, we must seek for it in a focus outside ourselves. No one has learned the meaning of living until he has

surrendered his ego to the service of his fellowmen. Service to others is akin to duty, the fulfillment of which brings true joy.”²

Reach Out to Rescue

“My dear brothers and sisters, ours is the responsibility, even the solemn duty, to reach out to all of those whose lives we have been called to touch. Our duty is to guide them to the celestial kingdom of God. . . . May we reach out to rescue those who need our help and our love.”³

Follow the Savior

“Let us learn our duty. Let us, in the performance of our duty, follow in the footsteps of the Master. As you and I walk the pathway Jesus walked, let us listen for the sound of sandaled feet. Let us reach out for the Carpenter’s hand. Then we shall come to know Him. He may come to us as one unknown, without a name, as by the lakeside He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same words, ‘Follow thou me’ (John 21:22), and sets us to the task which He has to fulfill for our time. He commands, and to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal



As you and I walk the pathway Jesus walked, let us reach out for the Carpenter's hand. Then we shall come to know Him.

Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings that they shall pass through in His fellowship; and they shall learn by their own experience who He is.

“We will discover He is more than the Babe in Bethlehem, more than the carpenter's son, more than the greatest teacher ever to live. We will come to know Him as the Son of God, our Savior and our Redeemer. When to Him came the call of duty, He answered, ‘Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever.’ (Moses 4:2.) May we do likewise.”⁴

Continue in Your Duty

“Time marches on. Duty keeps cadence with that march. Duty does not dim nor diminish. Catastrophic conflicts come and go, but the war waged for the souls of men continues without abatement. Like a clarion call comes the word of the Lord to you, to me, and to priesthood holders everywhere: ‘Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence.’ (D&C 107:99.)”⁵ **NE**

NOTES

1. “The Call of Duty,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 37.
2. “In Quest of the Abundant Life,” *Ensign*, March 1988, 5.
3. “Sugar Beets and the Worth of a Soul,” *Ensign*, July 2009, 7.
4. “The Call of Duty,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 39.
5. “The Call of Duty,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 37.



Every Church member has important responsibilities.

In a Word: DUTY



Rich blessings come to each of us as we fulfill our duty to pray daily, study the scriptures, draw close to the Savior, and serve others.

As a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, each of us has been baptized and confirmed.

With these ordinances come obligations, covenants, and blessings. While the *blessings* part usually sounds good to us, the *obligations* part may not always sound so appealing. But each of us has covenanted to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ and to keep His commandments. Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (1917–2008) said this about our duty as disciples of Christ: “Every member of the Church—every man, woman, and child—is faced with an obligation to fulfill his duty. Every member of the Church is commanded to live the laws of God and keep his commandments. Each has the duty to pray daily, study the scriptures, draw close to the Savior, and serve others” (“Let Every Man Learn His Duty,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 70).

Fulfilling each of these four basic duties brings rich and rewarding blessings into our lives:

- **Pray daily.** When we pray regularly, we are able to receive spiritual guidance. Our confidence grows when we know we are led by and follow the Spirit. “Pray always, that you may come off conqueror” (D&C 10:5).

- **Study the scriptures.** A better understanding of the scriptures will increase our knowledge of and faith in God. It will also help us discern truth from error and make

better decisions. Feasting on the scriptures “will tell you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:3).

- **Draw close to the Savior.** This duty is a blessing in and of itself. As we grow closer to the Savior, we are better able to do His will, and gradually we become more like Him. “Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you” (D&C 88:63).

- **Serve others.** Serving others is a sure way to bring more love and happiness into our own lives and the lives of those around us. “When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17). **NE**



Doing Your Duty

Think about ways you can do your duty. Write down your feelings in your journal, or jot down goals on a notecard and put it somewhere to remind you to stick to your goals.

A SACRIFICE *but a* JOY

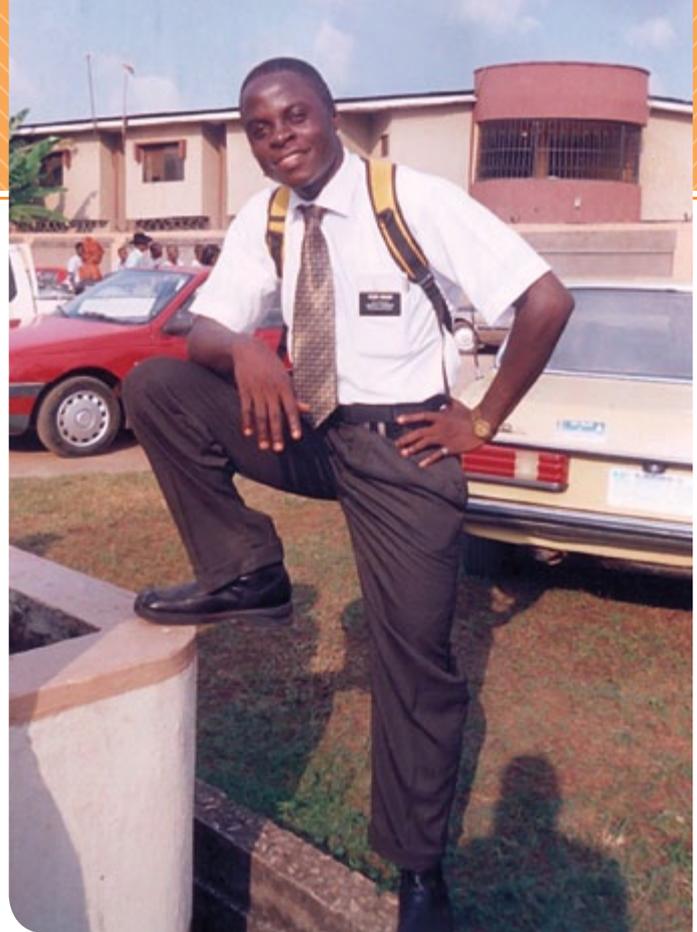
My desire to serve a mission almost became lost because I enjoyed the money I was making.

By Edward M. Akosah

When I was six years old, my mother met the missionaries and joined the Church in Ghana, Africa. My father had left her with five children, but the teachings of the Church helped keep our family strong. We loved each other and had peace in our home. I loved going to church with my mom and enjoyed attending Primary classes and then seminary.

As a young man I was called as a ward missionary and enjoyed proselyting with the missionaries. I also watched as some of the young men in our ward went on missions. When they returned, they were different. They were more learned and mature, both physically and spiritually. My older brother also served a mission. When he returned, I saw many improvements in his behavior. I kept asking myself, "What is it about a mission that makes all these people change and grow so much?" I became enthusiastic about going on a mission.

After I finished high school, I was working to save money for a mission. Soon my desire to serve a mission became lost because I enjoyed the money I was making. It would have been a sacrifice to go on a mission because the money I earned helped support my family. Each time I started filling out my mission forms, I thought about the



money I would be giving up, and I dropped my forms and continued working.

As my friends left on missions, I felt bad because I knew I should also be getting ready to go. This caused me to examine myself. I thought, "Sustaining the prophet and my leaders is not just raising my right hand. It's doing what they say and obeying our Heavenly Father's commandments."

Now was the time to serve a mission, so I submitted my mission papers to the bishop. It was the second happiest day of my life. The happiest was the day my bishop called me to his office and gave me a white envelope with my mission call to the Nigeria Ibadan Mission. My heart was full of joy.

In the missionary training center, I became better acquainted with the doctrines of the gospel and learned marvelous things. I was also able to receive my endowment in the temple. I am so grateful for my decision to come on a mission, and I have never regretted it. I too have grown spiritually on my mission. I believe it is because I am helping people receive the same gospel blessings that have brought so much happiness to me and my family. **NE**

Beauty

Enjoy eight photos from readers that celebrate the wonder and joy of life.

ALL AROUND

Photography is the art of painting with light. With just the simplest point-and-click device, we can use photographs to help us see the world with a new perspective and remind us of Heavenly Father's love. The camera also captures images of people, times, and places that remind us of special events in our lives, helping memories to remain bright. Come see some of the pictures that New Era readers have shared with us. They show that there is beauty in the small and simple creations as well as the spectacular.

Discover More Beauty

See also J. Tyler Bates, "The Beauty of the Earth," *New Era*, Feb. 2010, 16.

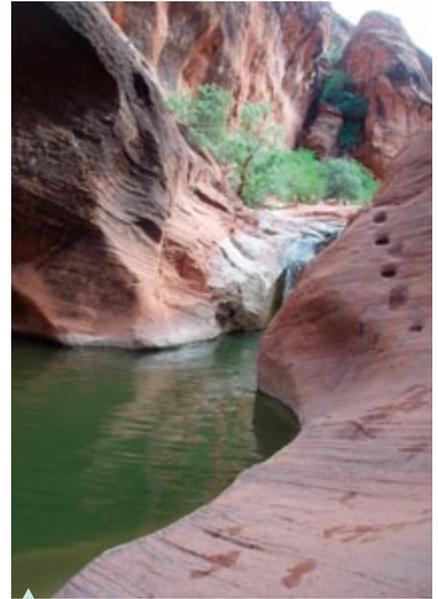


“These elders, Elder Clites and Elder Excell, were doing the Lord’s work on their preparation day in Minas Gerais, Brazil. These young men were truly loved by members and nonmembers because of their dedication, responsibility, enthusiasm, and great character. They taught me the gospel, and I became a member of the Church. We should be willing to be the one who can make a difference in someone’s life.”

Marcelo C., Brazil

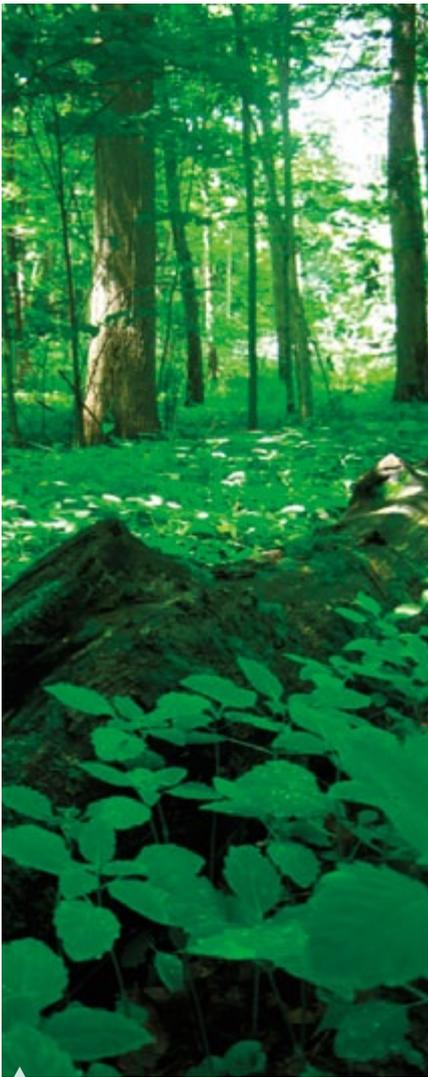
“I am one of a group of students who takes an annual trip to the Washington D.C. Temple every October. While I’m at the temple, the world disappears and the Spirit is there. There is peace and a wonderful, clarifying calm. I can think, study, pray, and relax there with much more effectiveness than in my busy, everyday life. Afterward, I also make sure to spend some time recording my appreciation of beauty through photography. These photographs are reminders to me of my eternal goal to enter the temple worthily.”

Jasmin J., Virginia, USA



“The day I took this picture was one of the best days of our vacation because we were able to just play around and be together as a family.”

Dayna W., Utah, USA



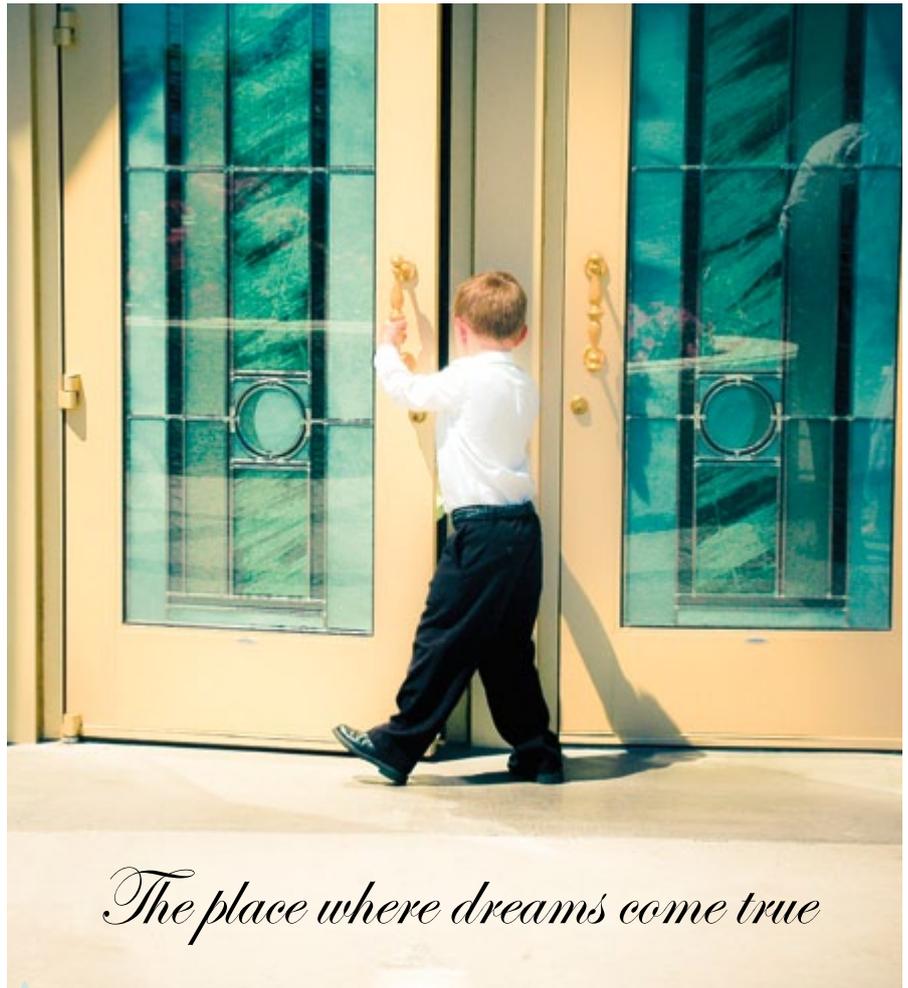
“When I took this picture of the Sacred Grove, I felt peacefulness around me and the rays of sunlight filtering through the canopy of leaves above. The hymn “Joseph Smith’s First Prayer” [*Hymns*, no. 26] came to mind, and it was as if the birds were testifying of what had occurred in this sacred place.”

Naomi S., Texas, USA



“To truly reverence the Creator, we must appreciate his creations. We need to plan to take time to observe the marvels of nature. . . . Take time to sit on a hillside and feel the tranquility of the evening when the sun casts its last golden glow over the horizon. Take time to smell the roses.”

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “God’s Love for His Children,” *Ensign*, May 1988, 59.



“This is a picture I took of my brother entering the Columbia River Washington Temple. This was on our way in to be sealed as a family in the temple. It now hangs on our wall, with the words added.”

Collin H., Washington, USA



“My family and I went to the Redwood Forest. It was amazing. The contrast between my little brother standing in front of a giant tree makes me think about how incredible and unique the Lord’s creations are.”

Breanna L. D., Utah, USA



“A warm glow began to pour through my window and slowly started to fill the room with light from outside. The June sky was bursting with vibrant color, and the sweet aroma of lilac blossoms floated in the peaceful air. I was reminded of how glorious God’s creations are and of the love He has for each of His children. Though sunsets fade and the colors dim, God’s love for us will always remain bright.”

Tmera B., Utah, USA

Send Your Photos

What beauty do you see in the world? Submit your own photos at create.lds.org.



Our hunger was moving us toward a bad decision.

Driven to

By Danny Spencer

“Thanks for the ride!” I yelled, waving at the red car as it pulled out of the driveway. I was excited to be hanging out with two new friends, Steve and Mark. It had taken a while to persuade Steve’s older brother to give the three of us a ride to the town’s music store, but we’d had a lot of fun there. We had just come back to Mark’s house.

“Is anyone else as hungry as I am?” I heard Steve ask. I realized then that my stomach was growling. I hadn’t noticed with all the fun I was having.

“Do you guys have any money? Maybe we could get a pizza,” suggested Mark. We went inside and pooled our money on Mark’s kitchen table. We found we had just enough for a small pizza but not enough to have it delivered.

“Hey, Mark, maybe your parents can give us a ride,” Steve said.

“No, they just left to see a movie,” Mark said with a frown.

I tried to make a joke, “Too bad none of us has a driver’s license. Then we could go down and get the pizza ourselves.”

Steve and Mark looked at each other. “I have my learner’s permit,” Mark said slowly. “My parents say I’m a pretty good driver, even though I’m only 15.”

“Didn’t your parents take the car?” Steve asked.

Mark answered, “They took my dad’s car, but they left my mom’s.”

We stood still for a moment, looking at

each other. I began to feel nervous.

“Let’s just go outside and sit in the car,” Steve suggested. “We could just see how we feel.”

Mark looked at me. “What do you think, Danny?”

I shrugged. I really didn’t think that we should do it, but I also wanted my new friends to think I was cool.

“Let’s go,” said Mark, and he led the way through his back door and into the garage. Mark climbed into the driver’s seat, and Steve sat in the passenger seat next to him. Hesitantly, I entered the car, sat in the back seat, and shut the door behind me.

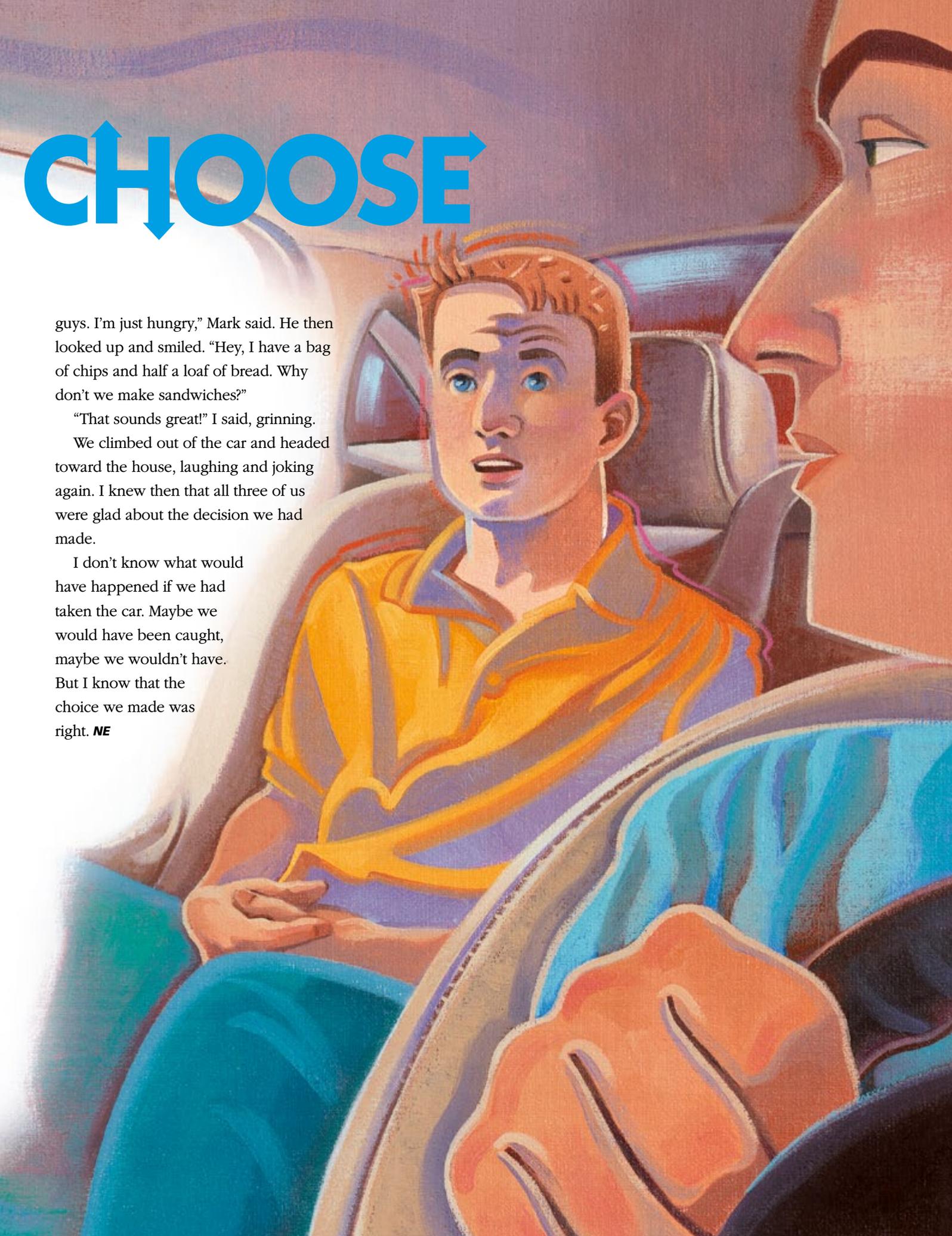
It had started out as a joke, but now I felt terrible. I imagined what my parents would think if they knew I was going along with this. What if we got caught? I would feel awful. I knew the Holy Ghost was telling me this was wrong. Then a thought hit me. My friends weren’t bad people. They were probably having the same feelings I was having.

Mark put the key in the ignition, and the engine roared to life. I couldn’t take it any more. “Guys, we really shouldn’t be doing this,” I said quietly. Mark and Steve both looked back at me. I felt myself blush. They were going to make fun of me. I just knew it.

“Yeah, you’re right,” Steve agreed, nodding. “What would our parents think? What would our teachers quorum leaders think?”

Mark also nodded and took the key out of the ignition. The growl of the engine died, and relief came flooding into me. “Sorry,

CHOOSE

A stylized illustration of a young man with short brown hair and blue eyes, wearing a yellow shirt, sitting in the driver's seat of a car. He is looking forward with a slightly surprised or thoughtful expression. The car's interior, including the steering wheel and dashboard, is visible. The background is a soft, warm glow, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall style is painterly and expressive.

guys. I'm just hungry," Mark said. He then looked up and smiled. "Hey, I have a bag of chips and half a loaf of bread. Why don't we make sandwiches?"

"That sounds great!" I said, grinning.

We climbed out of the car and headed toward the house, laughing and joking again. I knew then that all three of us were glad about the decision we had made.

I don't know what would have happened if we had taken the car. Maybe we would have been caught, maybe we wouldn't have. But I know that the choice we made was right. **NE**



ff

His Grace Is

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

Sufficient

How does God’s grace really work?





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 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, 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

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.

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 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 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. **NE**

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on July 12, 2011. For the full text, visit speeches.byu.edu.

“I’ve become addicted to pornography. It’s ruining my life. What can I do to break the addiction?”

Pornography is a widespread and serious problem. It hurts your spirit and infects your mind with unclean thoughts. It damages your relationships. Looking at pornography causes you to lose the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

Getting over the addiction is not easy, but it is simple—decide now to stop looking at or thinking about pornography. Speak immediately with your bishop or branch president. Don’t feel embarrassed to talk to him. He can help you repent so the Savior’s Atonement can cleanse your thoughts and spirit. “By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them” (D&C 58:43).

Do everything you can to avoid pornography in the future. That might mean getting rid of your cell phone and your Internet access, except in public places, with strong Internet filters installed.

Make prayer, scripture study, service, and other uplifting activities the focus of your life. The Lord taught, “Cease from . . . all your lustful desires” and “let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly” (D&C 88:121; 121:45). With sincere repentance and the help of the Savior and His chosen servants, you *can* overcome this addiction. **NE**

Read Scriptures



Pray for strength. Enos prayed for an entire day, supplicating the Lord for his sins to be forgiven, and through his faith, he felt great peace and the guilt disappeared. Read the scriptures to obtain the Holy Spirit, since when you have His companionship, you will not think or do impure things. Read Psalm 24:3–5 (about keeping oneself clean). Keep busy: do sports, go out and have clean fun, and don’t let yourself be influenced by supposed friends. When temptations come, be decisive and reject them. Remember that Heavenly Father knows everything you think and do.

Ana G., 17, Zulia, Venezuela

Never Give Up

Pornography ruined my life, but I have finally broken the addiction after much suffering. The repentance process will be long and hard, but pray sincerely every day for the Lord’s help during this trial. Never think that you are unworthy to repent, as the Atonement is for everyone. Also remember that each time you are tempted, Satan is trying to bring you down into sin. But it will always be your choice to either give in or ignore the temptation. Never give up on yourself or the Lord, as He will give you no trial that you cannot bear (see 1 Nephi 3:7).

A young woman from Victoria, Australia

Talk to Your Bishop

Go talk to your bishop as soon as possible. It’s hard to take that first step, but you have to talk to him to repent. He won’t make fun of you or be disgusted with you. He cares about you and wants only what’s best for you. Jesus Christ suffered for your sins

so you can feel free again from the crushing guilt and sadness you've been feeling for so long (see Alma 5:9). It's not too late to change. You can feel true joy again. Ask God to give you the courage to repent.

Taylor P., 18, North Carolina, USA

Sing a Hymn



Pornography is not of God. The repentance process is long and painful, but it is possible! You have to have the

desire to change, to perceive the gravity of the sin, and above all to seek help from Heavenly Father. To avoid falling into temptation, I have a picture of Jesus Christ beside my computer. He is always there watching me! Whenever pornographic images or music comes into my mind, I sing a hymn and soon these evil things are forgotten.

Natália Q., 18, São Paulo, Brazil

Pray

The power of prayer is indescribable; it gives us the strength to withstand adversity and come off conqueror (see D&C 10:5). If you seek Heavenly Father in prayer, He will give you the strength to free yourself from temptation. As you read the scriptures daily, you will be strengthened even more. If you trust in the Lord and not in your own strength, He will free you from the chains that bind you. It is through the Atonement that you can be healed.

Gian G., 18, Rivera, Uruguay

Confess

I've had this problem. It still haunts me. First of all, stop looking at pornography. Go to Heavenly Father. I felt Him forgive me when I didn't

think I could be forgiven. And then I thought I was fine. I didn't want anyone to know about it; I was so ashamed. But it's something you need to tell your bishop. I tried not to. But over and over I heard the words, "If you have a problem with pornography, go to your bishop." One day, in my temple recommend interview, it just spilled out. And I felt so good afterwards. I was free. A burden was lifted. Afterwards, I told my parents. They were sad, but they accepted it. Don't be afraid to come out with it.

A young woman from Tennessee, USA

Tell Someone

I was trapped by pornography for a long time. It was only with my parents' support and my bishop's help that I finally broke free. Reduced Internet privileges or a few weeks of not taking the sacrament is a small price to pay for the joy of being clean. Professional counselors can also help and will not judge you. They are also a tool the Lord has given us.

A young man from California, USA

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



HOW TO GUARD AGAINST TEMPTATION

"Start by separating yourself from people, materials, and circumstances that

will harm you. . . .

"Acknowledge that people bound by the chains of true addictions often need more help than self-help, and that may include you. Seek that help and welcome it. Talk to your bishop. Follow his counsel. . . .

"Along with filters on computers and a lock on affections, remember that the only real control in life is self-control. Exercise more control over even the marginal moments that confront you. If a TV show is indecent, turn it off. . . .

"Cultivate and be where the Spirit of the Lord is. Make sure that includes your own home or apartment, dictating the kind of art, music, and literature you keep there."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Place No More for the Enemy of My Soul," *Ensign*, May 2010, 45–46.

NEXT QUESTION

"How do I
'stand in
holy places'
when there's so
much unholiness
around me,
like at school?"

Send your answer and photo by September 15, 2012.

Go to newera.lds.org, click "Submit Material," and then select "Questions and Answers."

You can also write to us at newera@ldschurch.org

or
New Era, Q&A, holy places
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



For the Strength of Youth AN ANCHOR FOR TODAY



David L. Beck
Young Men
General President



Elaine S. Dalton
Young Women
General President

The First Presidency wrote that the standards in For the Strength of Youth “will help you with the important choices you are making now and will yet make in the future.”¹ With the release of a new edition of the pamphlet, Church magazines were able to spend a few moments with Young Women general president Elaine S. Dalton and Young Men general president David L. Beck talking about the revised pamphlet.

Why a new edition of *For the Strength of Youth* now?

Brother Beck: The Lord’s standards have not changed, but the adversary’s

attacks against those standards have increased in frequency and intensity. *For the Strength of Youth* has been updated to help youth withstand these attacks.

Sister Dalton: Prophets continue to speak in very clear terms to youth, and we want to keep their current words available. Youth need to be anchored in following the prophet, so recent teachings have been integrated into this pamphlet.

Brother Beck: As President Thomas S. Monson has reminded us, today’s youth are growing up in a time when the gap between the Lord’s standards and the world’s

standards is widening.² Temptations are becoming stronger, and sinful behavior is becoming more socially acceptable. The inspired counsel in this new pamphlet is an indication of Heavenly Father's love for the youth. He wants each young person to enjoy the blessings of living the gospel and has given them standards to help them. He has an important work for them to do now. The standards in *For the Strength of Youth* help qualify them to perform His work.



What has been updated with this edition?

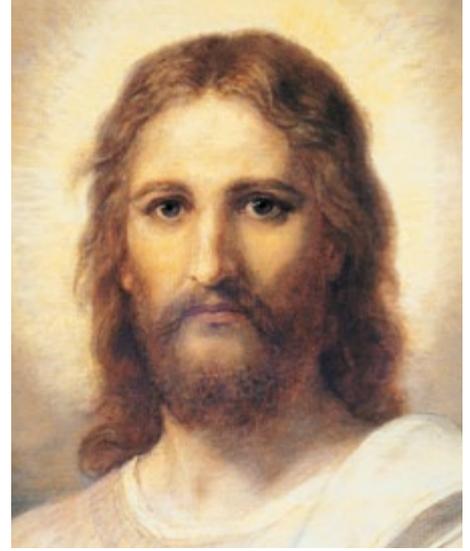
Sister Dalton: “Work and Self-Reliance” has been added. A lot of youth are spending so much time with new technologies—social networking, Internet browsing, video gaming—that they never really learn how to work. That’s a concern because when a young person goes on a mission, sometimes he or she isn’t prepared for the rigors of that hard physical and spiritual labor.

This goes along well with another new section: “Physical and Emotional Health.” You need to be physically healthy and take care of your body, but you also need to be mindful of your emotional health.

Brother Beck: Additional emphasis has also been placed on following the Spirit and living worthy to attend the temple.

How can youth make *For the Strength of Youth* a part of their lives?

Sister Dalton: I’d like for them to look for the blessings mentioned in the pamphlet and think about how these blessings will lead them to their goals. I really believe this generation is preparing the earth for the Savior’s Second Coming. I would urge youth to remember that they want to stand with confidence in His presence when He comes again.



Brother Beck: The *Fulfilling My Duty to God* and *Young Women Personal Progress* booklets also offer several good ideas. For example, in the “Live Worthily” sections of *Duty to God*, young men are invited to study the standards in *For the Strength of Youth*, make a plan to live by them, and then share their experiences with others. By doing so, they strengthen not only their own testimonies, but they also strengthen others.

Sister Dalton: Another interesting exercise would be for the youth to go through *For the Strength of Youth* and circle all mentions of the Spirit. Living these standards will enable



them to have the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost. And in a time when youth are making critical decisions in their lives, they need that companionship.

Brother Beck: I also see the pamphlet as a great resource for sharing the gospel; we can use it to help our friends understand why we live the way we do. Youth could also use it to prepare family home evening lessons, sacrament meeting talks, or lessons for Church classes—or even just to find answers to questions about the Lord’s standards. As youth do these things, the doctrines and principles in *For the Strength of Youth* will go deep into their hearts and become a part of who they are.



What would you say to those who think it’s hard to keep these standards in today’s world?

Sister Dalton: I’d say, “You’re right; it is hard.” But I would remind them that it’s a lot harder when you *don’t* keep the standards. Sin complicates your life and leads you to deal with things that you don’t want. I would say that living the standards in *For the Strength of Youth* is a key to happiness, and everyone wants to be happy.

Brother Beck: Nothing this world has to offer can compare to the comforting influence of the Holy Ghost, to the satisfaction of knowing that Heavenly Father is pleased with you, or to the power of temple covenants. These are the blessings promised to those who obey the Lord’s standards.

Sister Dalton: So many young women say, “I did a bad thing, so I can’t come to church anymore.” Then they start falling into worse behavior. But I’d say, “You *can* repent. You can change, and now’s the time. This is the day. This is your moment.”

What advice would you give to youth who don’t receive a lot of support at home in living these standards?

Brother Beck: I believe the Lord places each of us where we can do the most good with the spiritual gifts He has given us. If your family doesn’t share your commitment to living the Lord’s standards, don’t give up. Keep living the way you



know you should, because you never know who in your family might be watching you and privately drawing strength from your example.

Sister Dalton: Also, always remember who *you* are. You were reserved to be on the earth now because you have a strong testimony of the Savior. You proved that in the premortal world. As Brother Beck mentioned, your living the standards might ultimately bless your family. Don’t compromise. Don’t give in. As we live these standards, we can be a light. We can reflect the Savior’s light.

What blessings will come to youth as they live the standards?

Brother Beck: The Lord has promised many wonderful blessings to those who are true to the standards He has set. Some are immediate: the companionship of the Holy Ghost,

peace of conscience, and increased faith and confidence. Each time we obey a commandment, our ability to obey grows.

Sister Dalton: The world says, “Try everything. Because you’re young now, you can experiment.” What happens when you follow that message is like a funnel that starts out wide but gets pretty narrow at the bottom. Your agency becomes restricted by those decisions. Experimentation can lead to addiction. A moment of excitement



can lead to pregnancy out of wedlock or a change in your life plan. But if you will walk a strict path—turn the funnel upside down—and obey the Lord’s standards, the whole world opens up for you and grows wider as you keep the commandments. Instead of being bound to your mistakes, you have the freedom to live the kind of life that will make you happy.

Brother Beck: The world needs young people who understand the value of these blessings and how to qualify for them. There are many among your friends and your peers who are looking for an alternative to the world’s ways, who want true principles to build their lives upon. All they need is your example and testimony.

Would you like to share anything else with the youth?

Sister Dalton: The message I would give to the youth is that repentance is not a bad thing; it’s a blessing. The Savior provided for us the ability to repent. Don’t wait. We can change, and that will help us live the standards. One virtuous young man or young woman led by the Spirit can change the world. You can be that one.

Brother Beck: We love you, and we rejoice in your goodness. It’s exciting and inspiring for us to witness your faithfulness. If you feel alone, remember that there are thousands of youth just like you around the world who are committed to keeping the Lord’s standards. Remember also that the Holy Ghost can be your constant companion. Live worthy of His presence, follow His promptings, and allow Him to comfort you when you need it. Heavenly Father loves you and trusts you. He has great things in store for you. **NE**

NOTES

1. *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), ii.
2. See Thomas S. Monson, “Dare to Stand Alone,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 60.

HOW CAN I EXPLAIN TO MY FRIENDS WHY OUR STANDARDS AREN’T RESTRICTIVE?

You can use the funnel analogy Sister Dalton mentions. Trying things the world suggests will narrow your future because of the negative consequences. We turn the funnel the opposite way, where following standards and commandments opens up lots of opportunities for us now and in the future.

Standards help us:

- Have the companionship of the Holy Ghost, especially in making important choices.
- Enjoy happiness and freedom rather than enduring consequences of addiction or sin.
- Be worthy of temple blessings and eternal life, which is our ultimate goal.



My Mother's EXAMPLE

By Erin Barker

I slammed the plate into the dishwasher and cried in frustration.

"Erin, you can go to that pool party," my dad said. "You can take a break."

"It's not about that!" I yelled as I stormed from the room.

My tantrum wasn't about Adriane's pool party. My mom and my youngest sister, Abby, were sick with pneumonia. My dad and I had spent the last week caring for them and trying to keep the household functioning normally. This meant cooking, cleaning, grocery shopping, doing laundry, and driving my other two sisters around.

All of these things muffled my nagging worries and fears. I was worried about my family and nervous about leaving for college soon. So I kept myself busy and tried to ignore my fears. I had even planned on skipping Adriane's party, but I was tired and the thought of a carefree evening, hanging out with friends by the pool, pushed my

emotions over the edge. I exploded and took out my frustration on my dad.

I cried for a while in my bedroom. Then, feeling guilty, I went upstairs to see if my mom or Abby needed anything. I found my mother giving medicine to my fever-flushed sister. My mom was barely able to breathe and had been bedridden for days. My dad and I urged her to return to bed. We told her that we could take care of Abby. She wouldn't listen.

"I'm all right. You two get some sleep," she said. "Abby needs me."

I tried not to cry as I watched my mom comfort my 10-year-old sister. She checked her temperature, helped her into bed, then crawled in after her and held her shaking body. Abby stopped moaning and calmed under my mom's protection.

My mom was more ill than she had ever been. The pneumonia would eventually send her to the hospital for several days. Yet in the middle of her trial, she forgot about herself. Rather than complaining about her own illness, she found a way to ease her daughter's pain.

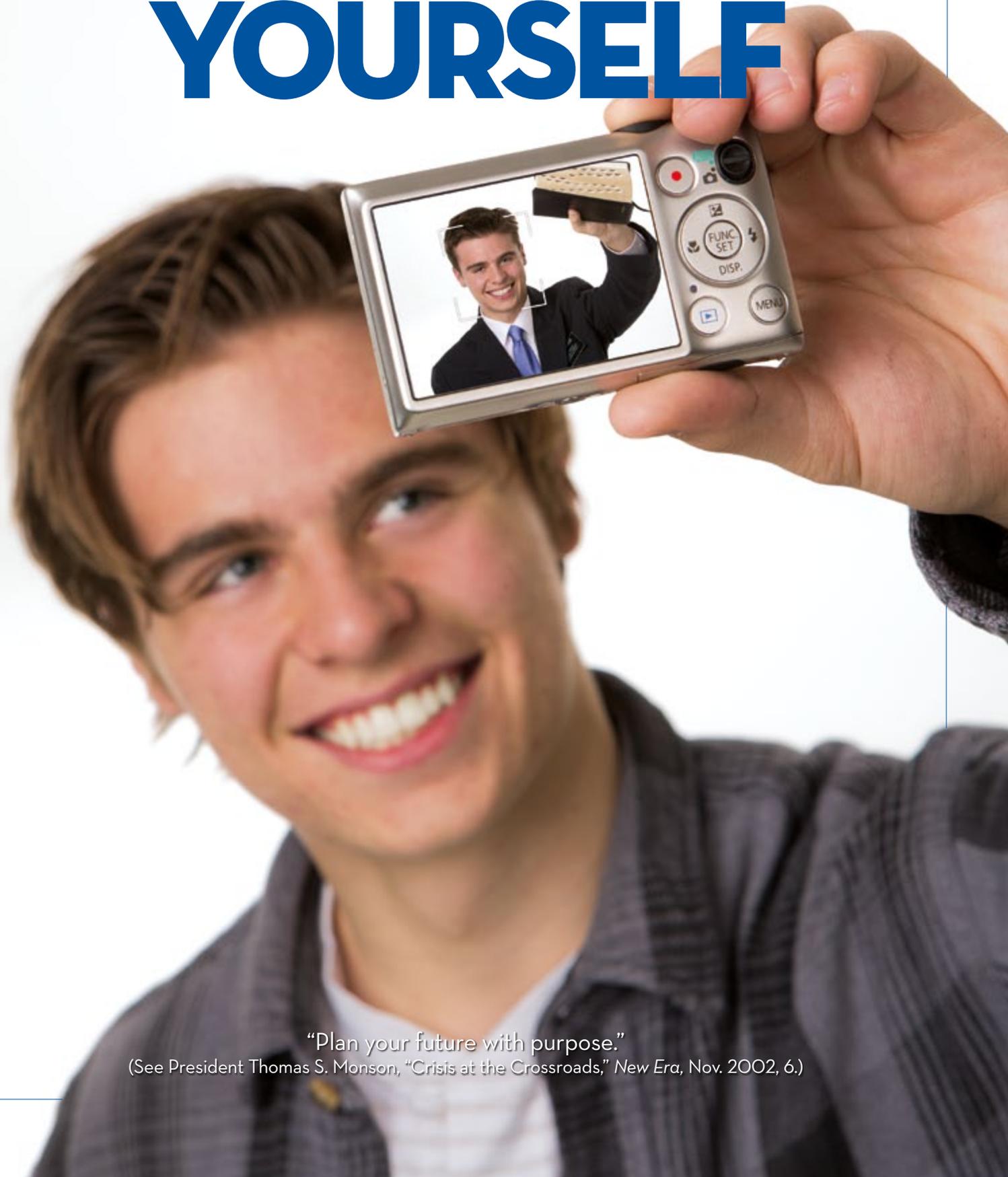
I had planned on becoming the martyr that night by staying home to help. Instead, I was embarrassed by my outburst and humbled by my mother's actions. Watching her, I knew she would do anything to help my sisters and me.

I felt her love that night and wanted to follow her example. I resolved to show those I love that I will be there when they need me, regardless of the personal sacrifice required. **NE**

ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN CAUL



PICTURE YOURSELF



“Plan your future with purpose.”

(See President Thomas S. Monson, “Crisis at the Crossroads,” *New Era*, Nov. 2002, 6.)

LOL

LOVE OUT LOUD

By Kimberly Richter

In a world where texting often replaces human interaction, it's easy to forget that we need to show love in a visible way. We all care about our family, friends, and neighbors. But sometimes we're not so good at *showing* how much we care. Here are some simple ways to love out loud.



Set aside time for your siblings. Play games or just talk together.



Rake leaves or shovel snow for your dad before he wakes up in the morning.



Call someone just to say hello.

Smile at the people you pass at school or in your neighborhood.



Give your mom a big hug.



Send a letter to your grandpa or grandma.



Say "I love you" out loud to people you love.



Spend time listening to and encouraging a family member or a friend.

Make treats for a family in your ward or branch.



Send a text message that shows you care: "You're the best." "Hope you feel better soon." "Missed you today."

Send a thoughtful note to a friend.

Do an extra household chore to lighten your mother's load.



Support your siblings in their talents and activities. Attend their games, concerts, or performances whenever you can.



Help your parents by getting your younger siblings ready for church.



Say something nice to each family member.



Pick up a friend for a Mutual activity.



Make a card or treat on someone's birthday.



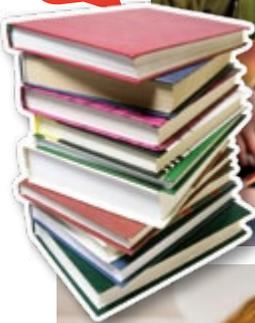
Visit or call your grandparents and ask to hear stories about their childhood or their years spent raising your mom or your dad.



Get your siblings together to make and serve dinner to your parents.



Tutor a friend in a school subject he or she doesn't understand.



Teach somebody one of your hobbies, like playing the guitar or sewing.



Give a genuine compliment: "I love your laugh." "You are always so nice." "You look nice today."



Help a sibling clean his or her room.



Thank your leaders after Church and Mutual activities.



Let someone else choose the movie or game on a family night.



WE NEED TO SAY IT

“Each of us already knows we should tell the people we love that we love them. But what we know is not always reflected in what we do. We may feel unsure, awkward, or even perhaps a bit embarrassed. . . .

“We should remember that saying ‘I love you’ is only a beginning. We need to say it, we need to mean it, and most importantly we need consistently to show it. We need to both express and demonstrate love.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “More Diligent and Concerned at Home,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 17–18.

What Matters Most

Watch a *Mormon Messages* video where President Monson talks about showing love at lds.org/go/82A.

What Will You Do?

Think about things you can do today and throughout the week to “love out loud.” Share your experiences with us at lds.org/go/82B.

BEHIND THE SCENES

For a family home evening activity, the Hotchkiss family in Lancashire, England, made Mormonad posters together and then sent us copies. One of their posters featured the letters “LOL,” which stood for “love out loud,” with images of ways to show love toward others. We loved the idea—and thought you would too.



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

How Do I **KNOW** *When I Am* **FORGIVEN?**

When I served as mission president, missionaries often asked these two questions: (1) How do I know when I am forgiven of my sins? and (2) If I am forgiven, why do I still feel guilt?

When asked those questions, I usually responded by saying, “If you feel the Spirit—when you pray, read the scriptures, teach, testify, or at any other time—then that is your witness that you have been forgiven or, alternatively, that the cleansing process is taking place, for the Spirit cannot dwell in an unholy tabernacle” (see Alma 7:21). In most cases the cleansing process takes time because our change of heart takes time, but in the interim, we can proceed with the confidence that God approves of our progress as manifested by the presence of His Spirit.

Some people are harder on themselves than the Lord is. Of course,

we must repent to be eligible for the cleansing and forgiving powers of the Atonement, but once we have repented, there is no such thing as a spotted repenter in God’s kingdom. There is no black mark on our right ankle that says “2008 sin” or brown stain behind our left ear that says “2010 trespass.” The Lord declared the comprehensive cleansing power of the Atonement when He said, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18). That is the miracle of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

On some occasions I believe our sins are cleansed before the guilt goes away. Why is that? Perhaps in God’s mercy, the memory of that guilt is a warning, a spiritual “stop sign” that cries out when similar temptations confront us: “Don’t go down that road. You know the pain it can bring.” Perhaps for those in the process of

repenting, it is meant to be a protection, not a punishment.

Will our guilt ever go away? The promise of the Lord is certain in that regard. To the righteous, the Lord said that the time would come when “there shall be no more . . . sorrow, nor crying, *neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away*” (Revelation 21:4; emphasis added).

I do not know if we will forget our sins, but the time will come when those who repent will no longer be troubled by their sins. Such was the case with Enos, whose “guilt was swept away” (Enos 1:6), and the converted Lamanites, who witnessed that the Lord had “taken away the guilt from our hearts” (Alma 24:10), and with Alma, who exclaimed, “I could remember my pains *no more*” (Alma 36:19; emphasis added). No doubt all of them remembered their sins, but



Will our guilt ever go away? The promise of the Lord is certain in that regard. To the righteous, the Lord said that the time would come when "there shall be no more . . . sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."

The more we learn about the Atonement and exercise faith in Christ's healing powers, the greater our ability to be forgiven and to forgive ourselves.



somehow they were no longer troubled by them. The infinite powers of the Atonement miraculously healed every wound and soothed every conscience with “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (Philippians 4:7).

There seem to be two conditions that will free us from all guilt and pain. First is our unwavering faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement. When Enos asked how his guilt was “swept away” (see Enos 1:6–7), the Lord responded, “Because of thy faith in Christ” (Enos 1:8). Accordingly, the more we learn about the Atonement and exercise faith in Christ’s healing powers, the greater our ability to be forgiven and to forgive ourselves. Second is the development of a character that has “no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually” (Mosiah 5:2). When this happens, we no longer view ourselves in our “carnal state” (Mosiah 4:2) but as spiritually begotten sons and daughters of God. We recognize that we are a different person than the one who sinned. Scrooge, the famous character in Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol*, had so transformed his life that he could rightfully declare, “I am not the man I was.”¹

As we repent, we become a different person than we were. The realization of our new identity, coupled with our faith in Christ’s cleansing powers, helps us reach the point

where we can say as Alma said, “I could remember my pains no more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more” (Alma 36:19). Accordingly, we can be comforted by the truth that God will ultimately judge us by what we have become, not by what we were.

The Apostle Paul gave some constructive counsel to all of us who have sinned but are striving to repent. He said we should be “forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before” (Philippians 3:13). In other words, we should put the past behind us and press forward, trusting in God’s redeeming power. Such an effort on our part is a demonstration of faith. Further, Paul counseled, “Happy is he that condemneth not himself” (Romans 14:22).

In the meantime, until that final drop of guilt is removed, if we feel the Lord’s Spirit we can proceed with confidence that we have been cleansed or that the cleansing process is working its divine miracle in our life. The promise is certain—if we do our best to repent, we will be cleansed of our sins and our guilt will eventually be swept away, because the Savior’s Atonement descended not only below our sins but also our guilt. Then we will be at perfect peace with ourselves and with God. **NE**

NOTE

1. Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol in Prose* (1843), 150.

Picturing Myself IN THE TEMPLE

A good-looking guy from work asked me out, but he was not a member of the Church, and I had a goal to marry in the temple.

By Adriane Franca Leao

As a young girl, I dreamed of being part of a forever family. I was 12 years old when my family was sealed in the São Paulo Brazil Temple. I perfectly remember kneeling with my family at the temple altar and being sealed with my siblings to our parents for time and for all eternity. I knew then that this was the type of family I wanted. I placed a picture of the São Paulo Temple beside my bed, and I looked at it every night, renewing my commitment to have nothing less than an eternal family.

Several years later I was working in the commercial department of a large company. One day our manager introduced me to a new employee. He was a tall young man with gorgeous blue eyes, an easy smile, and a great sense of fashion.

I could hardly believe it when he later began to flirt with me. I felt on top of the world! On our first date, I was excited to find out that he was a drummer in a band that was experiencing some success. I also discovered that he smoked and drank, but



I reasoned that, since he was not a member of the Church, it was not wrong for him.

That night when I arrived home, my thoughts were full of that beautiful young man. But as I knelt to pray, I saw my picture of the temple, and a strange feeling came over me. I ignored it and went to sleep.

The next day, when we went out together, the fact that he drank and smoked gave me a bad feeling. I was ashamed to be seated at a table with drinks, even though I hadn't touched any of them. I felt first excited and then frustrated when he tried to kiss

me. When I smelled the cigarettes and alcohol on his breath, that kiss didn't make it past an attempt!

I knelt beside my bed to pray that night, looking at the picture of the temple. I reflected that this young man was not the type of person who could take me to the temple for an eternal marriage.

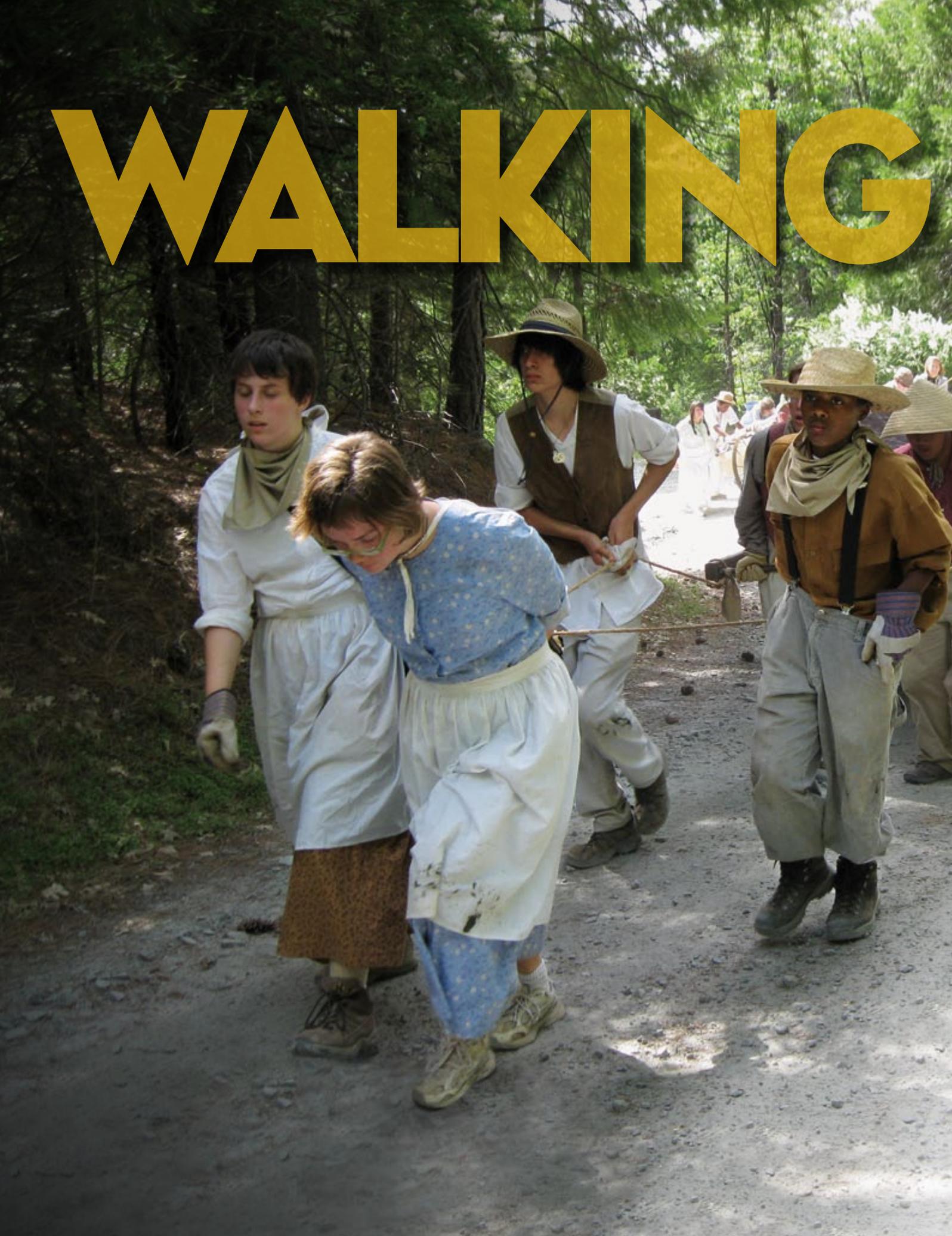
I lay down and slept, but not before happily thinking about my goal of marrying a worthy young man with whom I could establish an eternal family.

Even though the drummer was still attractive, his romantic look no longer impressed me. I knew the type of marriage I wanted.

A year later I was married in the São Paulo Temple to a worthy priesthood holder whom I love. It was worth waiting for a faithful young man who could receive with me that wonderful blessing from the Lord. **NE**

To buy your own picture of the temple, visit store.lds.org. Click the "Music, Media, and Art" tab and then click "Temple Pictures."

WALKING



with Our Ancestors

These teens made their pioneer trek more personal by focusing on stories of ancestors.

By Margaret Snider

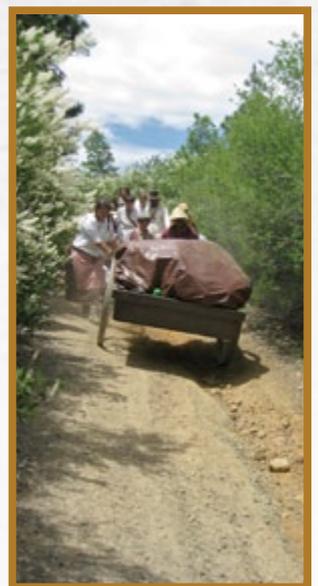
A pioneer trek can provide teens with a small sense of what their ancestors went through to help build what they now enjoy, a chance to tackle a difficult task, and an opportunity for bonding with each other. For youth in Northern California, it was a time to think about those who came before.

Each participant who took part in the three-day, 30-mile trek chose and researched an ancestor, a departed relative, an LDS pioneer, or someone else associated with the pioneers. They wrote the person's name on a cirlet of leather and wore it around their necks to keep that person in mind as they struggled over the same rugged terrain that the LDS pioneers faced in the Sierra Nevada Mountains on the Mormon Trail.

"We are traveling on the shoulders of the people who came before us," said Stake President Alan Fisher as the group met before starting out. "Be strong. Lead the charge against immorality. You are called to be the pioneers to lead, to guide, preparatory to the coming of the Savior."

The participants divided into families of approximately 10 people, with wards being mixed.

Starting out in high spirits, the youth soon began to rely on each other. The first day was a 16-mile, mostly uphill, grueling hike that



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF MARGARET SNIDER



A pioneer trek gave these youth an opportunity to learn about what the pioneers experienced. "It's just a glimpse of what their lives were," says Brooke A. (above). "This experience is one that we'll never forget."

took 11 hours. Brooke A., 18, says, "The first day was so difficult. The other two days were so emotional and spiritual because our bodies were so weak. We had to rely on something bigger than us."

Jared M., 14, says he walked for his ancestor, Paul Maughan. "He was a little kid who fell out of the wagon and was trampled by the wagon behind. I'm walking for him. I knew this was going to be really hard, and it was. But I was kind of excited."

Some youth walked for ancestors who were pioneers in different parts of the world. Alex B., 17, is descended from Germans who were transplanted to Russia and then immigrated to the United States. Alex's great-great-grandfather was one of those pioneers.



Elvis H., 16, did not have ancestors who were LDS pioneers. He chose to walk for Norton Hunter, who was important to the pioneers because he made

handcarts that they pulled and pushed across hundreds of miles.

Elvis started out with enthusiasm. After the difficult first day, he was excited to reach camp, but he couldn't sleep because he was in pain. The next day, he was taken to the hospital, where he was operated on for appendicitis. "In my situation, if we were back in pioneer days, I probably would have been one of those graves on the way."

Alexis A., 17, says the trek was a lot harder than she expected. "I walked for my Grandpa Brodowski. He actually passed away last December. He was a pioneer in his family because he converted and was the only

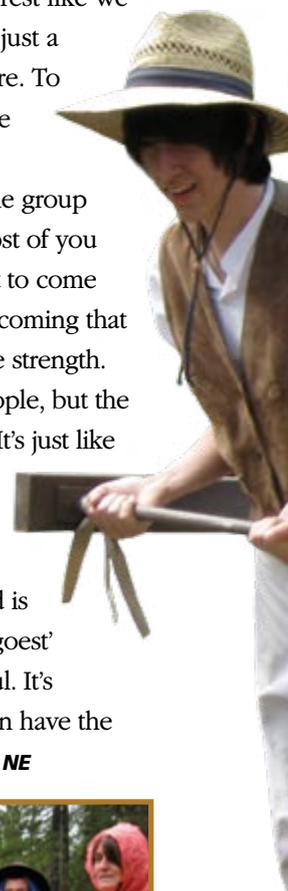


member in his family. In the end, everything turned out OK, and he actually

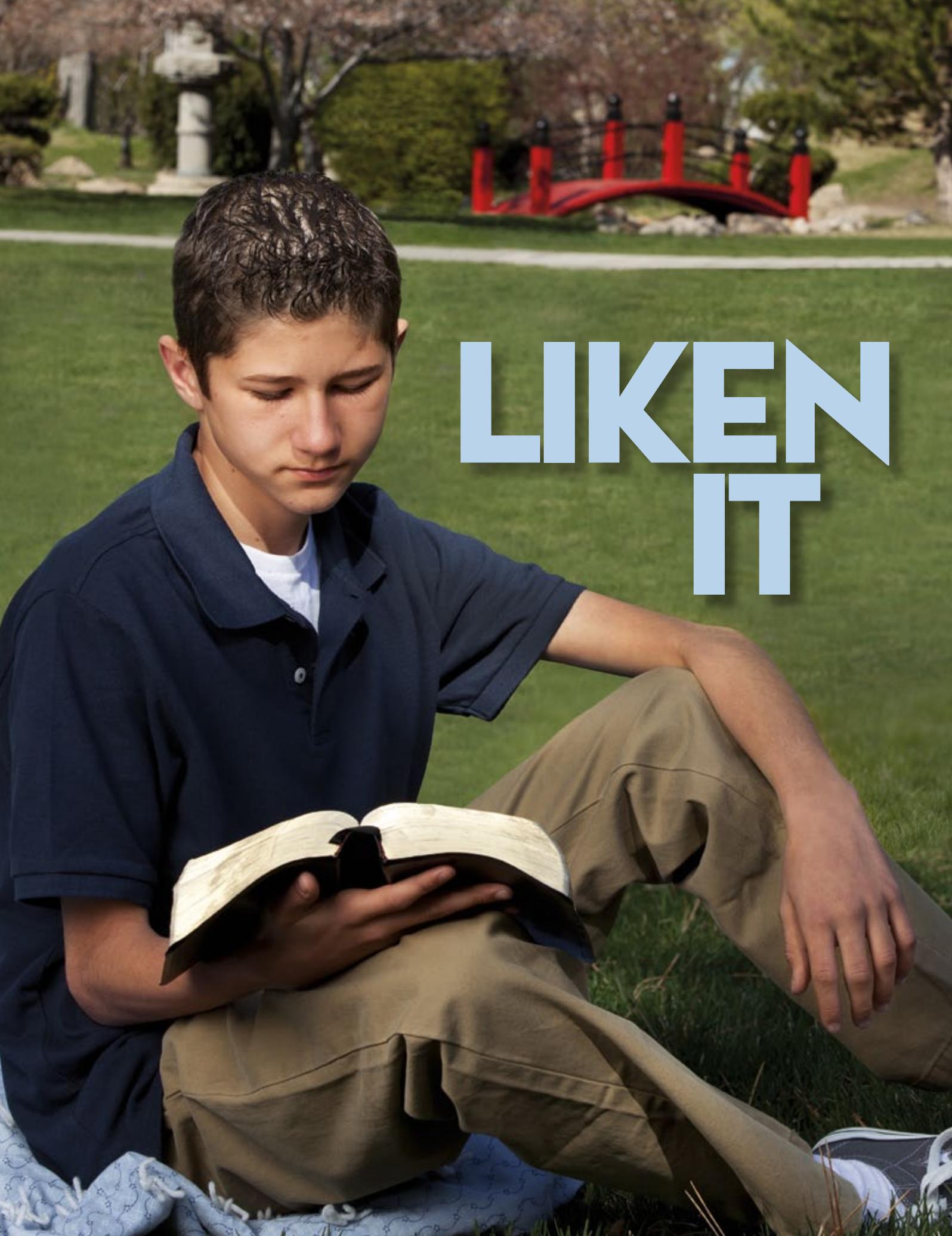
started a great generation of LDS members."

Though the youth faced many difficulties, the pioneers tackled many more. Brooke says, "We can go on hikes with our family, but to physically have to also pull a couple-hundred-pound handcart is totally different. We didn't have to carry babies or take care of toddlers. They didn't get to rest like we did when we got to camp. It's just a glimpse of what their lives were. To just have this experience is one that we'll never forget."

Marilyn M., 15, testified to the group at the very end of the trek: "Most of you know that I really did not want to come on the trek, but I learned after coming that you will always be able to have strength. It may come through other people, but the Lord is going to give it to you. It's just like our scripture for the year, 'Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest' (Joshua 1:9). That's so powerful. It's completely assuring that we can have the Lord with us wherever we go." **NE**





A young man with dark, curly hair is sitting on a blue patterned blanket on a green lawn. He is wearing a dark blue polo shirt and khaki pants. He is looking down at an open book he is holding in his hands. In the background, there is a red Japanese-style bridge, a stone lantern, and trees with pink blossoms. The text "LIKEN IT" is overlaid on the right side of the image in a light blue, bold, sans-serif font.

**LIKEN
IT**

By David A. Edwards

Church Magazines

How do you make the connection between the prophets of old and your life as a youth today?

Most of us can remember times when we were comforted, inspired, or taught by the scriptures, and we treasure these moments, because they can be among our most spiritual and potentially life-changing experiences.

And then there are the other times—those moments when the scriptures seem like a person trying to speak to us from across a wide gorge with a whipping wind in between. So how do we build a bridge over this chasm of centuries, languages, and customs?

Nephi said he “did liken all scriptures [to himself and his family] that it might be for [their] profit and learning” (1 Nephi 19:23), and modern prophets have told us we should try to do the same. So here are a few bits of advice for bridging the gap you may sometimes feel between yourself and the scriptures.

1. Look for the big picture.

Sometimes when you broaden your view and look at a scripture outside its immediate context, it's easier to see how it's relevant to your life. A quick way to do this is to review some of the headings to the surrounding



chapters. And sometimes it's necessary to ask yourself how what you're reading fits into other parts of the scriptures—or even into Heavenly Father's plan in general.

2. Look for principles.

Elder Richard G. Scott has taught, “Search for principles. Carefully separate them from the detail used to explain them. . . .

It is worth great effort to organize the truth we gather to simple statements of principle” (“Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 86). So, for instance, after reading a chapter of scripture, think of a statement (a complete sentence rather than just a word or phrase) that summarizes a principle taught in that chapter, and maybe even write it down. When you do this, you may find that the principles you come up with and the way you state them will have a more personal application.



1. Example: When you're reading King Benjamin's sermon (Mosiah 2–5), you will come across familiar scriptures such as Mosiah 2:17 (“when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God”), and that's good. But as you read through those chapters, it's helpful to go back and briefly review the themes from his entire address and even the chapter before it (Mosiah 1) to understand what he was trying to teach his people and how he was doing it.

You can then ask yourself questions such as:

- “Why was King Benjamin giving this address?”
- “What does serving others have to do with giving thanks to God?”
- “What does accepting the Atonement have to do with helping the poor?”
- “What does all of this have to do with taking Christ's name upon me?”



2. Example: In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7), the Savior teaches the parable of the wise man and the foolish man (Matthew 7:24–27). After reading this parable, you might state the principle it teaches this way: “Building my life on the teachings of Jesus Christ will help me withstand temptation and persecution.” Can you form other statements of principle from the teachings in the Sermon on the Mount?



3. Example: As you read about the following people in the scriptures, think about their relationships to one another and how those relationships are like ones that you are familiar with:

- *Naomi and Ruth.* What was their relationship, and how did Ruth's faith affect how the relationship developed (see Ruth 1)?
- *Jesus, Mary, and John.* How does Jesus's different relationships to these two people affect the way you feel when you read John 19:26–27?
- *Nephi and Zoram.* How did Nephi convince this stranger that he would be safe with him (see 1 Nephi 4)?
- *Captain Moroni and Pahoran.* How does understanding the relationship between these two (Pahoran was basically Moroni's boss) make Pahoran's reaction to Moroni's letter all the more remarkable (see Alma 59–61)?



4. Example: As you read John 21, imagine you are Peter when the Savior asked him three times, "Lovest thou me?" How would you feel? How would you answer?

Or read Doctrine and Covenants 41 and think how you would feel if the Lord said something about your character like what He said about Edward Partridge in verse 11. How would this make you want to act?



5. Example: In Mormon 3 we read that Mormon stepped down as the leader of the Nephite armies because of their wickedness. Why might he have gone back later to lead them when it seemed hopeless (see Mormon 4–5)?

3. Look at the relationships between people.

Across the world and throughout history, basic human relationships are pretty much the same—parents, children, friends, neighbors, business and work associates, strangers, countrymen, civic and religious leaders. We all understand these relationships, so when you look at the relationships between the people you're reading about, you can more easily draw connections to your own life.

4. Use your imagination.

Do what you do when you read other books—imagine yourself in the middle of the story. For instance, imagine you're the person writing it, and try to get a sense for his feelings and his purpose. Or think of yourself as someone living at that time and in that place, and ask yourself how you would have reacted to the prophets' words. Or imagine you're the person it's being written to (which isn't such a stretch, since a lot of times that's actually the case), and think about how the prophet is trying to connect with you.

5. Focus on why people do what they do.

Identifying motives is a great way to connect to people of the past. Customs and circumstances may have changed, but the basic things that drive people to do what they do haven't really changed much over the centuries. People 3,000 years ago sinned, repented, obeyed, and served for the same basic reasons people do those things today. As you read, consider what's driving the people you're reading about (love, pride, greed, selfishness, faith), and try to relate those things to yourself and the world you live in.

6. Try rephrasing certain passages.

The language of the scriptures is beautiful and inspiring, but when you sense a language barrier in a passage of scripture, you may need to rephrase it in your mind. Break a sentence down into its basic parts, and then replace difficult words or rearrange the sentence so that it makes more sense. Then you can often more easily see the connection to yourself.

As you diligently study the scriptures and try to forge a stronger connection with them, you will likely find that your mind will be more active and your heart will be more open to the Spirit. When this happens, you will be better able to hear the words of the scriptures speak loudly and clearly across the gap of centuries and continents, and then they can sink deep into your heart. And that will be a cherished experience well worth the effort. **NE**



6. Example: You're reading 2 Peter 1:12–13:

WHAT YOU READ

Wherefore I will not be negligent

to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.

Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle,

to stir you up by putting you in remembrance.

WHAT YOU THINK

Well, "negligent" means you're not doing your duty, so Peter will always do his duty. What duty?

So, his duty is to give them reminders of what they already know.

According to the footnotes, "meet" means "right," and "tabernacle" is referring to the body, so Peter's saying that as long as he lives, it's right for him to . . .

So, as long as he lives, Peter will remind people of the truth and "stir them up"—kind of like shaking someone who's asleep. Hmm. That's like the Church leaders at general conference. They tell us what we need to hear and remind us of truths we should know.

And they'll keep doing it as long as they live—just like Peter.



A KEY TO REVELATION



"Pondering a passage of scripture can be a key to unlock revelation and the guidance

and inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Scriptures can calm an agitated soul, giving peace, hope, and a restoration of confidence in one's ability to overcome the challenges of life. . . . Scriptures can communicate different meanings at different times in our life, according to our needs."

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Power of Scripture," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 6.



WHAT WE REALLY THINK OF YOUTH

“You face your challenges with extraordinary strength and courage. I express my love to you and the confidence I have in you.

“You inspire the people around you more than you can imagine.”

David L. Beck, Young Men general president, “The Magnificent Aaronic Priesthood,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 54.

THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD



“Putting on the Whole Armor of God, Raft-Style” was the theme of a high adventure activity in which nearly 50 young women and 20 adults were divided into “raft families” and floated the Green River in southern Utah.

In preparation for the rafting experience, safety lessons were presented as metaphors taken from Ephesians 6:10–18. Life vests represented the “breastplate of righteousness,” sunscreen represented the “shield of faith,” and the oars of the rafts represented the “sword of the Spirit” and reminded the youth of the direction we’re given by the scriptures and counsel from prophets.

During the second and final river run, the temperatures dropped and the river became shrouded in mist, much like the “mist of darkness” spoken of in Lehi’s dream (see 1 Nephi 8:23–24). The youth were reminded that protection comes as we hold fast to gospel truths and we are able to safely get to our destination. One Laurel said of that final run, “I have never been so cold and tired in my life, but I have never had so much fun.” One of the bishop’s counselors said, “Not only was this a great activity, but it was also so spiritual, even while we floated the river. This is an experience that the participants will never forget.”

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF TANYA BIRD

MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURE

1 Nephi 3:7 “And it came to pass that I, Nephi, said unto my father: I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.”

This scripture strengthens my faith because Nephi shows during trials that he still obeys and does what the Lord wants him to do. And Heavenly Father blesses him for that.

Kaila T., 16, Philippines

Tell us about your favorite scripture in a paragraph or two. Send it to us, along with a photo, by going to

newera.lds.org and

clicking “Submit Material.”

PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL VANDENBERGHE



QUOTE FROM CONFERENCE

“Make every decision you contemplate pass this test: ‘What does it do to me? What does it do for me?’ And let your code of conduct emphasize not ‘What will others think?’ but rather ‘What will I think of myself?’ Be influenced by that still, small voice.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Believe, Obey, and Endure,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 129.

FINDING A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

I was born into the Church, and I didn’t have much of a testimony until I started to read the scriptures with pure intent. Instead of just reading the words on the paper, I searched deep for their meaning. I read 3 Nephi 11:3, and I put myself in the people’s shoes. That scripture and the ones following it shook me. From then on I kept reading the scriptures and praying with sincerity, and my testimony grew.
Ryan R., Washington, USA

DUTY TO GOD

I’ve been working to complete my Duty to God goals, both when I lived in Venezuela and when I moved with my family to China.

Duty to God truly is inspired. A young man can learn marvelous things that will be applied throughout the rest of his life by completing his goals. He will learn spiritual things, temporal things, physical things, and much more.

It’s well worth the effort of dedicating yourself to complete these goals. I have learned to be a better man, I’ve grown in my testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and I have better prepared myself to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and to serve a mission. It’s gratifying to know that I will be able to be a good example to my future children one day.

Jonathan A., China

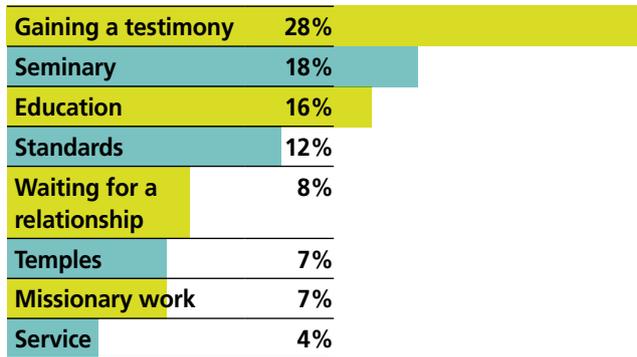
PERSONAL PROGRESS

On February 27, 2011, I received my Young Women Recognition. I am happy that I completed the Personal Progress program, that I kept myself pure and clean, and that I can wear my medallion with pride. I know that the Young Women organization helps us progress and prepare ourselves for marriage in the holy temple. I am grateful to my Heavenly Father for this organization. By earning my medallion, I have completed one of my goals, and I know that I can continue to do much good in the work of the Lord.

Katherine M., Venezuela

SURVEY RESULTS

Here are the results of a recent survey we posted on the *New Era* Facebook page. The survey asked, “Which of the following would you like to see the *New Era* use as a special theme for an upcoming issue?”



You Voted: Watch for a special section on gaining a testimony in the February 2013 issue of the *New Era*.

Choosing the Right

I look forward to the *New Era* every month. I like the jokes and the stories by other youth. It is good to know there are others trying to choose the right, like me, all over the world.

Sarah O., 14, Montana, USA

Answering Questions

The article “Answering Your Friends’ Questions” (Jan. 2012) about what to say to your friends when they ask about the Church really hit me. It’s nice to prepare in case something like that comes up. Thanks for the missionary advice!

Kelli G., 13, Utah, USA

Mission Papers (from youth.lds.org)

Awesome article! [See “A Message to Future Missionaries” at lds.org/go/82C.] I turn in my mission papers in March, and I can’t wait! I am thankful for covenants made receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood and the covenants I will soon make in the temple.

I love this work. I know it’s true!
Tyler C., 19, California, USA

We love hearing from you, whether it’s sending us a message or leaving a comment online. Write to us by going online to newera.lds.org and clicking “Submit Material.” Or leave a comment on any article at youth.lds.org.

You can also e-mail us at newera@ldschurch.org or write to *New Era*, 50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024.

By **Brittany Beattie**
Church Magazines

As you look for it, you'll see evidence of Heavenly Father's love all around you.

Because Heavenly Father loves us so much, He has filled our lives with blessings to make our hearts joyful. Since those blessings surround us, sometimes we forget to notice them and recognize how they show God's love.

Each day this month, consider focusing on at least one evidence of God's love for you. Then "give thanks in all things" through thought and prayer for the many blessings and great love He sends (Mosiah 26:38–39; see also Ephesians 5:20 and D&C 59:7). Here are some ideas to help you get started.

EVERY DAY IN MANY WAYS

A LOVING PLAN
"God's universal and perfect love is shown in all the blessings of His gospel plan."
Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Love and Law," *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 26.

NOTES

How does knowing I am a child of God bless me and help me see His hand in my life every day?

How have I felt Heavenly Father's love by attending the temple or holding a temple recommend?

How is my life blessed by a bird's song, the sun's warmth, and the earth's colors?

Think about how Jesus Christ's many roles and titles show His love for me.

01 WEDNESDAY

We have the knowledge that we are children of God (see Psalm 82:6 and Acts 17:28–29).

02 THURSDAY

We are blessed as we live worthy to attend the temple (see Psalm 24:3–5).

03 FRIDAY

Nature's beauty is all around—and it was created for us to enjoy (see "My Heavenly Father Loves Me," *Children's Songbook*, 228–29; see also Alma 30:44, Moses 6:63, and lds.org/go/82D).

04 SATURDAY

The Savior is our Mediator and has shown us the way to eternal happiness (see John 3:16–17; see also all the headings under "Jesus Christ" in the Topical Guide).

PHOTOGRAPH BY © ISTOCK.COM/ KYOSHINO

NOTES

Blessings I Notice

Think about how good I feel each time I experience the cleansing power of the Atonement.

How have I been blessed as Heavenly Father helped me turn a weakness into a strength?

What skills and lessons have I learned from Mom or Dad?

How have my friends helped me stay close to Heavenly Father?

How does the laughter of children, family, or friends comfort or bless me?

How have I been strengthened by the many good resources that help me to learn?

How does Heavenly Father bless me through today's inventions and technologies to do His work?

How have I been blessed (both temporally and spiritually) for paying tithing and offerings?

How has Heavenly Father helped me become a better person through my trials?

14 TUESDAY

We can be forgiven of all of our sins (see Mosiah 4:2, Moroni 6:8, and D&C 19:16–19).

15 WEDNESDAY

Even our weaknesses are blessings, because they help us turn to the Lord so He can help us make them strengths (see Ether 12:27).

16 THURSDAY

Parents do so much for us and help us learn a lot (see Mosiah 4:14–15 and D&C 68:25–28).

17 FRIDAY

Friends can help us stay true to the gospel and become better people (see lds.org/go/82F).

18 SATURDAY

Joyful laughter from a glad heart can make any day brighter (see lds.org/go/82G, lds.org/go/82H, and lds.org/go/82J).

19 SUNDAY

Millions of good books are available for us to read and learn from (see D&C 109:7).

20 MONDAY

Modern technologies simplify our lives, so we have more time to fulfill our unique missions (see lds.org/go/82K).

21 TUESDAY

We receive great blessings for paying tithing (see Malachi 3:10 and lds.org/go/82L).

22 WEDNESDAY

Trials, though difficult, can help us learn a lot and make us better than we thought we could be (see D&C 122:7, lds.org/go/82M, and lds.org/go/82N).

DIVINE LOVE

"Divine love is perfect, infinite, enduring, and universal."

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Divine Love," *Ensign*, Feb. 2003, 25.

Blessings I Notice

23 THURSDAY

We can pray to Heavenly Father at all times, and He will always hear us (see 3 Nephi 18:19–20).

How is my life blessed because I know Heavenly Father is always mindful of me and wants the best for me?

24 FRIDAY

Living the Word of Wisdom helps us stay healthy and strong (see D&C 89).

How am I blessed because Heavenly Father taught me how to eat healthy, exercise, avoid harmful substances, and take care of my body?

25 SATURDAY

All of us are given unique talents and gifts so we can help each other and help build God's kingdom (see 1 Corinthians 12).

How have I felt love by sharing my talents and enjoying the talents of others?

26 SUNDAY

We can renew our covenants each week during the sacrament (see D&C 59:9–19).

How have I felt Heavenly Father's love as I've partaken of the sacrament?

27 MONDAY

The priesthood has been restored (see D&C 13, 20, 84, and 107).

How has the priesthood helped me understand more about Heavenly Father's love for me?

28 TUESDAY

Photography and art help capture the beauty of the world and God's love (see the article "Beauty All Around" on page 6).

How has artwork strengthened and blessed me?

29 WEDNESDAY

Think about everything we can do in various types of weather: rain, sun, snow, and clouds (see "Thank Thee for Everything," *Children's Songbook*, 10).

How have I seen evidences of God's hand through various kinds of weather?

30 THURSDAY

Commandments bring us many blessings when we're obedient (see D&C 130:20–21).

How have I felt God's love by following the commandments?

31 FRIDAY

In a world of around 6.8 billion people, we are among just 14.4 million people who are members of the Church (see lds.org/go/82P).

How does having the true gospel in my life bless me, and how can I share that truth with others?

POWERFUL EVIDENCE

"There is no greater evidence of the infinite power and perfection of God's love than is declared by the Apostle John: 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son' (John 3:16)."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Love and Law," *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 26.



THROUGH A FATHER'S BLESSING

The summer I turned 12, just before I entered the seventh grade, I encountered the first doubts I'd had about the gospel. My parents seemed to know the Church was true, and so did the many Church leaders I'd had throughout my life. But I realized I couldn't remember ever feeling the "warm, fuzzy feeling" that everyone talked about.

So for three months, I prayed hard every night to feel it too. I prayed for any sign that Heavenly Father was listening to me and ready for me to know. Still, no answer came.

I didn't tell my parents, siblings, or friends about my inner turmoil. I was scared to think I was the only one without an answer, that I was the only one who didn't know for sure that the gospel is true.

After those three months, at the end of summer vacation, it was time for our family's annual father's blessings. These were our "back-to-school blessings," as we called them, so the things spoken for each of my siblings generally fit with that theme. My dad blessed my siblings with success in their schooling and academic goals.

When it was my turn, my dad laid his hands on my head. Just after he started the blessing, he spoke nine words without hesitation, in the surest voice I'd ever heard him use, which shocked me: "I testify to you that this gospel is true." My dad

TUNING IT OUT

I am a Beehive. Last month, I got my first CD of Church music. I listened to it a lot and downloaded it onto my MP3 player. One day when I got on the bus, there was no place to sit except in the back, right in the middle of the teenagers who say bad things. They were talking so loudly and using such horrible language that I couldn't block them out. I had a feeling to get out my MP3 player and listen to my church CD. Once I did, the sounds and words around me immediately

melted away, and I felt like I was in another place. I concentrated on the lyrics and felt happy. I'm sharing this story so that everyone can know that if you are in situations similar to this, you can listen to music that brings the Spirit, and you'll feel better.

*Alyssa K.,
Idaho, USA*

didn't even mention my academic life. Instead, he simply bore his testimony for the entire blessing.

My eyes welled with tears that confused the rest of my family—none of them, including my father, knew about the questions I'd been struggling with. However, as I learned then, my Heavenly Father did.

Since that day, I can testify that no matter how or when, whether it's through a feeling or the words of another, Heavenly Father will answer every prayer.

Siera G., Utah, USA

BUT I'M NOT 16

At a recent school dance, I found out that a young man in my class liked me. After I talked to him about it, he asked me to

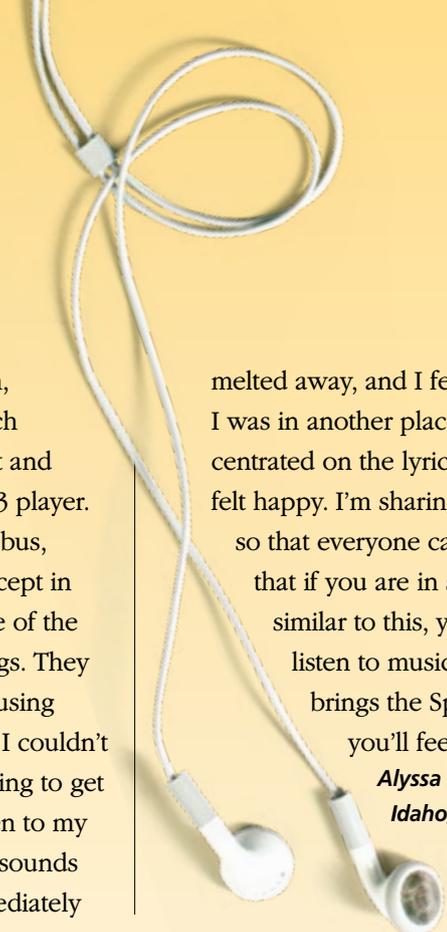
"date" him. I told him no and said that my parents wouldn't let me. I didn't mention anything about the Church.

Later in the week, he e-mailed me and again asked me to "date" him. He told me that lots of kids at our school had strict parents who wouldn't let them date. He then told me that even though they weren't allowed to have boyfriends or girlfriends, they made the decision to do so anyway.

I explained that I was a Latter-day Saint and would not date until I was 16 and would not steady date. I felt bad because he was very nice, and I really did like him. However, I felt good about my choice and knew I had made the right decision.

I know that waiting until you are 16 to date is very important, and I'm glad that with the gospel, making hard choices is easier.

Madeline C., North Carolina, USA





THANK YOU

for Your

EXAMPLE

By Angela Farmer

We've never met, but your faithfulness to gospel standards changed my life.

Several years ago, a young man named James traveled internationally with a group of athletes. He was listening to a conversation that another athlete, Tom, was having about a beautiful young woman whom he was interested in—you. Most people considered Tom to be a very good-looking and well-accomplished athlete.

Tom admitted his disappointment that you had such high standards. In order for him to date you, you asked that Tom seriously consider the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Tom said the standards of sexual purity were more than he had expected. James was deeply impressed that there was a Church with young people who were so serious about their religion and standards, and he asked for the name of the Church.

On returning to the United States, James decided to go to a Church meeting and see

what inspired such dedication. He surprised the missionaries by showing up at church one Sunday. Soon afterward, after receiving the missionary lessons, James was baptized. Years later, I met James at a single-adult activity, and we were eventually married for time and all eternity in the temple.

I often think of you. It may have been uncomfortable for you to hold up high standards to a good-looking athlete, but I'm grateful you did. There is no way you could know how your dedication to high moral standards changed our lives. We just celebrated our 16th anniversary. I wish I could meet you. I would like to show you our lovely children and our happy home.

I hope you understand that even when you simply live your standards, you can have a profound effect on the lives of others. Being morally clean is a path to more than just personal happiness. **NE**

"Hey, wait a minute. There's no such thing as a video game merit badge for Boy Scouts."



ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF

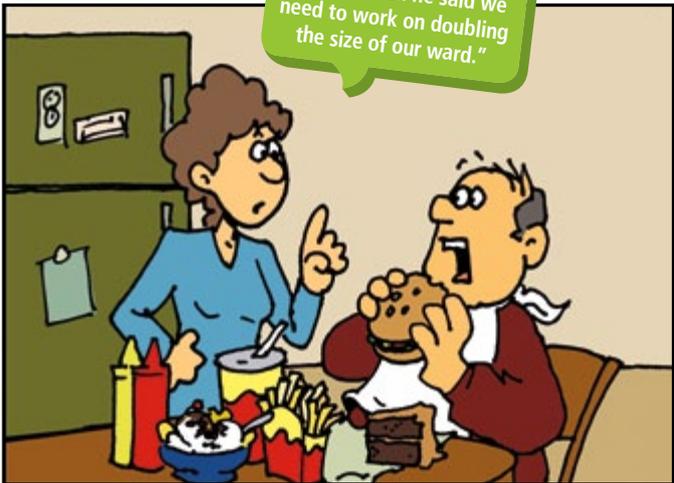
"... And they ... offered burnt offerings unto the Lord ..."

"Hey! Kinda like Jessica's cookies!"



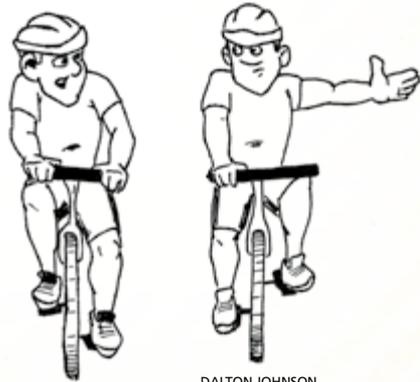
RYAN STOKER

"I'm pretty sure that's not what the bishop had in mind when he said we need to work on doubling the size of our ward."



KEVIN BECKSTROM

"Hey, buddy, you forgot to turn off your blinker."



DALTON JOHNSON

HOW TO BE A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST



**By President
Dieter F. Uchtdorf**

Second Counselor in the
First Presidency

HOW HAVE YOU APPLIED THIS?

"The best thing that motivates me is to remember I am a daughter of God."

Rebecca R.

"I have started to read my scriptures every night. I have been so blessed by this, with insight, strength, and faith."

Andrew W.

The first step on the path of discipleship begins in the exact place where we stand! We do not have to prequalify to take that first step. It doesn't matter if we are rich or poor. There is no requirement to be educated, eloquent, or intellectual. We do not have to be perfect or well-spoken or even well-mannered. You and I can walk in the path of discipleship today.

- Let us be humble; let us pray to our Father in Heaven with all our heart and express our desire to draw close to Him and learn of Him.
- Have faith.
- Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened. (See Matthew 7:7.)
- Serve the Lord by serving others.
- Become an active participant in your ward or branch.

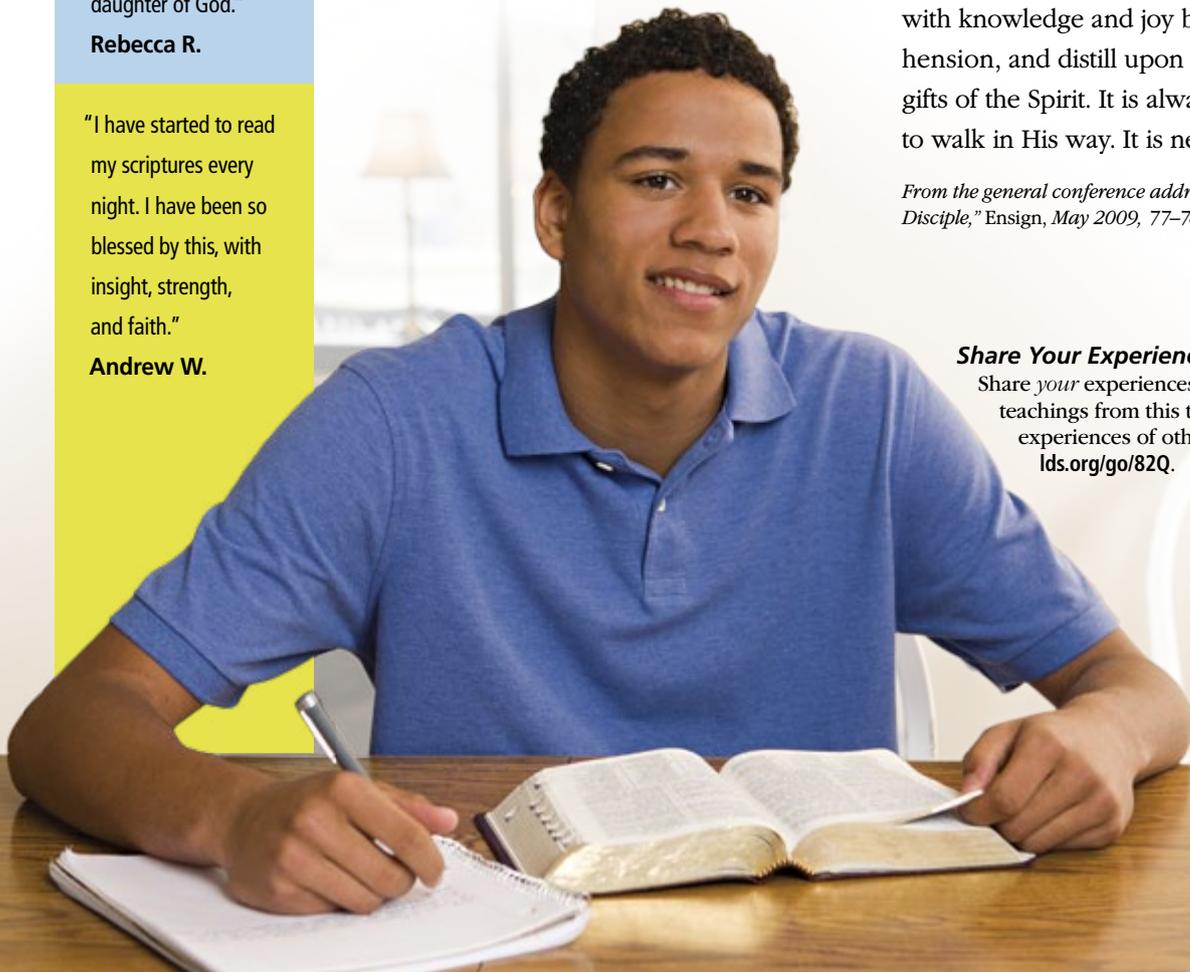
- Strengthen your family by committing to live the principles of the gospel. Be of one heart and of one mind in your family.
- Adjust your lives to be able to have a temple recommend and use it.
- Have meaningful family home evenings, read the word of God, and speak to our Heavenly Father in earnest prayer.
- Fill our hearts with gratitude for the Restoration of His Church, for living prophets, the Book of Mormon, and the priesthood power that blesses our lives.
- Embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ, become His disciples, and walk in His way.

I invite you to start where you are and come to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Walk again in the way of the Lord. I testify that the Lord will bless your life, endow you with knowledge and joy beyond comprehension, and distill upon you the supernal gifts of the Spirit. It is always the right time to walk in His way. It is never too late. **NE**

From the general conference address "The Way of the Disciple," Ensign, May 2009, 77–78.

Share Your Experiences

Share *your* experiences in applying the teachings from this talk and read the experiences of other youth by visiting lds.org/go/82Q.





Dew

By Hannah Winward

Water gathers in the night
Collecting droplets
On dark tangled blades
Huge spheres of glass
That magnify minute shards of light
And when the sun whispers its warmth
Upon crystal surfaces
They open their arms
And return to the sky.

WHAT'S ONLINE



For the Strength of Youth

With the revised *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet (see pages 18–21), you have lots of resources to learn more about how youth around the world are living gospel standards. Visit youth.lds.org and click on “For the Strength of Youth” to find videos, addresses from Church leaders, articles, Mormonads, and more for every standard.



Mormon Channel: Addiction Recovery

The Mormon Channel interviewed a young man and a young woman who are in the Addiction Recovery Program provided by the Church. Hear how they have learned to overcome their addictions through the power of the Atonement at lds.org/go/82R.

From Mission Prep to Olympic Prep

This year, Miles Batty broke the NCAA record for the fastest indoor mile—at a quick 3:54.54. But what makes his story even more amazing is that most sports authorities never thought he could do it, because he took two years to serve a mission during a pivotal time of his running career. And this summer he was even preparing as a contender for the Olympics. See more of his story in a video at lds.org/go/82S.

