

AUGUST 2014

THE

# New Era



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New Era

## THE MONTHLY YOUTH MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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**Cover photograph:** Cody Bell

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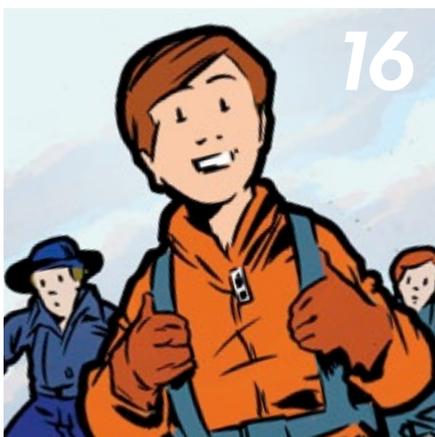
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# TRUTHS MOST WORTH KNOWING

*If you have stumbled or even been lost for a time, you can move forward with faith and not wander to and fro in the world any longer.*



By President  
Boyd K. Packer

President of the  
Quorum of the  
Twelve Apostles

Some youth have questions and are searching for direction. Others are wondering how they got off the gospel path and how they might return. While I speak to all, I speak most earnestly to the one who is seeking.

## Your Spiritual Account

We all live on spiritual credit. In one way or another, the account builds and builds. If you pay it off as you go, you have little need to worry. Soon you begin to learn discipline and know that there is a day of reckoning ahead. Learn to keep your spiritual account paid off at regular intervals rather than allowing it to collect interest and penalties.

Because you are being tested, it is expected that you will make some mistakes. I assume that you have done things in your life that you regret, things that you cannot even apologize for, much less correct; therefore, you carry a burden. You, perhaps, may feel inferior in mind and body and are troubled or burdened with the weight of some spiritual account that is marked “past due.” When you come face to face with yourself in those

moments of quiet contemplation (which many of us try to avoid), are there some unsettled things that bother you? Do you have something on your conscience? Are you still, to one degree or another, guilty of anything small or large?

Too frequently we receive letters from those who have made tragic mistakes and are burdened. They beg: “Can I ever be forgiven? Can I ever change?” The answer is yes! (See 1 Corinthians 10:13.)

## Repentance Gives Relief

The gospel teaches us that relief from torment and guilt can be earned through repentance. Save for those few—those very few—who defect to perdition after having known a fulness, there is no habit, no addiction, no rebellion, no transgression, no offense small or large which is exempt from the promise of complete forgiveness. No matter what has happened in your life, the Lord has prepared a way for you to come back if you will heed the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Some are filled with a compelling urge,

a temptation that recycles in the mind, perhaps to become a habit, then an addiction. We are prone to some transgression and sin and also a rationalization that we have no guilt because we were born that way. We become trapped, and hence comes the pain and torment that only the Savior can heal. You have the power to stop and to be redeemed.

### **A Rattlesnake Named Pornography**

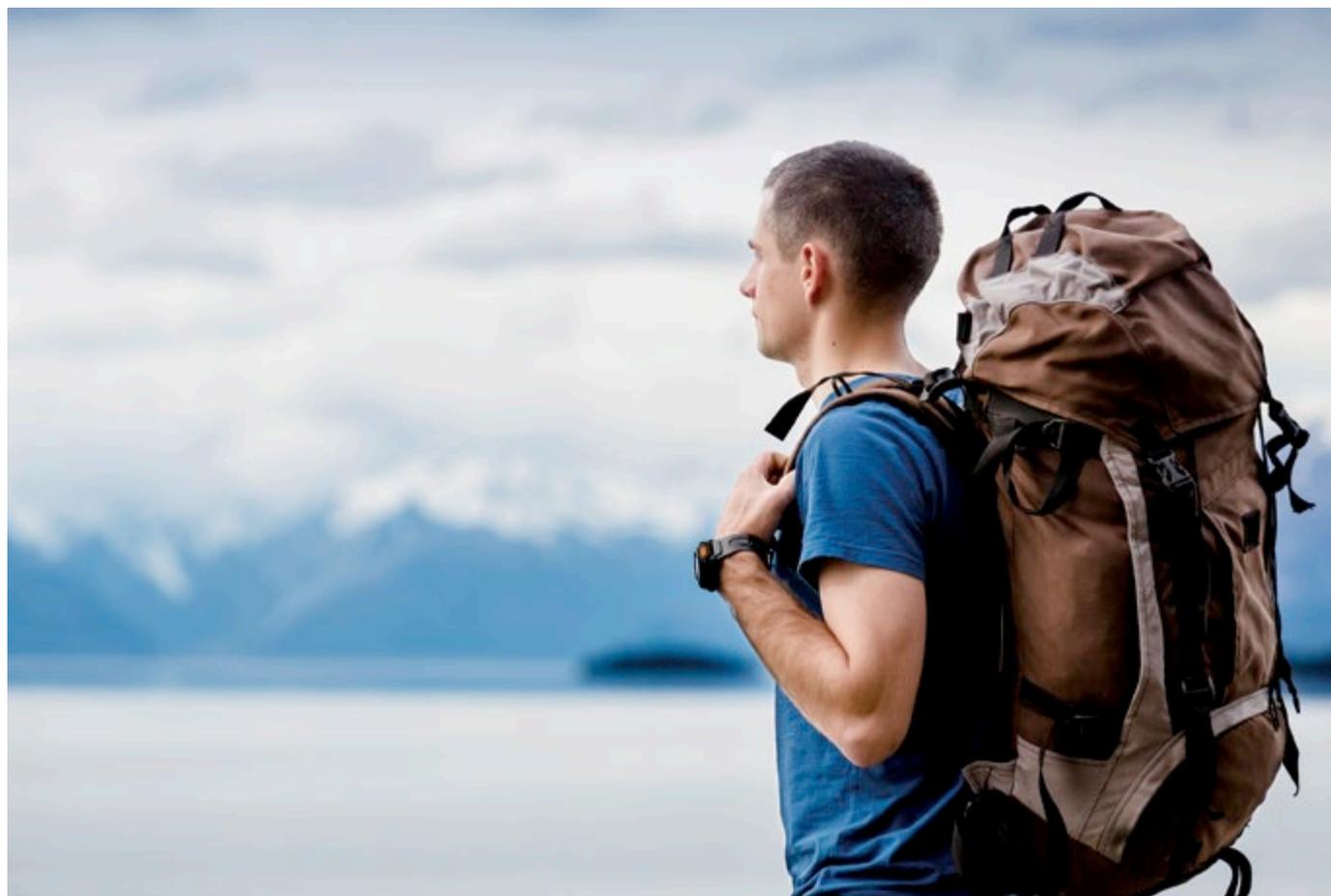
President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988), First Counselor in the First Presidency, told me once, “Don’t just tell them so that they can understand; tell them so that they cannot misunderstand.”

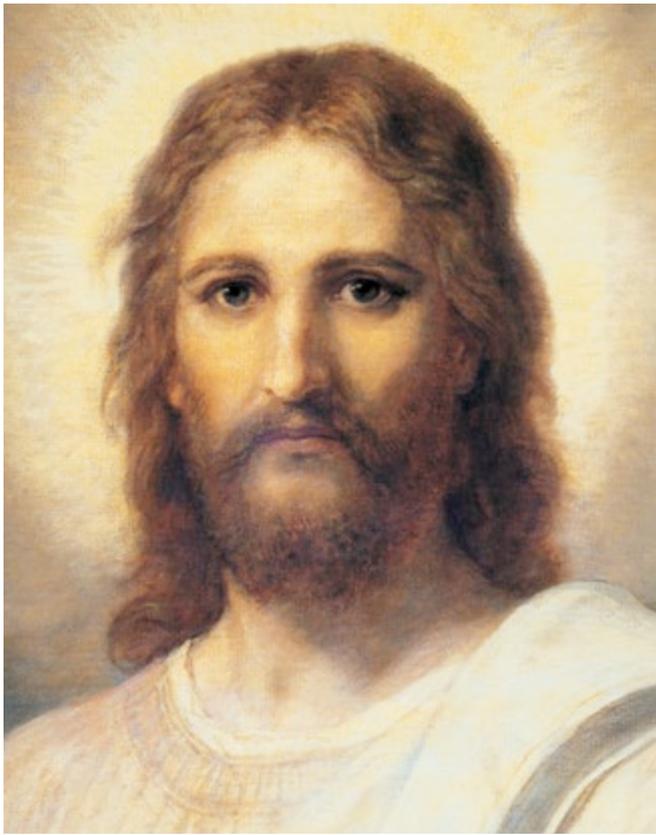
*Collecting or viewing pornography is akin to keeping a rattlesnake in your backpack.*

So listen up! I will speak plainly as one called and under obligation to do so.

You live in a day when the scourge of pornography is sweeping across the world. It is hard to escape it. Pornography is focused on that part of your nature through which you have the power to beget life.

To indulge in pornography leads to difficulties, divorce, disease, and troubles of a dozen kinds. There is no part of it that is innocent. To collect it, view it, or carry it around in any form is akin to keeping a rattlesnake in your backpack. It exposes you to the inevitable spiritual equivalent of the serpent’s strike with its injection of deadly venom. One can easily understand, with the world being what it is, that you can almost innocently be exposed to it, to read it, or to view it without realizing the terrible consequences. If that





describes you, I warn you to stop it. Stop it now!

The Book of Mormon teaches that all people “are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil” (2 Nephi 2:5). That includes you. You know what is right and what is wrong. Be very careful not to cross that line.

Although most mistakes can be confessed privately to the Lord, there are some transgressions that require more than that to bring about forgiveness. If your mistakes have been grievous, see your bishop. Otherwise, ordinary confession, quietly and personally, will do. But remember, that great morning of forgiveness may not come all at once. If at first you stumble, do not give up. Overcoming discouragement is part of the test. Do not give up. And as I have counseled before, once you have confessed and forsaken your sins, do not look back.

The Lord is always there. He is willing to suffer and pay the penalty if you are willing to accept Him as your Redeemer.

### **The Savior’s Suffering for Our Sins**

As mortals, we may not—indeed cannot—understand fully how Jesus Christ fulfilled His atoning sacrifice. But for

now the *how* is not as important as the *why* of His suffering. Why did He do it for you, for me, for all of humanity? He did it for the love of God the Father and all mankind. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

In Gethsemane, Christ went apart from His Apostles to pray. Whatever transpired is beyond our power to know! But we do know that He completed the Atonement. He was willing to take upon Himself the mistakes, the sins and guilt, the doubts and fears of all the world. He suffered for us so that we would not have to suffer.

### **Complete Forgiveness Is Possible**

If you have stumbled or even been lost for a time, if you feel that the adversary now holds you captive, you can move forward with faith and not wander to and fro in the world any longer. There are those who stand ready to guide you back to peace and security. The grace of God, as promised in the scriptures, comes “after all we can do” (2 Nephi 25:23). The possibility of this, to me, is the truth most worth knowing.

I promise that the brilliant morning of forgiveness can come. Then “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (Philippians 4:7) comes into your life once again, something like a sunrise, and you and He “will remember [your] sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:34). How will you know you have been forgiven? You will know! (See Mosiah 4:1–3.)

This is what I have come to teach you who are in trouble. He will step in and solve the problem you cannot solve, but you have to pay the price. It does not come without doing that. He is a very kind ruler in the sense that He will always pay the price necessary, but He wants you to do what you should, even if it is painful.

I love the Lord, and I love the Father who sent Him. Our burdens of disappointment, sin, and guilt can be laid before Him, and on His generous terms, each item on the account can be marked “paid in full.” (See Isaiah 1:18–19.)

## Live Faithfully and Remain Worthy

The scripture “learn wisdom in thy youth; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God” (Alma 37:35) is an invitation attended by the promise of peace and protection from the adversary. (See also 1 Timothy 4:12.)

Do not expect that all will go smoothly throughout your life. Even for those who are living as they should, it sometimes will be just the opposite. Meet each of life’s challenges with optimism and surety, and you will have the peace and faith to sustain you now and in the future.

For those who do not yet have all of the blessings you feel you want and need to have, I firmly believe that no experience or opportunity essential for redemption and salvation will be denied you who live faithfully. Remain

worthy; be hopeful, patient, and prayerful. Things have a way of working out. The gift of the Holy Ghost will guide you and direct your actions.

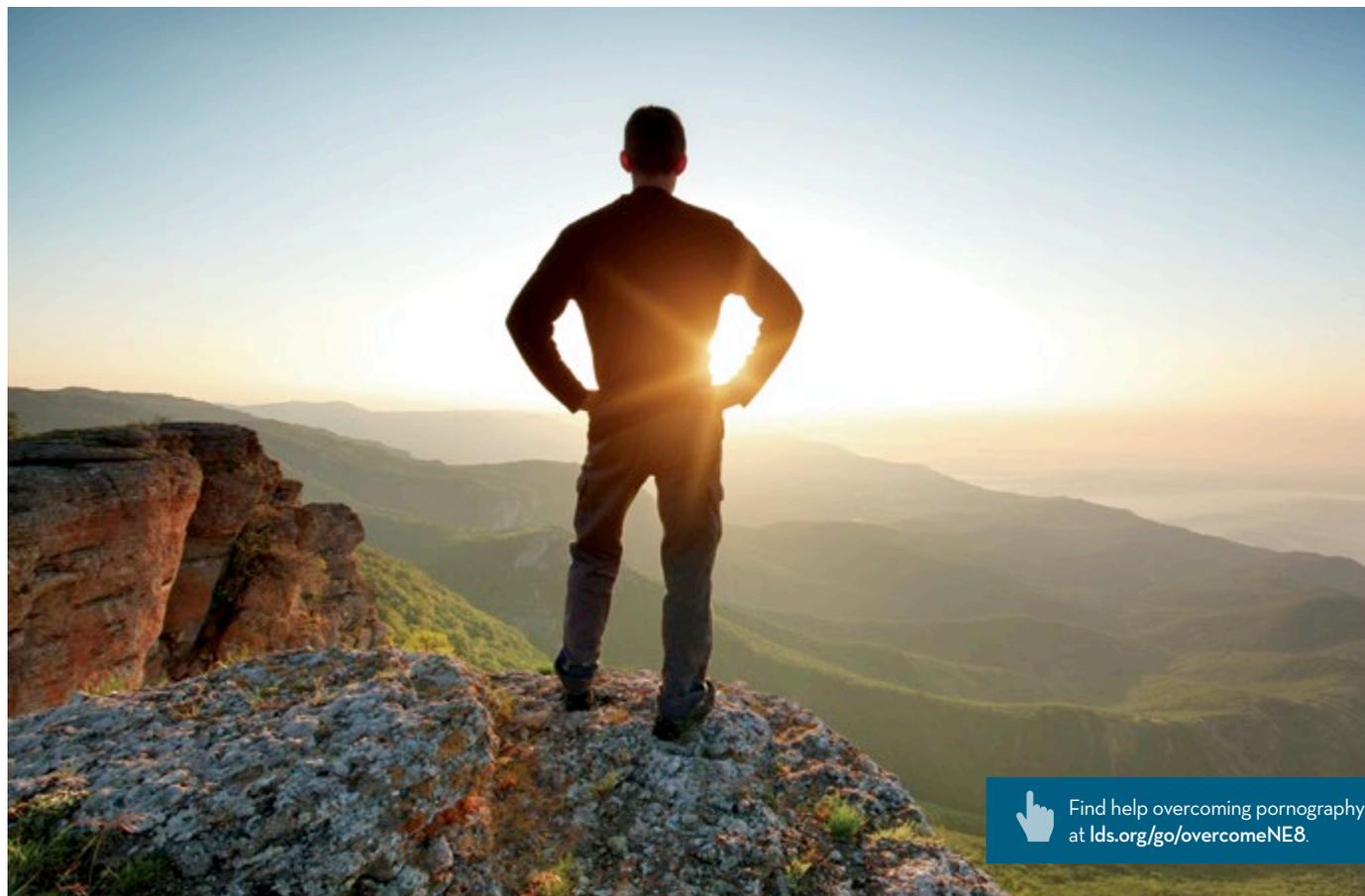
I know you as the youth of the Church, and I understand that you’re not perfect, but you are moving along that road. Have courage. Know that any person who has a body has power over one who has not.<sup>1</sup> Satan is denied a body; so if ever you are confronted with temptations, know that you outrank all those temptations if you will exercise the agency given to Adam and Eve in the garden and passed on to this very generation. **NE**

*From a devotional given at Brigham Young University on November 6, 2011. For the full text, go to [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).*

### NOTE

1. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 211.

*I promise that the brilliant morning of forgiveness can come.*



Find help overcoming pornography  
at [lds.org/go/overcomeNE8](http://lds.org/go/overcomeNE8).



# Banana Bread MISSIONARIES

*For these young men, sharing a slice of bread has blessed countless lives, including their own.*

**By Mindy Raye Friedman**

Church Magazines

If someone offered you a piece of delicious banana bread, how would you react? For the young men in a ward in Ecuador, that's one way they start conversations about the gospel.

Every two months they have a missionary day with open houses in a different area of their ward. They split into several teams, each made up of a young man, a full-time or recently returned missionary, and an elder or high priest. Some of the groups work at a tent, some go to contact people in the park, and some go door to door.

When they meet someone, they offer the person a piece of banana bread. When the person accepts, he or she is told that although the bread is delicious and good for the body, the missionaries have a message that will be nourishing to the person's soul. The young men and their companions then invite the person to meet with the missionaries. In this way, they've been able to get 40 to 50 referrals for the missionaries in a couple of hours.

The young men also fellowship the members of their own quorums. On Saturdays they meet for a Young Men

activity and to work on Duty to God. Then they visit the less-active members of their quorum. They encourage them to attend church and then invite them to come back to play sports or participate in another activity.

In this way and many others, these young men are preparing to be lifelong missionaries. Two of them (at right) share how they feel strengthened and inspired by their experiences.



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## CHANGED BY THE GOSPEL

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I have been a member of the Church for five years. My parents are not members, but my uncle Jorge is the Young Men president, and he has been a great support. I am also grateful to my bishop for his constant support and encouragement.

I decided to get closer to the Church after one of the missionary days they had in the ward. It was one of my first experiences that motivated me to join the Church. As a deacon, teacher, and now a priest, my leaders have always supported and encouraged me to participate in all of the missionary work activities. I like the open houses, where I have the opportunity to share with others the blessing of being a member of Christ's Church. What inspires me most are the service

activities, where I have the opportunity to serve my neighbor as Jesus taught us to do.

A year ago, my younger brothers, Luis, age 15, and Israel, age 12, joined the Church. Together we have been working on the projects in Duty to God, and since their baptisms we have shared wonderful experiences working together. All of the young men in the ward are very close, and we support each other.

I know that baptism is the gate to enter the kingdom of heaven. When we are in the service of our fellow beings, we are in the service of God (see Mosiah 2:17). Missionary work blesses families, and I know that my life has changed because of the gospel.

Alvaro T., 17

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## LEARNING MY RESPONSIBILITIES

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As a deacon I learned my responsibilities thanks to the support of my parents and leaders and working with the goals in the *Duty to God* booklet. As a teacher I learned more by going to do visits as a home teacher, participating in the open houses on the missionary days, sharing banana bread, attending Mutual, and participating in ward and stake activities.

Now as a priest I get to focus more on missionary work. Working with the Young Men president and as an assistant to the bishop, I have learned much more about my responsibilities as a priesthood holder.

Our leaders constantly invite us to come with them and the full-time missionaries so that we can become familiar with missionary work. They also exhort us to read the scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon. All of these experiences motivate and prepare me to receive the higher priesthood and to serve a full-time mission.

Isaac G., 17

### *Your Missionary Experiences*

How have you shared the gospel through small and simple means? Share your stories by visiting [newera.lds.org](http://newera.lds.org) and clicking "Submit Your Work" or by emailing [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org).



PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE WARD COURTESY OF NOLFO ZAMBRANO, PHOTOGRAPHS BY WELDEN C. ANDERSON



## A MIRACLE AT THE AIRPORT

*One small prompting can change lives for the better.*

By Thomas E. Robinson III

**A**s a new missionary in Japan, I had a hard time understanding anyone, let alone getting to know them. It was difficult to learn to love people I didn't even know, especially when I couldn't understand what they were saying. But I made an effort to show my love for them, and I appreciated their efforts to reach out to me.

Each week, my companion and I received a loaf of homemade bread from a sister in the ward named Sister Senba. She showed her love for the missionaries by baking homemade bread and writing small but heartfelt notes.

I was touched that someone cared about me. I felt impressed to show my gratitude to her in some small way. I wrote her a note expressing how grateful I was for her and the sacrifices she and her family made to help the missionaries. We became friends, and I began to think of her as my "mother away from home."

Months passed. Early one Wednesday morning I received a call from my mission president, who asked me to transfer down to Okinawa. When I hung up the phone, I was filled with the most bittersweet feeling. I dreaded having to say my good-byes. Each phone call to tell members of the ward I would be leaving on the following day made my heart hurt. Saying good-bye to the people I had come to love so much was more difficult than I had imagined it would be.

As I finished these calls, I noticed that the only one who had not answered the phone was Sister Senba. I was sad I would not be able to say good-bye to a member who had become so close to my heart.

The next morning two other missionaries and I left for the airport. When we arrived at the ticket counter and tried to buy tickets, the workers told us that our cards had been declined. We did not have any money to pay for the tickets, and the flight was leaving in 10 minutes! The three of us were in a panic. We were about to miss the flight and be stranded at the airport for the day.

But all of my panic turned to comfort when I turned around and saw Sister Senba walk into the airport. I was shocked that she was there because she hadn't known what time our flight was. As she scrambled over to us, she smiled and gave us all bread to bring onto the plane.

As we explained to her that we were going to miss our flight, she became saddened. None of us knew what to do. Then Sister Senba began rummaging through her purse, looking for something that could help us. She jumped happily into the air when she found a small envelope in her purse in which, weeks ago, she had placed ¥50,000—the exact amount of money we needed. She gave us the

## TRULY THE LORD USES SMALL MEANS TO BRING ABOUT HIS WORK.

money, and we were able to get our tickets in time. We thanked her with every ounce of gratitude our souls could muster, said good-bye, and rushed onto the plane.

After the plane took off, my fellow missionary turned to me and said, “Isn't she amazing?! *That* was a miracle!”

I then realized how truly miraculous it really was. He then said, “What does your note say?” I saw he was reading a note that was with the bread Sister Senba had given him. As I realized I had one too, I pulled out the note and read a small piece of paper personally addressed to me, which immediately made my eyes swell with tears. It said, “I love you! Please don't forget me! I will never forget you!”

At that moment I felt the Spirit more strongly than I ever have before. Sister Senba's example taught me how important it is to follow the promptings of the Spirit—no matter how small or strange the prompting might seem. Through these promptings we have the power to change lives for the better. I know it was not a coincidence that she came to the airport. It *was* a miracle.

Truly the Lord uses small means to bring about His work. How blessed we are as members of this Church to have His influence in our lives. Let us all remain worthy to receive these promptings and bless the lives of the children of God. **NE**

*Thomas E. Robinson III lives in Utah, USA.*

*Editor's note: Sister Senba was promptly reimbursed by the mission.*



**YOU WORK HARD FOR YOUR MONEY.**  
*A few simple principles can make your cash go further.*

# HOW TO BE MONEY SMART

By Arianne Cope

**W**hen I got my first paycheck for my first real job (at a sandwich shop), I rewarded myself with a shopping spree. I bought some music and a cute outfit. After spending every dollar I'd earned, I thought about my purchases.

"There goes two whole weeks of work," I thought. And a sick feeling started to grow in my stomach.

As I thought about all those hours of hard work making sandwiches, my superficial purchases hardly seemed worth it. I vowed to be more careful with my money.

So from then on, I saved every penny for college and a possible mission and never bought anything I wanted ever again.

Yeah, right.

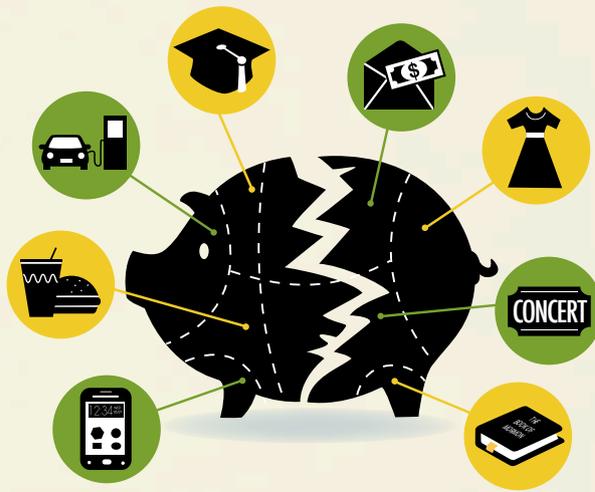
I was still a normal teenager who wanted stylish clothes, good music, and fun activities with my friends. But coming from a big family, I knew that if I wanted those things, I would have to save money to pay for them myself.

It might sound impossible, but I found ways to be financially prepared for the future *and* have fun at the same time—even with a part-time job that didn't pay very much. Here are some tips on how you can increase your "money smarts."

## ➔ A BUDGET THAT WORKS ◀

You've probably been told about budgets from the day you earned your first nickel or dime. That's because it really works. A budget is a plan that will help you make the best use of what you earn and save. Here's one way you can set up a budget of your own:

1. Decide on a time frame for your budget. Most budgets plan for expenses monthly.
2. Add up every dollar you plan to make to figure out your expected income. (Or use last month's earnings for this month's spending so you have an exact amount available.)
3. Calculate how much you'll need to pay for tithing, along with any other offerings you might want to give.
4. Create a list of things you think you'll purchase throughout the month, along with how much they'll probably cost.
5. Separate your needs from your wants, because you'll want to spend your money on needs first.
6. Subtract the total cost of your needs from your total income.
7. Set aside a little money each month for your wants.
8. After paying for tithing and your immediate needs, put most of the money that's left into savings. Look to the future and set a plan to save for college, a mission (particularly young men), or other big things. Think about how much you need to save every month to meet the financial goals you have for those big things in the future.
9. Remember that making your budget work takes solid planning, a strong commitment, and self-discipline. It's tough, but it's worth it.



## ➔ SHOPPING PRINCIPLES ◀

If you're like most teenagers, you're probably going to want to spend some of your money at the mall, at a store, or online. So you'll want to know some basic principles about shopping before you go:

- Decide what you're planning to buy before you go shopping. Then stick to your plan and avoid the habit of buying things on impulse.
- Buy something only if you really love it. Don't let your friends, a salesperson, or an advertisement talk you into buying something you're not going to use often.
- Remember that the word *sale* doesn't always mean you're getting a good deal. Look for the best quality at the lowest price. Sometimes that means paying a little bit more for something that will last a lot longer.
- Ask yourself if you can live without the item. Remember the old adage: "Fix it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without."



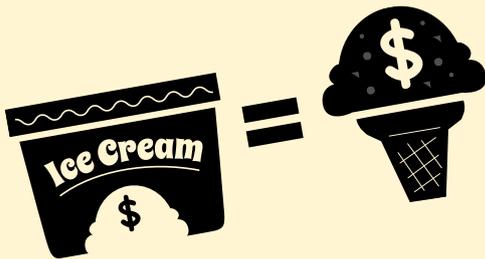
## THE FUN STUFF



Here's a little-known fact: a half-gallon of ice cream from the grocery store tastes almost as good as ice cream from an ice-cream shop. Also a fact: you can often buy a half-gallon of ice cream for the same price you'd pay for a single serving at an ice-cream shop. So if you need to save some money, suggest that your friends all split a half-gallon from the store rather than spending a lot more at the ice-cream shop.

And that's just one example of simple money solutions. You can be frugal in lots of ways while still having a great time:

- Watch the newspaper or look online to find free community or local events.
- If you want to see a movie, go to a matinee or a dollar theater for cheaper tickets.
- Plan ahead. Make a list of ideas of free things to do with your friends so you won't rely on spending money to entertain yourselves.
- Have fun outdoors without paying much (if anything). Enjoy a campfire in the canyon or on the beach or a free Frisbee game at the park—they can be just as much fun as going to a movie or a concert.



**FACT: YOU CAN OFTEN BUY A HALF-GALLON OF ICE CREAM FOR THE SAME PRICE YOU'D PAY FOR A SINGLE SERVING AT AN ICE-CREAM SHOP.**



## SOME FINAL TIPS



Just to finish, here are some general, money-related guidelines to keep in mind:

- Keep track of your money and keep it in a safe place.
- You can't buy happiness, but being willing to share usually results in a smile.
- Avoid gambling of any kind.
- Be cautious of things that seem too good to be true—they usually are.

The most important lesson about money, however, is to keep in mind that we're not here on earth to get rich or to have a lot of fancy things. Remember these truths from the Doctrine and Covenants: "Seek not for riches but for wisdom, and behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich. Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich" (D&C 6:7). NE

*Arianne Cope lives in Utah, USA.*

# 3 Nephi 18:15, 20-21

*Jesus Christ taught the Nephites the importance of prayer.*

## LEST YE BE TEMPTED

This is one of many scriptures that teach how praying can help us escape Satan's temptations (see also D&C 10:5; 31:12; and 61:39). Here are some other blessings the scriptures promise when you obey the command to pray always. What blessings have you received?

- You will be worthy to stand in the presence of God (see Luke 21:36).
- The Lord will consecrate your efforts (see 2 Nephi 32:9).
- The Spirit will be poured upon you (see D&C 19:38).
- You will be given strength to endure (see D&C 88:126).
- Things will work out for your good (see D&C 90:24).

## ALWAYS IN MY NAME

Praying in Christ's name means more than just ending our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ. The Bible Dictionary teaches: "We pray in Christ's name when our mind is the mind of Christ, and our wishes the wishes of Christ—when His words abide in us (John 15:7). We then ask for things it is possible for God to grant. Many prayers remain unanswered because they are not

in Christ's name at all; they in no way represent His mind but spring out of the selfishness of man's heart" ("Prayer").

15 Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye must watch and "pray always, lest ye be tempted by the devil, and ye be led away captive by him.

20 And "whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you.

21 "Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed.



## WHICH IS RIGHT

"Here the Savior reminds us that faith, no matter how strong it is, cannot produce a result contrary to the will of him whose power it is. The exercise of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is always subject to the order of heaven, to the goodness and will and wisdom and timing of the Lord. That is why we cannot have true faith in the Lord without also having complete trust in the Lord's will and in the Lord's timing."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ," *Ensign*, May 1994, 100.



## PRAY ALWAYS

"We should be alone with our Heavenly Father at least two or three times each

day—'morning, mid-day, and evening,' as the scripture indicates. (Alma 34:21.) In addition, we are told to pray always. (See 2 Ne. 32:9; D&C 88:126.) This means that our hearts should be full, drawn out in prayer unto our Heavenly Father continually. (See Alma 34:27.)"

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899-1994), "Pray Always," *Ensign*, Feb. 1990, 2.

## WHATSOEVER YE SHALL ASK

In the scriptures the Lord repeatedly promises to answer our prayers if we will but ask. What can you learn from these scriptures about how to ask and receive answers? What other scriptures can you find that teach about this?

- James 1:5-6
- 1 Nephi 15:11
- Enos 1:2-15
- Mormon 9:21
- D&C 8:10
- D&C 46:30-32

*Editor's note: This page is not meant to be a comprehensive explanation of the selected scripture mastery verses, only a starting point for your own study.*



By Elder  
José L. Alonso  
Of the Seventy

# I'd Never PRAYED BEFORE in That Way

**W**hen I was 15, I went to live with my father while I finished high school. He lived and worked in another city and had joined the Church. I didn't know he was a member, but I saw that he acted differently. He acted with love and kindness and was interested in my concerns and needs.

The first night I arrived, I was so hungry. We sat down for dinner and I started to eat, but my father

said, "Wait a minute. We need to pray." I said, "We need to *what?*" I didn't even know what the word *pray* meant! My father explained that he was going to thank God, our Heavenly Father, for the food we had received from Him, and then we could eat. My father prayed, and in his prayer he mentioned my name and asked for God to bless me. I felt something wonderful. That was the first time I felt the Spirit so strongly in my life.

My father taught me to pray to Heavenly Father on my own. Later, when the missionaries taught me about Joseph Smith's prayer, I immediately felt that it was possible for the Lord to answer the prayer of a young man. The missionaries asked me to read the Book of Mormon and to pray to know if Jesus is the Christ, if Joseph Smith was a prophet, and if the Book of Mormon is true.

That night I read the story in 3 Nephi 11 of when Jesus visits the Nephites. I was in a private place, so I got down on my knees and I prayed. Even though I was only 15, I had faith that the Lord would answer my prayer. I received an impression in my mind, as clear as anything I had ever seen, that Jesus is the Christ, Joseph Smith was a prophet, and the Book of Mormon is true. I felt like Joseph Smith after that prayer. I was so happy to truly know that Heavenly Father answers prayers from young people.



## LINKED PRAYERS: COUNSELING WITH THE LORD

"There may be things in our character, in our behavior, or concerning our spiritual growth about which we need to counsel with Heavenly Father in morning prayer. After expressing appropriate thanks for blessings received, we plead for understanding, direction, and help to do the things we cannot do in our own strength alone. . . .

"At the end of our day, we kneel again and report back to our Father. We review the events of the day and express heartfelt thanks for the blessings and the help we received. We repent and, with the assistance of the Spirit of the Lord, identify ways we can do and become better tomorrow. Thus our evening prayer builds upon and is a continuation of our morning prayer. And our evening prayer also is a preparation for meaningful morning prayer."

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Pray Always," *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 41-42.



When I heard  
my father pray  
for the first time,  
I felt something  
wonderful.

## WHAT KEPT ME STRONG: *Daily Prayer*

**A**s a teenager in an area with a lot of Church members, I found that daily prayer was one of the most important things that helped me stay spiritually strong. I made sure to pray every day and developed a pattern that helped me—morning and evening prayers.

### MORNING PRAYERS:

Every morning I would share with the Lord:

- My plans for the day.
- What I wanted to do.
- What I thought the Lord wanted me to do.

I would present my plans to God and then ask for the Lord's help in accomplishing them.

### EVENING PRAYERS:

Every evening I would:

- Report on how my day went and if I had accomplished the things I had set out to do.
- Share things that had been difficult for me.
- Share things that I had learned from people or through the Spirit that day.

The more I prayed, the more I learned to understand and receive impressions from the Holy Ghost. These impressions helped me gain more strength to follow the direction of the Lord. **NE**

With canteen in hand, I was prepared for my second 50-mile hike and campout in the Uinta Mountains. I was about as well prepared as a 14-year-old could be. My equipment was all set to go, my boots were sturdy, and my pack was full of all the essentials.

The day of the hike arrived, and our leaders reminded our group of young men that the mountains could be very dangerous. Hikers and campers were often lost in the rugged hills and on the numerous trails. We were warned not to wander away from the path. Our leaders—my father included—all seemed concerned for our safety and were anxious to keep us from straying off of our chosen path.

Being one of the stronger hikers and a leader in the group, I soon found myself and three other boys leading the way. Sometimes we waited for our group at the forks in the trail to make sure we followed the correct path and would not become lost.

We hiked for hours, laughing and joking all the way. We were having a great time. Suddenly, we heard frantic calls and the sounds of running. We knew something must have gone wrong. We wondered if maybe some of the group had become lost. I was concerned for the friends I'd left

behind with the leaders. Something bad must have happened.

We stopped to listen so we could hear what the distant voices were yelling. We heard our names. More specifically, I heard *my name* being called. I recognized my father's voice. We called back and heard their heavy footsteps coming

We stopped to listen so we could hear what the distant voices were yelling. We heard our names. ... We called back and heard their heavy footsteps coming in our direction.

in our direction.

Something bad *had* happened. We learned that four of the boys in our group had strayed from the correct path and had become lost. It was us. We were the ones who were lost. My father was thankful to have finally found us, and together we began the hike back to the correct trail.

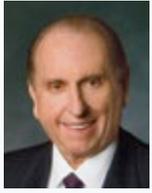
In my head, I retraced my footsteps. I couldn't figure out how I'd become lost. I felt like I was still on the original path. I'd been so sure! We retraced our steps and my father showed us a turn we had missed. It was just a small path with a little hidden sign marking the correct way. We had hiked two miles off the right trail! We were thankful we'd been found before dark. For the rest of the hike,

we stayed close to our leaders and the rest of the group and were never in danger again.

Sometimes our overconfidence as youth gives us an unrealistic sense of independence. We push on without consulting our parents or leaders. We fail to ask for advice. We feel

# THE 50 MILE HIKE

By Duncan Anderson



### CHOOSING RIGHT PATHS

"I plead with you to make a determination right here, right now, not to deviate from the path which will lead to our goal: eternal life with our Father in Heaven. Along that straight and true path there are other goals: missionary service, temple marriage, Church activity, scripture study, prayer, temple work. There are countless worthy goals to reach as we travel through life. Needed is our commitment to reach them."

President Thomas S. Monson, "The Three Rs of Choice," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 68.



#### A Voice of Guidance

One role of prophets is to help us know how to avoid dangerous paths by obeying Heavenly Father's plan. Learn more about the strength and protection that come through following the words of God's prophets at [lds.org/go/prophetsNE8](http://lds.org/go/prophetsNE8).

certain we're headed in a direction leading to the right destination. We laugh and joke and enjoy the path until it's too late, too dark, and we're lost.

When it comes to choosing the right trails in life, our Heavenly Father has provided tools to guide us and keep us on the path that leads to Him. We have the scriptures, prayer and revelation, our parents, guidelines like *For the Strength of Youth*, and our Church leaders to guide us through the countless options life offers.

### NEED ADVICE?

Is there anything you'd like advice on? Don't be afraid to ask your parents or Church leaders. Remember they are there to help you, no matter what you'd like to talk about.

When we do stray off the path, it's often our loving parents and dedicated leaders who come to the rescue. They can guide us back to the correct way and show us where we went wrong. Through repentance, we can correct those wrongs and start fresh on the right path, headed toward the destination that will give us eternal happiness and a life in the presence of our Heavenly Father. **NE**

*Duncan Anderson lives in Utah, USA.*



# DO'S *and* DON'TS

## *of Defending Your Beliefs*

By David A. Edwards  
Church Magazines

One of the things we agree to do as part of the baptismal covenant is “to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that [we] may be in” (Mosiah 18:9). And incidentally, we renew this covenant every week when we partake of the sacrament.

In the April 2014 general conference, several speakers reminded us that there will be times when standing as a witness of God will mean having to face opposition, criticism, and ridicule. So what should you do when you're required to take the uncomfortable, uncool, or unpopular step of defending your beliefs?

*Be brave and humble, firm and gentle,  
all at the same time. With the Lord's  
help, it's not as hard as it sounds.*



## HERE'S SOME ADVICE FROM THE SCRIPTURES

The scriptures give you some basic principles for standing up for your faith, including the following.

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—“FOR I AM —  
**NOT ASHAMED**  
OF THE GOSPEL OF  
**CHRIST**”

(Romans 1:16).

As President Thomas S. Monson has said, “We will all face fear, experience ridicule, and meet opposition. Let us—all of us—have the courage to defy the consensus, the courage to stand for principle. Courage, not compromise, brings the smile of God’s approval” (“Be Strong and of a Good Courage,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 69).

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—“*We speak,* —  
NOT IN THE WORDS  
— *which man’s* —  
WISDOM TEACHETH,  
— *but which* —  
THE HOLY GHOST  
TEACHETH”

(1 Corinthians 2:13).

Heavenly Father has given you the gift of the Holy Ghost, and you should take advantage of this gift. This doesn’t mean reason and logic can’t be inspired or confirmed by the Spirit; it just means that

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you should rely on the Spirit to guide your defense of your faith. Bear testimony by the Spirit. That’s the Lord’s way. (See also D&C 100:5–8.)

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—“HE THAT —  
**HATH THE**  
SPIRIT OF CONTENTION  
**IS NOT OF ME,**  
— BUT IS —  
**OF THE DEVIL,**  
WHO IS THE FATHER OF  
CONTENTION, AND  
**HE STIRRETH UP**  
THE HEARTS  
— OF MEN —  
TO CONTEND WITH ANGER,  
ONE WITH ANOTHER”

(3 Nephi 11:29).

The point here is not that you should avoid any discussion in which people have differing points of view. Rather, it has to do with your intent as well as the emotions involved. We should seek understanding and try to persuade with meekness, not just score points and prove we’re right and someone else is wrong. A discussion where people are getting really worked up and angry is one you should either try to soften or simply avoid.

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—“A SOFT ANSWER —  
**TURNETH AWAY**  
*wrath;*  
— BUT —  
**GRIEVOUS WORDS**  
*stir up anger*”

(Proverbs 15:1).

Elder W. Craig Zwick of the Seventy has explained this scripture this way: “A ‘soft answer’ consists of a reasoned response—disciplined words from a humble heart. It does not mean we never speak directly or that we compromise doctrinal truth. Words that may be firm in information can be soft in spirit” (“What Are You Thinking?” *Ensign*, May 2014, 42).

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—“*Behold,* —  
I send you forth  
as sheep in the  
midst of wolves:  
*be ye therefore*  
*wise* as serpents,  
and *harmless*  
— as doves” —  
(Matthew 10:16).

The Savior doesn’t want you to be ignorant or naïve, but He also doesn’t want you to attack anyone. Knowing what goes on in the world doesn’t mean we have to use its tactics.

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—“CONTEND AGAINST  
**NO CHURCH**”  
— (D&C 18:20). —

There is no need to criticize other churches. Positive statements of your beliefs rather than negative statements about others will be most effective. As the Prophet Joseph Smith said, “We don’t ask any people to throw away any good they have got; we only ask them to come and get more” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 155).

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—“AND THOU —  
**SHALT DECLARE**  
*glad tidings. . . .*  
“AND THOU SHALT  
— DO IT WITH —  
*all humility,*  
TRUSTING IN ME,  
— *reviling not* —  
**AGAINST REVILERS**”  
(D&C 19:29–30).

The tidings you declare are *glad*. Remember that, and make sure your face and your voice show it too. Also, the word *revile* here means to hurl abusive or insulting language at a person. So if

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someone's doing that to you, don't retaliate and do the same thing back to them. The Apostle Peter taught that the Savior Himself gave the example you should follow in this regard (see 1 Peter 2:23).

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**"SEE THAT YE ARE NOT  
*lifted up unto  
pride; yea,*  
SEE THAT YE DO  
NOT BOAST IN YOUR  
OWN WISDOM,  
*nor of your  
much strength.*  
"USE BOLDNESS,  
BUT NOT  
OVERBEARANCE"  
*(Alma 38:11-12).***

Again, be humble. It's not about you or how smart and capable you are. Also, you can

be bold without making overblown statements or being a verbal or intellectual bully. As Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: "You will one day find yourself called upon to defend your faith. . . . Such moments will require both courage and courtesy on your part" ("The Cost—and Blessings—of Discipleship," *Ensign*, May 2014, 6).

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**"And of tenets  
*thou shalt not talk,*  
but thou shalt  
declare repentance and  
faith on the Savior, and  
*remission of sins  
by baptism, and by fire,  
yea, even the Holy Ghost"*  
*(D&C 19:31).***

Here, the word *tenets* refers to opinions or teachings that go beyond the basics. So the Lord is saying to stick to the basic message of the gospel when you're declaring His glad tidings. This also applies to defending your faith. You don't need to stray into detailed discussions about every little thing related to the Church. As Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, "Keep your sharing of the gospel *simple*" ("I Have Given You an Example," *Ensign*, May 2014, 34).

**"LOVE YOUR ENEMIES,  
BLESS THEM  
THAT CURSE YOU,  
DO GOOD TO THEM  
THAT HATE YOU,  
AND PRAY FOR  
THEM WHICH  
DESPITEFULLY USE YOU,  
AND PERSECUTE YOU"  
*(Matthew 5:44).***

"Everyone, independent of his or her decisions and beliefs, deserves our kindness and consideration," said Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "The Savior taught us to love not only our friends but also those who disagree with us—and even those who repudiate us" ("Spiritual Whirlwinds," *Ensign*, May 2014, 20).



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**Finding Courage**  
Read more on this topic at [lds.org/go/courageNE8](https://lds.org/go/courageNE8).

**How Do You Defend?**  
Do you have experience in defending your beliefs? Or do you have ideas to add to these lists? Go to [lds.org/go/defendNE8](https://lds.org/go/defendNE8) and share.

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## HERE'S SOME ADDITIONAL ADVICE

### BEFORE YOU SAY ANYTHING

- Check the context—is it a suitable time and place to speak up?
- Gauge the emotional climate—what's everyone feeling, and where is the discussion headed?
- Try to determine people's real intent—are they just looking for an argument, or would they be open to your testimony of the truth?
- Examine your motives—do you want to help someone or just be right?
- Pray for the Spirit to guide you.
- Be in the habit of praying, studying the scriptures, and attending church.
- Realize you won't necessarily be popular but God will be pleased if you do what's right.

### WHILE THE DISCUSSION'S GOING ON

- Don't assume that people will be offended if you share your beliefs.
- Don't be apologetic.
- Try to find common ground.
- Stay positive, and make positive statements rather than negative defenses (which come across like you're saying "Am not!" all the time).
- Recognize that some terminology and concepts may be new for some people (like *premortal life* or *apostasy*).
- Remember, it's not a debate—you don't have to change the other person's view, and the Lord's cause isn't going to win because you scored more points.
- Don't have the same conversation with the same person over and over again if it just leads to an argument every time.
- If something comes up that you don't know anything about, you can say that you want to study and think it through so you can talk about it later.
- Sometimes you may need to just bear your testimony and leave.
- Have an exit strategy—not only how to get out of a conversation but how to pick up your spirits after you leave a really hard conversation.

### WHEN TALKING IN PERSON

- Check your volume and tone; don't talk loudly or heatedly.
- Smile, or at least don't look angry, upset, or bored.
- Don't just be thinking of what you're going to say next, but focus on how the conversation is affecting the person.
- Don't get drawn into a physical confrontation. Just . . . no. That would be sad.

### ON THE INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- If you see misinformation, tactfully and factually correct it if appropriate.
- Don't get into a flame war.
- Rather than always commenting on public discussions, send more private messages.
- Don't be afraid to share a video, article, or meme.
- Check out [Mormon.org/FAQ](http://Mormon.org/FAQ) for answers you can summarize in your own words.
- If someone's acting like a bully (attacking, mocking, and so on), avoid that person.
- Stop, calm down, and think before responding to something that upsets you, whether that's a few moments, hours, or days.
- If a person won't listen and the posts just make you mad, stop following that feed.

### MOTTOES THAT ARE EASY TO REMEMBER

**“BE OF GOOD CHEER,  
AND DO NOT FEAR”**

————— (D&C 68:6). —————

*I dare to defend, but  
— I don't care to contend. —*



By Bonnie L.  
Oscarson

Young Women  
General President

# Defy Gravity:

## GO FORWARD WITH FAITH

*As you keep moving forward, you can stay upright even when outside forces try to pull you down.*

I received my first two-wheel bicycle when I was eight years old. With the help of my older brother and father, I began the rather scary process of figuring out how to ride it. The other kids in the neighborhood made it look so easy and natural as they zoomed up and down the street on their bikes. I perched on the bike seat—which seemed to be at least 10 feet (3 m) above the ground—and realized there was absolutely nothing to keep me from falling over and proving that the law of gravity was alive and well.

As I tried riding, I learned quickly that if I wanted to stay balanced, I had to keep pedaling. When I first sat on the seat, speed was the last thing I wanted to add to the already daunting equation. But I very soon understood the wisdom and the physics involved in moving forward. As long as I kept

pedaling, I could stay upright and avoid the rough concrete just waiting to take the skin off my arms and legs. Soon I was zipping around the neighborhood with my friends.

Just as those who keep pedaling a bike can stay upright despite gravity's influence, those who are guided by the Holy Spirit in all they do can withstand the influence of the adversary.

So it is with living the gospel and the standards in *For the Strength of Youth*. It takes faith to believe that if we consistently follow the counsel

of the First Presidency as outlined in that booklet, our lives will be balanced and steady. We will be led where we want to go.

We need to keep moving forward to avoid falling. To do that, we should consistently and faithfully do certain actions:

- Pray morning and night.
- Study the scriptures daily.
- Attend Church meetings and partake of the sacrament worthily.
- Serve those around us.
- Be worthy to attend the temple.

All of these actions keep us moving forward in the right direction.

That's why reading and being familiar with the standards described in *For the Strength of Youth* will help ensure we are making choices consistent with God's standards. Living these principles and keeping the commandments



invite the Holy Ghost to be our constant companion. Just as those who keep pedaling a bike can stay upright despite gravity's influence, those who are guided by the Holy Spirit in all they do can withstand the influence of the adversary.

What are the destinations you have in mind as you pedal forward? For all young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, preparing now for a full-time mission is important in forward growth. For all youth, being prepared to go to the temple and receive the endowment by making and keeping sacred covenants should also be a primary goal.

As the message from the First Presidency at the beginning of *For the Strength of Youth* says: "In all that you do, stay focused on the temple. In the temple you will receive the greatest of all the Lord's blessings, including marriage for time and all eternity."<sup>1</sup>

Receiving the covenant of eternal marriage in the house of the Lord and becoming righteous husbands, wives, fathers, and mothers may seem far down the road, but the time to begin preparing is now. All of these things lead to the most glorious and grand destination of all—eternal life with our Heavenly Father.

One of my favorite scriptures sums up what we need to do in order to keep moving toward our goals: "Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life" (2 Nephi 31:20).

Just as I learned as an eight-year-old girl that I needed to keep pedaling

and moving forward in order to defy gravity and keep my balance on my bicycle, it is important for all of us to keep moving forward with faith, trusting in the counsel of living prophets and a loving Heavenly Father to keep us from falling. Some of our destinations are just down the road while others will take a lifetime of faithful living to achieve. The promises of what lies at the end of the road, if we are faithful, are certain and glorious and well worth the ride. **NE**

**NOTE**

1. *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), ii.



**Learn More**

See what's next in your covenant path at [lds.org/go/covenantNE8](https://lds.org/go/covenantNE8).

# BOARD GAMES AND BROTHERS

My chance to play left a lasting impact, but it wasn't what I'd expected.

By David Christensen

I felt the hot tears of anger slowly slide down my face. I wiped them away with my hand, but I could still feel the slightly salty taste on my lips as sobs of anguish began to pour out. I just wanted to hang out with my brother. Why couldn't he be my friend, too?

Just a few hours before, I had stared at my older brother, Steve, in complete surprise, waiting for him to tell me that he was only joking. "Well, do you want to play?" Steve asked impatiently.

I gave myself a quick pinch to make sure I wasn't dreaming, and then I voiced a timid, "Yeah, sure." I still couldn't believe that my brother had invited me to play a game with the "big kids"! After all, I'd been told for three years that I was still too young to play more difficult board games with my brother and his friends.

I went into the room where the older boys were setting up the board game. As the game started pieces, I felt like I was dreaming. For the first time, I felt equal to my brother—not like I was just his tagalong.

The dream ended quickly, however. The game was tough, and my inexperience and lack of knowledge became painfully obvious as the other players quickly and soundly defeated me.

Losing so quickly was bad enough, but to make matters worse, the other guys started to make fun of me. I tried to continue playing even though they were being mean, but it was hard to hold back my tears of frustration. Unfortunately, one tear trickled down my cheek before I could wipe it away. My brother saw it and teased me too. I couldn't take it anymore and ran to my room.



So there I was, crying by myself, wondering why my brother couldn't just be my friend. I went to sleep that night feeling sad and alone.

The next morning I woke up still feeling worthless. I decided to get dressed and climb the hill behind our house to a secluded place where I could think and be alone. But when I got to the door of my bedroom, I noticed that a piece of paper had been slipped below my door. Unfolding it, I read:

Dear David,  
I would like to ask for your forgiveness for the way I acted last night. I was more interested in winning than in helping you figure out the game. As it turned out, I did end up winning the game, but if you had been a few years older and had just a little more experience, you would have easily won. Next time we play, I'll try to teach you a few pointers that might be helpful. Again, I ask for forgiveness and wish you better luck next time. You're really an exceptional player for your age.  
Love, Steve

True to his word, Steve did help me with some strategy ideas during the next game. He was also very careful not to hurt my feelings. In fact, I noticed that Steve began to take a greater interest in me. That's not to say that he suddenly became my best friend, but he gave me more encouragement and became more willing to listen when I told him about things that were important to me.

Neither of us ever mentioned the letter or the change that occurred in our relationship. I guess it's just one of those things that guys don't talk about much. I kept Steve's letter, but it wasn't until I began reading the Old Testament that I understood why I had become so attached to it. I was struck by Genesis 4:9, which reads, "And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?" I realized that my brother had been faced with the same question but had given a much different response from Cain. The letter is a wonderful reminder to me that I am blessed with a brother who answered, "Yes, I am my brother's keeper." **NE**

*David Christensen lives in California, USA.*

#### FAMILY LIFE



"Some of our greatest opportunities to demonstrate our love will be within the walls of our own homes. Love should be the very heart of family life, and yet sometimes it is not. There can be too much impatience, too much arguing, too many fights, too many tears. ... And yet the bottom line is that the reasons do not matter. If we would keep the commandment to love one another, we must treat each other with kindness and respect."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Love—the Essence of the Gospel," *Ensign*, May 2014, 92-93; read the talk at [lds.org/go/loveNE8](https://www.lds.org/go/loveNE8).

# The Dating Academy

SIGN UP TODAY!



By **Matthew O. Richardson**

Served as Second Counselor in the Sunday School General Presidency from 2009 to 2014

While speaking to youth about how to prepare for a celestial marriage, President Thomas S. Monson emphasized that “proper dating is a part of . . . preparation for marriage.”<sup>1</sup> Have you thought much about happy relationships? Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said a “celestial marriage brings greater possibilities for happiness than does any other relationship.”<sup>2</sup>

When I was serving as bishop in a young single adult ward, I worried about those who approached dating with very little purpose, understanding, or direction. This caused me to wonder if my own children would be any different when their time came. My wife and I decided to help our children prepare for “proper dating” and happy relationships by creating the Richardson Dating Academy, or RDA as our children call it.

It wasn’t long after we started the RDA that friends of our children wanted to participate and even become RDA graduates. So, how about you? Are you ready to become a dating academy graduate yourself? Class is in session!

*Learning the ins and outs of dating can be hard. Let this course turn you into a dating pro!*



## Lesson 1: Purposes and Standards of Dating

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once explained that most athletic contests have “lines drawn on the floor or the field within which every participant must stay in order to compete.”<sup>3</sup> Success depends on how well a competitor knows and stays within the set boundaries. Likewise, it’s important to know the “dating lines” or the purposes and standards of dating as taught by Church leaders.

### HOMEWORK

As you know, “dating” means different things to different people. Your first assignment is to figure out just what a “date” is according to Church standards. Can you explain the purposes of dating and the specific dating standards and guidelines set by the Church? Or, do you know when it’s most appropriate to be involved in dating and steady dating (having a boyfriend or girlfriend)?

You can find answers to these questions in the “Dating” section of *For the Strength of Youth*. The First Presidency reminds us why knowing and understanding these standards are so important. They promise, “The standards in this

booklet will help you with the important choices you are making now and will yet make in the future.”<sup>4</sup>

Now that you have a solid foundation of the standards and purposes of dating (you *did* do your homework and read that section, didn’t you?), it’s time to move on to lesson #2.



## Lesson 2: Watch and Learn

One of the most common ways people learn is by watching others. Dating is no different. In the dating academy, we spend time observing others in dating situations. In our family, we learned many pointers—some to do, others to avoid—by watching dates in progress at restaurants and other settings. Yes, we went to certain places with the sole purpose to observe dates for “class.”

### TIPS

Here are some suggestions that will help you learn as you observe.

- Watch but don’t be creepy. This is about learning from others but not stalking, staring, or even judging. Look for things you like and things you would like to avoid.
- Go to a variety of places and settings to observe others. Not every date is the same nor should it be. Watch how the setting affects the experience.
- Watch how people interact with each other. Can you tell who is with whom? Are they paying attention to each other? In what ways? Are they talking with each other? Do they look like they enjoy being with each other? How can you tell if they are having fun?
- Talk with a parent, leader, or good friends and share what you noticed and what you learned.

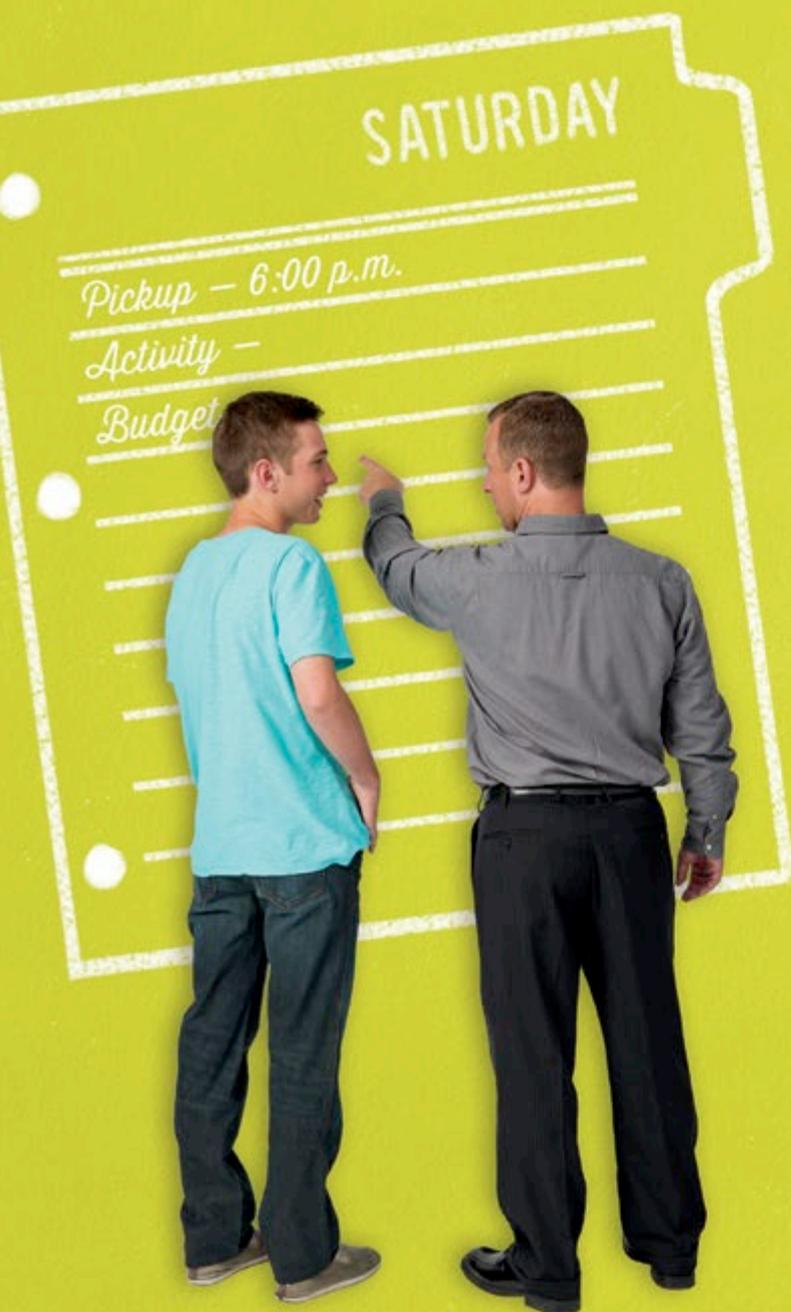
### HOMEWORK

The next time you go out to eat, attend a movie, or go to almost any activity, make an effort to look around and see how other people are interacting. It may surprise you to see how much dating is actually going on! Take the time to learn from those around you by paying attention to what’s working and what isn’t.

## Lesson 3: Planning a Date

The quality of experience you'll have with others is often determined by what happens *before* a date begins. Showing up on your date's doorstep with no plan is a recipe for an awkward experience. Nobody likes playing the "What do you want to do?" game.

You're better than that! With a little practice, you can become a date-planning champion. And young women, no fair skipping this section! While most of the time young men plan and ask for dates, you'll still want to have these skills down for when it's your turn.



### TIPS

- Start planning early.
- Don't be afraid to bounce ideas off your friends, parents, and others. They can provide excellent suggestions that you haven't even thought about.
- Make sure you let your budget, amount of time available, the reasons for dating, and Church standards guide your planning.
- Think of what you hope will happen during the date from beginning to end. This helps you realize what needs to be done to make the date a success.
- Pay attention to details. Call ahead for event times, prices, menus, and what the proper dress is for the occasion.
- Plan for emergencies. For example, what will you do if you don't have enough money or have car trouble? What if your date gets sick?

### HOMEWORK

Rather than leaving everything to chance, dating academy grads understand what needs to happen and they plan accordingly.

Your homework assignment, even if you're years away from dating, is to practice planning an event. You can brainstorm with friends really fun ideas for a date. Then work together to think of what planning is required to make those ideas actually happen. Or, you can ask your parents to let you plan the next family outing.

You might choose a place to eat or what to do. Plan all the details (event times, travel time, cost, backup plans) and then put your plan into action. You could even come up with a dating plan complete with backup ideas if something goes wrong and share it in family home evening, while talking together around the dinner table, or with friends. You may find that properly planning an activity is almost as much fun as the actual date!



#### Group Date Ideas

Need ideas? Check out [lds.org/go/ideasNE8](https://www.lds.org/go/ideasNE8). Some of the youth activities there could be adapted for dates.

## Lesson 4: Inviting Others and Being Invited

You know your dating standards front and back, you've watched others in dating situations, and you've come up with a solid date plan.

Congratulations! Now you still need to invite someone. Or, you need to know how to respond when you are invited. So what's the best way? A phone call? Ask in person? Here are some different points to consider.

### TIPS

- Be ready to give details when you invite someone on a date. Talk about what you have planned, start and end times, who's participating, and how they should dress (casual, dressy, etc.). Your excellent planning from academy lesson #3 makes this part of the academy easy.
- There's a time to talk by phone and a time to ask face-to-face. The more important the event is, the more personal the invitation should be. Don't be afraid to skip technology and actually talk with someone.
- Some events may require you to speak with your date's parents first. This shows respect and courtesy.

### HOMEWORK

In the Richardson Dating Academy, all of our children practiced dating invitations. For example, our children might call an aunt, older sibling, or other family member to practice inviting someone on a date. Or our son or daughter would receive an invitation from a family member and practice responding. They learned how to deal with rejection, acceptance, or even a disinterested response or two.

Now it's your turn. Working with your parents, ask them to line up somebody in your family you can call and practice inviting on a date. Make sure you do this more than once!



## Lesson 5: On the Date

It would be impossible for any dating academy to cover every little thing to consider or plan for in dating. So much depends on good judgment, communication with your parents, and listening to the Spirit.

Still, here are a few key points you might want to brush up on before putting your date plan into action.

### TIPS

- Develop a “you first” attitude. This means you always think of your date first. Is he or she having fun? Is he or she comfortable?
- Make sure you dress appropriately for the occasion. The way you dress usually communicates how you feel about others and about the event. Know the difference between casual (but never sloppy), semiformal, and formal and when it would be appropriate to dress in those ways.
- Show common courtesy by opening doors, saying thank you, talking less about yourself and more about your date, and extending sincere compliments.
- Learn how to navigate restaurants. Know how to make a reservation, get a table, calculate a service tip, and pay the bill.

### HOMEWORK

Once again, the best way to learn any good skill is by practicing it. Our youth enjoyed role-playing different situations to think about how to act most appropriately. We also loved going out to eat as part of the dating academy experience. Our children learned how to act in a restaurant, order a meal, calculate the tip, and pay the bill by actually doing it when they were with us.

Look for opportunities to practice skills you should use on a date. For example, the next time you and your family go somewhere, ask your parents to let you purchase the tickets, order the meal, or calculate the tip. Treat your family or friends with the same respect and courtesy that you should show others on a date. Open doors for your family, be the first to say “thank you,” and pay attention so you are part of the conversation.



## Lesson 6: The Doorstep

Last but not least, dating academy graduates know how to conclude a date on the right note. Nothing sours a great date more than a bad ending.

Here's how you can finish a date with success.

### TIPS

- Express gratitude. Be sincere and to the point. If there was something you especially liked, tell your date what it was.
- There's no reason for dragging things on at this point. You've already spent plenty of time together! Avoid the "doorstep shuffle." When people aren't sure what to say, they tend to shuffle back and forth or move their feet in place. If you find yourself "shuffling" in place, it's a pretty good signal that you need to say good-bye!
- Know and follow the Church's counsel on kissing and physical intimacy. (You might also want to read John Bytheway's article "What Do Kisses Mean?"<sup>5</sup> at [lds.org/go/kissesNE8](http://lds.org/go/kissesNE8).)

### HOMework

Yes, here's another opportunity for practicing. Our family has spent several family home evenings role-playing doorstep good-byes. It's been both helpful and fun to watch an older sibling coach the younger sibling with do's and don'ts.

Most memorable was an older sister showing how she could turn a hug into a handshake with the grace of a princess and the speed of a ninja. You too can get together with family members and role-play different scenarios that might happen on a doorstep. We guarantee it'll be an academy night you'll all remember!



### Graduation

If you've studied all the material, worked on the tips, done the homework, and talked through the lessons with your parents and family, you too can become a dating academy graduate.

As you continue strengthening these important skills, you'll find support, strength, and power that will bless your relationships both now and in the future. You will be better prepared for happiness. **NE**

### NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, "Preparation Brings Blessings," *Ensign*, May 2010, 64.
2. Russell M. Nelson, "Celestial Marriage," *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 93.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, "We Are All Enlisted," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 45.
4. "Message to the Youth from The First Presidency," *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), ii.
5. John Bytheway, "What Do Kisses Mean?" *New Era*, Oct., 2004, 38–41.



### Do Try This at Home

Interested in having a dating academy at home? Let your parents know there's an RDA article for them in this month's *Ensign* or at [lds.org/RDA](http://lds.org/RDA).



## SUNDAY LESSONS

This Month's Topic:  
**Marriage and  
Family**



### **MARRIAGE IS WORTH IT**

"It is so rewarding to be married. Marriage is wonderful. In time you begin to think alike and have the same ideas and impressions. You have times when you are extremely happy, times of testing, and times of trial, but the Lord guides you through all of those growth experiences together."

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Eternal Blessings of Marriage," *Ensign*, May 2011, 96.

# WHY MARRIAGE IS *Awesome!*

We love being married, and here's why.

By Ben and Rachel Nielsen

After our first date, we both knew we wanted to go on a second date. Ben wanted to go on another date because Rachel was friendly and fun to talk to. Rachel wanted to go on another date because Ben was a gentleman and was still smiling after *all* of his well-laid plans fell through. After the second date, plus many more dates and prayers after that, we fell in love and decided to get married in the Sacramento California Temple.

The wedding day was absolutely perfect, and we have loved being married ever since. The world may see marriage differently, but we know that “no other relationship of any kind can bring as much joy, generate as much good, or produce as much personal refinement.”<sup>1</sup> Marriage is awesome, and here's why.

## FROM BEN: *A Teammate*

During my mission in Brazil, I grew to love soccer. One thing that I love most about this sport is having teammates and learning how to work together with my team. Rachel is a fantastic teammate. She helps me achieve my goals, joins me in making important decisions, and is there for me when I have trouble.

When we were sealed in the temple, we promised to “help one another as equal partners.”<sup>2</sup> Rachel and I strive to support each other in everything we do, and it's great to know that I always have a reliable teammate.

## FROM RACHEL: *Expressions of Love*

Let's face it, girls (and boys), it's nice to know that someone loves you. And when you're married, you have chances to share and receive love every day! When I was talking to my parents about the possibility of marrying Ben, my dad said, “Whomever you choose to marry, I want him to frequently and sincerely express his love for you like Elder Richard G. Scott did for his wife.”<sup>3</sup> I listened to Dad.

I decided to marry Ben, and he has always made an effort to express his love to me in small and big ways. During my senior year of college, I worked for months to prepare, apply, and interview for a prestigious internship. And when I finally heard that I got the job, I came home and saw a vase full of flowers from my husband. He knew how hard I had worked and how much the internship meant to me. At other times, he'll hide my favorite drink and a love note in the fridge before he heads out for a weekend Scout camp. And every day, he'll do the dishes and make me laugh. Ben is great at expressing his love for me, and that brings both of us great joy.



### FROM BEN: *More Enjoyment*

Dating Rachel is so much fun. In fact, we make sure that we still frequently go on dates even as a married couple. After we first met, we found that we enjoy many of the same activities: walking through parks, attending plays, watching sporting events, eating new and different food, listening to music, and so much more. I loved doing these things before I met Rachel, but they're even more fun now that we get to share them together. When you're married, you have someone to enjoy life with—and that makes life awesome.

### FROM RACHEL: *An Eternal Missionary Companion*

Before I met Ben, I was nearing the age of missionary service and had seriously considered serving a full-time mission. But then Ben entered my life, and I knew that Heavenly Father had a different plan for me.

When Ben and I got engaged, relatives who knew about my thoughts to serve a mission asked me about my choice, and I would tell them, "I decided that I wanted to pick my own missionary companion—and stay with him for eternity."

When you're married, you and your spouse have the chance to participate in the work of salvation together. Ben and I have found great joy in building a Christ-centered home, studying and living the gospel together,

servicing in the Church, and inviting others to come unto Christ. As we work together to build the kingdom of God, we grow closer, our love deepens, and life is more fulfilling.

### TAKE IT FROM US

Despite what the world may say, marriage *is* awesome and *is* worth making a priority. When you're married, you have a teammate, you give and receive love, you enjoy life more fully, and you have someone to build the kingdom of God with. All of that brings us great joy, and because we were sealed in the temple, we can have this joy forever! If we keep our covenants, we will be together for eternity and receive the crowning blessings of the priesthood. We "have found in marriage the richest fulfillment of human existence."<sup>4</sup> **NE**

*Ben and Rachel Nielsen live in Utah, USA.*

#### NOTES

1. L. Whitney Clayton, "Marriage: Watch and Learn," *Ensign*, May 2013, 83.
2. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
3. See Richard G. Scott, "The Eternal Blessings of Marriage," *Ensign*, May 2011, 96.
4. James E. Faust, "Enriching Your Marriage," *Ensign*, Apr. 2007, 6.

## JOIN THE CONVERSATION

### Things to Ponder for Sunday

- What qualities and attitudes make for the strongest and happiest marriages and families?
- What are you doing now that will help your future marriage and family stay strong and happy?

### Things You Might Do

- Share with some friends your goal of marrying and having a family, and tell them why.
- In church, share why you are looking forward to marriage and family and how you are preparing for them.

# MISSIONARY COMPANIONS

Your family can help unite the family of God.  
You can all share the gospel in natural and pleasant ways.

(See M. Russell Ballard, "Put Your Trust in the Lord," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 43.)



By Alex Larsen

I always knew I wanted to be a mother, but when I was growing up, it wasn't always on my mind. When my fiancé and I were engaged, one day I was talking with one of my college professors—a woman I greatly admired—about my engagement. She said something that brought my life choices into sharp focus. “You are wasting your talent,” she told me as she shook her head. She went on to say that someone as smart as I was should not get married young. She assumed I would have children in my future and would be “throwing away” my education and chances of a stellar career on my future motherhood. I could tell by the way she looked at me that she thought I was making a terrible and naïve mistake.

It's been several years since that conversation, and my husband and I have two little girls. Kate is three years old and is my little sweetheart. She moves through life at a leisurely pace, savoring all of the little details she notices. Annabel is one year old, with bright, blue eyes and a head of curls. She's exuberant and determined. Though I didn't change my mind because of what my professor said, our discussion has stayed with me. In one way my professor's predictions were correct: I do not have a prestigious working career. But my professor got the most important point wrong, because I have wasted nothing.

*The world told me I would be giving up everything, but what I gained was worth so much more.*



WHY  
BEING A

ROCK

I love the opportunity to stay home and care for my young children, because these are the most formative years of their lives. I have the opportunity to create a rich home environment for my girls by reading and discussing things with them as part of our everyday life. Kate will often astound me by remembering and commenting on something we'd read in a book several weeks before, and

Annabel learns a new skill almost every day. But as fun and important as it is to watch them learn new information and skills, I feel the most satisfied when I see

their spirits growing and developing. I remember the first time Kate pointed to a picture of the Savior and said, "Jesus." I knew then that what I was doing was eternally significant in the lives of my children.

The world often tells us that life's rewards come in the form of status, money, or grand accomplishments, but I know there's great satisfaction even in the small acts of changing diapers or wiping sticky fingers. Every little thing I do as a mother is part of helping to build the kingdom of God by nurturing His children. I always knew I wanted children, but it was not until I held my first baby in my arms that I began to realize how much my heart was capable of loving.

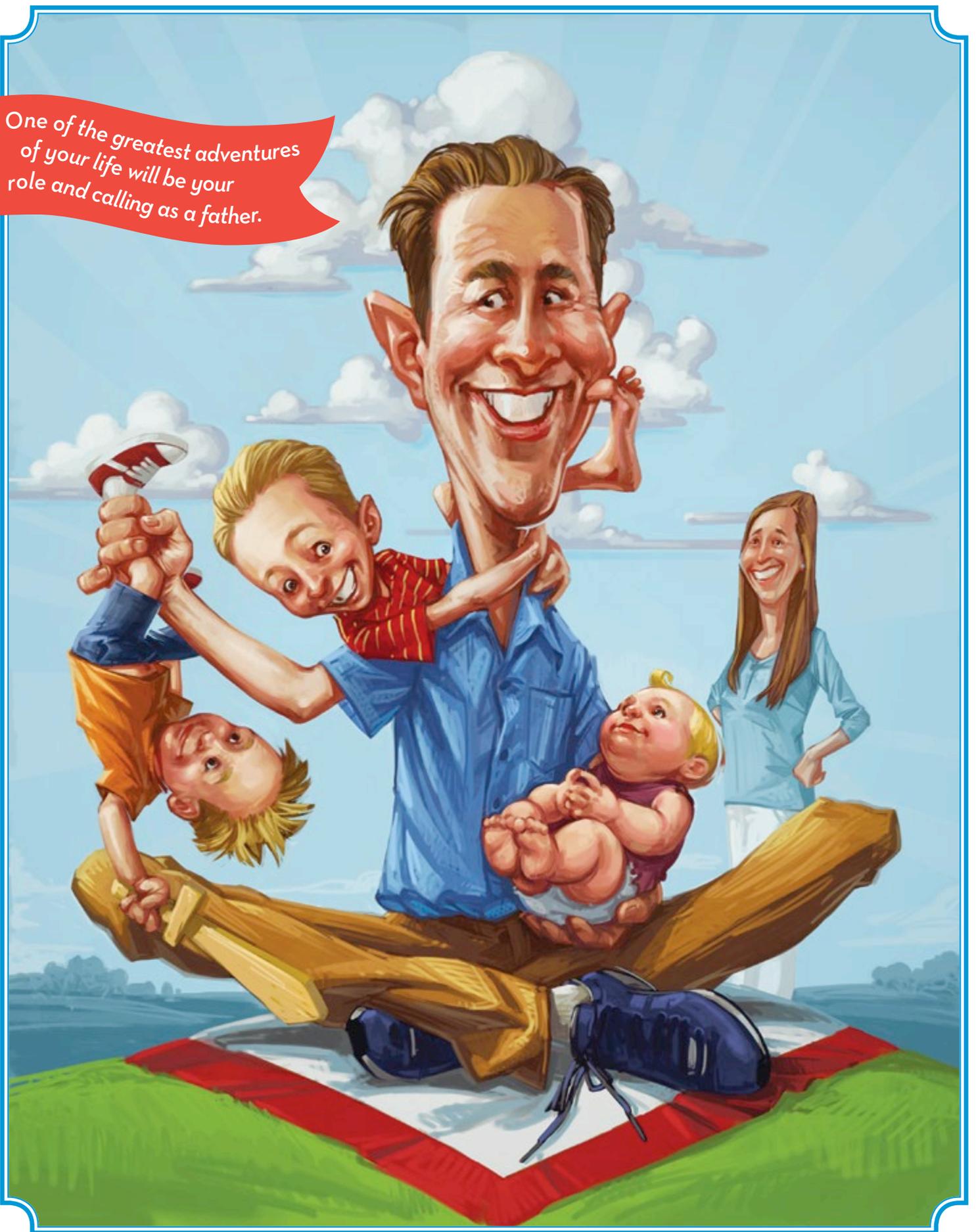
The love I have for my daughters has helped me better understand how much my Heavenly Father loves all of His children. When speaking of little children, Jesus taught that "of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:14). More than anything, motherhood has helped me to grow as a daughter of God, because now I know what a daughter of God looks like from the eyes of a parent. The world makes us think that a woman loses herself in motherhood—she loses her body, her free time, and her career. But I have found myself in motherhood. I feel more beautiful and more valuable than ever before. **NE**

*Alex Larsen lives in California, USA.*

# MOM KS!



One of the greatest adventures  
of your life will be your  
role and calling as a father.



# WHY BEING A DAD ROCKS!

By Chris Deaver

**W**hen I was younger, I loved spending time with my dad. He always knew the best games to play, the best stories to tell at night, and the most interesting sports to try. It was like he was born to be a great dad.

Fast-forward my life to when I married my sweetheart, Julia, and then even further to the moment that our first child, Daniel, was born. I was filled with a rush of emotions. I was happy, shocked, amazed, and a little scared. I felt totally inadequate to be a father and to have the responsibility of teaching and being an example to my son. But I quickly realized that I'd been preparing all my life to be a dad. When I held my son in my arms for the first time and looked down into his face, I felt the Spirit touch my heart, and I realized that I was ready to try to be a great dad just like my own dad was to me.

When Daniel was very young, he already had a great sense of humor. He learned to tell hilarious jokes that would make my wife and me laugh. He also often said things that inspired us. Shortly after hearing President Thomas S. Monson announce the change in age requirements for young men and young women preparing to serve missions,<sup>1</sup> we were driving in the car. Daniel announced that he would start preparing himself right then, at age six, so he would have 12 years of preparation. Then he said with a smile, "Dad, can I change the song from 'I Hope They Call Me on a Mission' to 'I AM Going on a Mission'?" It was awesome.

Three years after Daniel was born he was followed by his brother, Austin. For me as a dad, it's been great to watch both boys become best friends. And Austin has been just as fun as Daniel in his own way. He enjoys building and destroying block towers, and one of his favorite activities is to fearlessly wrestle me as if I stand no chance against his four-year-old powers. Of course, I give in and let him win—so I guess I reinforce his belief. But it's so much fun. I know he'll be a great wrestler, but what I want most is for him to wrestle "against the rulers of the darkness of this world" and "against spiritual wickedness" like it says in the scriptures (Ephesians 6:12). And I hope I'm helping to prepare him to do that.

We just recently had our third child, a baby girl named Faith. During the delivery, my wife was having some complications and we were scared for our baby. I gave Julia a blessing. Then she asked me to sing to her. The Spirit brought peace to both of us. Soon baby Faith came safely into the world. It was a miracle, and she definitely lived up to her name. Faith's beautiful smile brightens my life. I can't express in words how much she means to me.

For any young man still wondering, let me tell you: You were born to be a great dad. The world may not agree, but fatherhood is the best. Someday you'll find that your kids inspire you, too, and that being a dad is the greatest adventure of your life. Yes, it's a duty and something you need to take seriously, but being a dad is unlike anything else. **NE**

*Chris Deaver lives in Florida, USA.*

**NOTE**

1. See Thomas S. Monson, "Welcome to Conference," *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 4–5.



I know looking at pornographic pictures is wrong, but **what about reading books with “romantic” scenes?**

**W**e always seem to be encouraged to read more, because, well, everyone knows that reading is a good thing. But not all books are worth reading, and just because sexual material is written about rather than photographed or video recorded doesn't mean that it's less morally hazardous. Making a common display of a sacred intimacy that's intended to only be part of a marriage relationship is wrong—whether in words or images.

If something you're reading contains explicit sexual descriptions that imprint themselves on your mind and arouse sexual feelings in the same way that looking at pornographic images would, then guess what? It's pornography. Remember the counsel in *For the Strength of Youth*: “Choose wisely when using media, because whatever you read, listen to, or look at has an effect on you. Select only media that uplifts you” ([2011], 11). **NE**

**If I don't have a burning desire to share the gospel, does that mean I don't have a testimony?**

**P**resident Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has said, “Each of us must come to our own personal testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. We then share that testimony with our family and others.”<sup>1</sup> It can sometimes be easy to question the depth of your testimony

when you compare yourself to people like Brigham Young, who once said, “I wanted to thunder, and roar out the gospel to the nations. It burned in my bones like fire pent up.”<sup>2</sup> So, what if you don't feel fire in your bones?

Hopefully your lack of desire doesn't come from a lack of concern for your

fellowmen. As your faith in Jesus Christ grows, so does your love of all people, a love that is a mark of the true followers of Christ (see Moroni 7:48; John 13:35).

It's likely, however, that your hesitancy simply comes from fear and anxiety about speaking to others. For many people, such feelings can be overwhelming. Even prophets have had doubts about their ability to speak to people (see Exodus 4:10; Moses 6:31). They, of course,

had no reason to question their testimonies—and neither should you if you are studying the scriptures, pondering, praying, fasting, repenting, and doing all the other things that help bring the Spirit into your life.

If you feel you just need a little extra courage to share the gospel, visit [lds.org/go/shareNE8](https://www.lds.org/go/shareNE8) for ideas. **NE**

#### NOTES

1. Boyd K. Packer, “The Witness,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 96.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), viii.



## The Family

You'll be studying about the family in your Sunday classes this month. As you study and discuss family, you may ponder these questions: Why do Church leaders emphasize family so much? What is the place of family in Heavenly Father's plan? How does family help make us happy?

To find some answers to these questions, see the family proclamation near the back of your *Personal Progress* or *Duty to God* booklet or online at [lds.org/go/familyNE8](http://lds.org/go/familyNE8). You'll also find teachings about family relationships in general conference talks at [conference.lds.org](http://conference.lds.org).

Give yourself an easy reminder to prepare for your Sunday lessons on the family. Just place these cards in your scriptures, locker, or bedroom. You can also download or share them online at [lds.org/go/cardsNE8](http://lds.org/go/cardsNE8).

BACKGROUND TEXTURE BY ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK



# The FAMILY IS THE *pattern of* HEAVEN

Elder Lawrence E. Corbridge  
Of the Seventy  
April 2014 general conference

The ultimate end  
of all activity in  
the Church is that  
a man and his wife  
and their children  
can be happy  
at home.



President Boyd K. Packer  
President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles  
April 2014 general conference

— *We need* —  
TO PUT  
**MORE**  
*quality*  
TIME & EFFORT INTO  
*strengthening*  
*family* —  
**RELATIONSHIPS.**

Elder Michael John U. Teh  
Of the Seventy  
April 2014 general conference



## Eternal Families

Elder Corbridge taught, “Marriage and family are not conventions of men until only death do us part. They are intended to be made eternal through covenants we make with God. The family is the pattern of heaven.”

Families can only be eternal when sealed by temple covenants (see D&C 131:1–3; 132:15, 18–20, 46).

What can you do right now to keep yourself worthy for temple attendance today and for a temple marriage in the future?

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## Quality Time and Effort

As you “put more quality time and effort” into strengthening your family, as Elder Teh taught, remember the old adage that *quality* not just *quantity* time matters. So how can you make the most of your time together? Look for ways to develop the principles of successful families as defined in the family proclamation:

- Faith
- Prayer
- Repentance
- Forgiveness
- Respect
- Love
- Compassion
- Work
- Wholesome recreational activities

What can you do with your family to live these principles?

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(Examples: show compassion for a sibling struggling with math by helping her with homework, express respect for your brother’s hobby by supporting him at a competition, show forgiveness by not fighting back and develop faith by talking about the gospel together.)

## Happy at Home

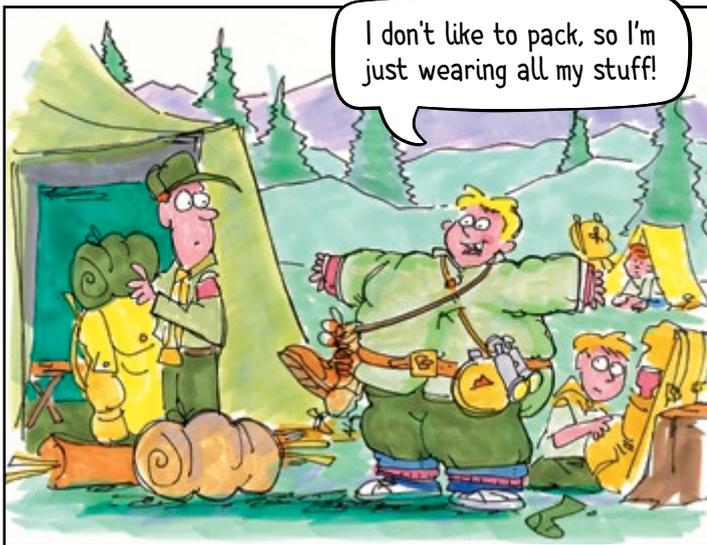
The scriptures teach that “men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25). Have you ever thought about how that relates to finding joy and happiness at home? Here are some points to ponder:

- Why is happiness at home so important that it’s “the ultimate end of all activity in the Church,” as President Packer taught?
- How do the things you do in the Church add to happiness at home, such as family home evening, Personal Progress, Duty to God, seminary, Sunday lessons, and Mutual? What can you do each week to use these activities to bring more happiness to your home?
- What do the scriptures and hymns teach about how we should live in love at home? (For example, see Mosiah 4:13–15; D&C 88:119; and “Home Can Be a Heaven on Earth” [*Hymns*, no. 298].)
- What can you do as a family to bring even more happiness into your life?

From now on, just take a picture of the tooth and upload it to my Facebook page, and then I'll send you the money through PayPal.



RANDY GLASBERGEN



I don't like to pack, so I'm just wearing all my stuff!

VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY



[Gasp!] He ... he ... made his bed this morning. And I didn't even ask!

Who says there aren't modern miracles?

RYAN STOKER



What makes you think Dad's talking to the prophet?

Because he said he was on a conference call!

JON CLARK

# “My mom works all day. How can I improve our relationship?”

**S**ince you don't see your mom often, make sure that the time you do have together is used well. You could talk to your mom about how to do this. She wants a good relationship with you too and will help you work on it. Try asking her what she would appreciate: coming home to a clean house? doing an activity together? just talking with you? As you regularly do activities your mom appreciates, your relationship will improve.

Of course, you could plan some fun activities to do together, but any meaningful time together—such as washing the dishes or reading the scriptures—can be a great way to build your relationship.

Also plan time for communication. Understanding one another is a key ingredient in good relationships. One thing to discuss is how your mom's work schedule will affect your relationship with her. You can avoid misunderstandings if you talk about your expectations as well as your mom's.

Prayer will help. Families are important to Heavenly Father, so He can inspire you to know how to improve your relationship with your mom. Don't ignore a prompting to do something that seems small (see Alma 37:6). A hug and a smile, for example, can make a big difference. **NE**



### Write a Note

Even if you have very little time together, you can still express your love to your mother.

Write her thoughtful, secret notes. As she reads them at work, she will think of you. Do as much as you can for her. Think about her more often and pray for her. Ask the Lord to inspire you and prompt you regarding how you can improve your relationship.

*Irinka E., 20, Odessa, Ukraine*

### Seek to Understand Her

Try to understand her situation, because she works for your benefit. You can begin by helping with things at home, like cleaning the house, helping your siblings, and cooking. You also can share scriptures with your mom, pray together, and do activities that you like to do together.

*Morony M., 18, Chihuahua, Mexico*



### Have a Special Sunday

On some Sundays we have a special lunch or dinner with a new dessert, we talk, and at the end we sing hymns. This brings us together and helps us be better friends!

*Rebeca N., 12, São Paulo, Brazil*

### Try an Experiment

We arrange time to be together: having family home evening, playing games, going to the beach, having lunch together. All of this helps to

keep the flame of a good relationship alive. When we disagree, we avoid criticizing. I know that sometimes I ask not to do housework, but this contributes to disharmony in the home. Since I began this experiment—complaining less, lowering my voice, helping more with housework, and talking more with my mother—a sweet spirit has developed in our home and we cooperate more.

*Glenda C., 18, Bahia, Brazil*



### Help at Home

Do some extra chores around the house. Your mom has been working all day. If she has less work to do when she gets home, she'll probably be happier and have more time to talk and do things with you. While you are talking, you can ask about her day at work. It will show her that you care, and it will open doors for other topics of discussion, allowing you to grow closer.

*Heather B., 18, Oregon, USA*

### Find Something You Both Like to Do

My mum's relationship with me skyrocketed when I said, "I want to spend more time with you, but I don't know what to do or when to do it." Playing board games happens to be our favorite pastime. So we set aside a time together to play, laugh, and make memories. When you are open with your parents, eventually they become your best companions. You

will be able to talk to them about anything, and you will be sure of an honest answer. That is the sign of a mature relationship.

*Ephraim S., 15, New South Wales, Australia*

### Read Scriptures Together

Both of you could set a goal to read together every day, even just five minutes, from the Book of Mormon or any other Church book. It will strengthen your relationship and nourish you with the word of God so you can be ready to face each day. Remember also to pray to God and ask for His help. I know He hears you and loves you.

*Laura M., 19, Córdoba, Argentina*



### LEARN FROM YOUR MOTHER

"Please look to your faithful mothers for a pattern to follow. Model yourselves

after *them*, not after celebrities whose standards are not the Lord's standards and whose values may not reflect an eternal perspective. Look to your mother. Learn from her strengths, her courage, and her faithfulness. Listen to her. She may not be a whiz at texting; she may not even have a Facebook page. But when it comes to matters of the heart and the things of the Lord, she has a wealth of knowledge."

**Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Mothers and Daughters," Ensign, May 2010, 19.**

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

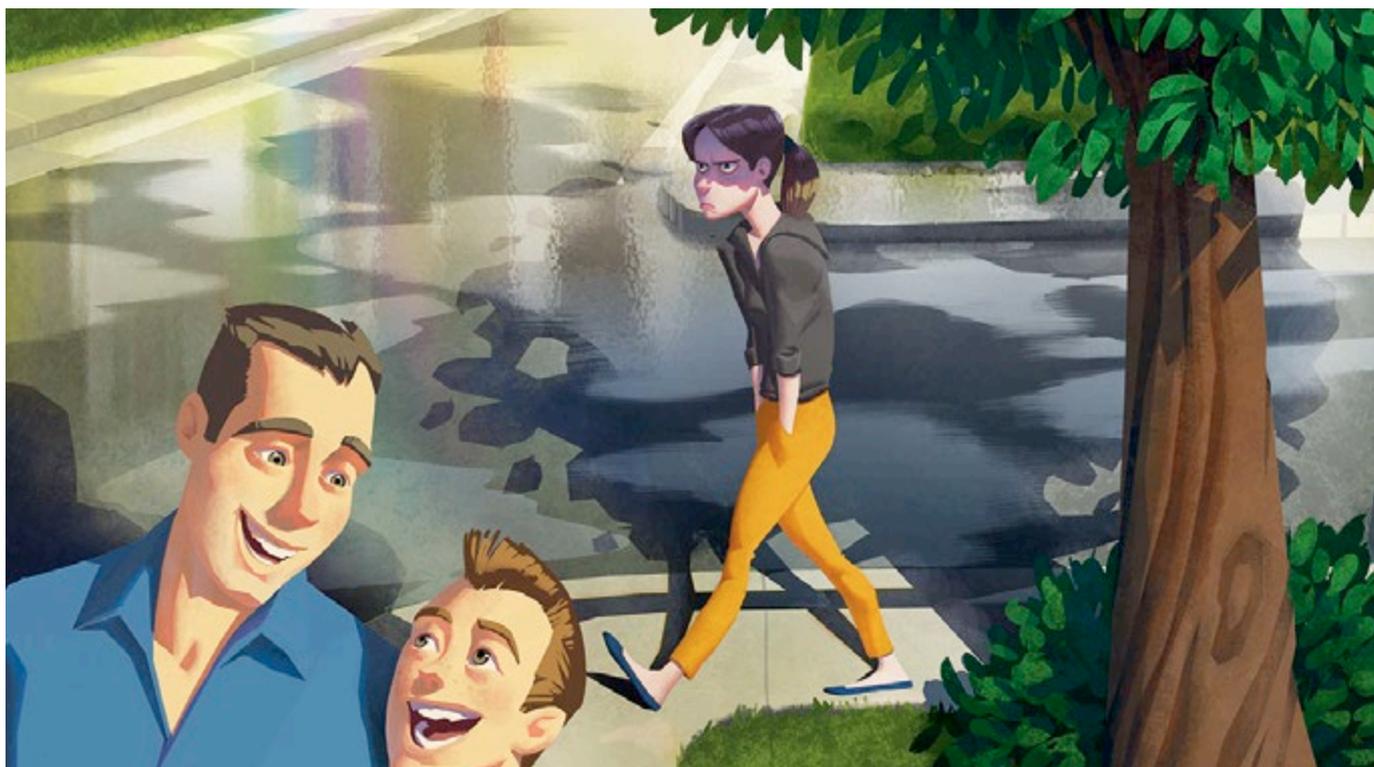
## UPCOMING QUESTION

"My parents just got divorced. I'm angry that they have broken up our family. How do I forgive them?"

Send your answer and photo by September 15, 2014.

Go to [newera.lds.org](http://newera.lds.org), click "Submit Your Work," enter your LDS Account, and then select "New Era."

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



## MISERABLE TO THE END OF THE STREET

**F**or one family home evening, my dad wanted to take advantage of a pause in the rainy weather to go on a walk around the neighborhood. I grumbled and complained that it was too wet and muddy to go walking. I used the excuse that I had a ballet recital that week and didn't want to sprain an ankle, but my dad didn't buy it. He insisted that it was going to be the activity for the evening. I murmured a bit more about the unfairness and my recital, but we left on the walk anyway.

As I glumly stomped outside for the walk with my family, I was determined not to smile or be happy. I succeeded in feeling miserable until

we reached the end of the street. Then we turned the corner and I saw, in full force, nature's beauty and wonder. Before me was a gorgeous sunset, and opposite it was a rainbow arching above our neighborhood rooftops. I immediately forgot all about being miserable and looked around in awe.

On the way home I said a prayer of gratitude, thanking God for the beauty of His creations. I later thanked my dad for choosing the activity and for allowing us to enjoy nature for that family home evening.

**Jennie H., North Carolina, USA**

## FORGIVING MY FRIENDS

**A**s the only member of the Church in my peer group, I've experienced some instances when my friends have offended me. Sometimes they judge and criticize my religion. I feel so alone, yet I'm thankful I know the standards of the Church.

If my friends offend me, I try to humble myself and avoid contention, because I know contention is evil. When they start discussing some matters about the Church, I just testify of my belief in the gospel.

I always forgive my friends with or without their apology. Forgiving is not just about saying, "Apology accepted," or, "It's OK," because forgiveness has a deep meaning: Jesus Christ atoned for our sins so that Heavenly Father can forgive us.

Even though my friends don't understand my faith now, I know that I can be God's instrument to teach them the gospel. I am helping them, and at the same time I am helping myself to grow spiritually and prepare to serve a mission.

*Joshua V., Philippines*

## A DIFFICULT DECISION

**A**s volleyball tryouts approached for my senior year in high school, I couldn't believe the thought that was running through my head: I wasn't supposed to play volleyball. I'd played volleyball since seventh grade—why should this year be any different?

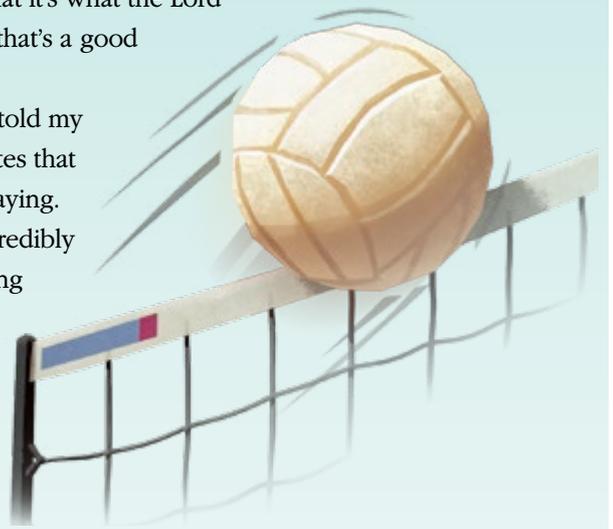
Not seeing the sense in quitting, I ignored the feeling and continued to participate in summer volleyball events. After a while the feeling came back, so I decided that if I really wasn't supposed to be on the team, my coach would just cut me during tryouts.

Then one night at the gym, I couldn't focus on the game at all. I felt terrible and restless inside. I came home frustrated with my team and with myself. I sat next to my mom and sister and cried. I told them how confused I was, and my mom told me to pray and ask Heavenly Father what He wanted me to do. I went up to my room and began to pray. I told Heavenly Father how I felt, then I asked Him to help me feel peace if I was not supposed to continue playing volleyball. I felt His peace in my heart and knew that I needed to quit.

I'm still not sure all the reasons why that was the right decision, but I know that it's what the Lord wanted me to do, and that's a good enough reason for me.

The next morning I told my coach and my teammates that I wasn't going to be playing. Even though it was incredibly hard, I knew I was doing the right thing.

*Klaire B., Arizona, USA*



## STANDARDS AND FRIENDS

**S**ince I've been in school, I've had friends who haven't understood the moral standards of our religion. At first it was difficult, but over time my friends have become used to the idea of my being morally clean. I made a goal in my life to be clean and pure, and it's worked out well, both for me and for those who used to criticize me. Over time, respect, peace, and joy have become a part of our loving circle of friends.

*Vitória M., Brazil*



By Elder Neil L. Andersen

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

## HOW TO BE WISE

In today's information tidal wave, we desperately need wisdom—wisdom to **sort through and discern** how to apply what we are learning.

Let's remember:

1. We must seek after wisdom.
2. Wisdom is multidimensional and comes in different sizes and colors.
3. Wisdom gained early brings enormous blessings.
4. Wisdom in one area may not be transferable to another.
5. Wisdom of the world, while in many cases very valuable, is most valuable when it humbly bows to the wisdom of God.

The scriptures describe two types of wisdom: the wisdom of the world, and the wisdom of God. The wisdom of the world has both a positive and a negative component. In the darkest description, it could be described as a partial truth, mixed with intelligence

and manipulation, to achieve selfish or evil purposes.

There is another kind of wisdom of the world that is not nearly so sinister. In fact it is very positive. This wisdom is consciously acquired through **study, reflection, observation, and hard work**. It is very valuable and helpful in the things we do. To good and decent people, it comes as we experience our mortality.

More importantly, the wisdom that brings success in the world must be willing to step behind the wisdom of God and not think that it can substitute for it. The wisdom of God is wisdom with a large W.

Not all wisdom is created equal. We need to learn that when there is conflict between the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God, that we must **yield our will to the wisdom of God**.

I suggest you take some of the issues facing you. Put a line down the middle of a paper. List the wisdom of the world on the left side and the wisdom of God on the right side. Write the issues in conflict one with another.

### What choices are you making?

In section 45 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which speaks of the events leading up to the Second Coming of the Savior, the Lord again tells the story of the ten virgins and then leaves us with these words: “For they that are wise [wisdom with a large W], and have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide,

and have not been deceived—verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day” (see D&C 45:57).

Let us **seek after the wisdom of God**. There is much we can learn right now about wisdom. I promise you that the Lord's blessings will attend you as you seek for wisdom, the wisdom of God. He is so anxious to impart His wisdom to us. And if we will be obedient and prayerful and seek after it, it will come. **NE**

*From a Brigham Young University–Idaho commencement address given on April 10, 2009.*

## HOW HAVE YOU APPLIED THIS?

“There are always two possibilities to choose. You can choose what you want. But you should decide wisely. I can say that choosing the Lord can help you through each day and having the Holy Spirit by your side can help you through each situation. Choosing the wrong side can lead to an unhappy feeling, a feeling that [will seem like] happiness for a short time but [afterward] you will see the consequences and you will bitterly regret the decision you have made. Stay on the Lord's side! It's not always easy, but it's worth doing!”

**Samuel J., Austria**



### Share Your Experiences

Share how you choose God's wisdom over the world's wisdom and read the experiences of other youth at [lds.org/go/wisdomNE8](https://lds.org/go/wisdomNE8).

YOU  
HOLD

»» in your hands ««

THE HAPPINESS

OF  
MORE PEOPLE

THAN YOU CAN NOW

IMAGINE....

... When you choose whether to make or keep a covenant with God, you choose whether you will leave an inheritance of hope to those who might follow your example.

President Henry B. Eyring  
First Counselor in the First Presidency  
April 2014 general conference

## WHAT'S ONLINE



### COMING UNTO CHRIST

If you're planning a camp or youth conference around this year's Mutual theme (Moroni 10:32), don't miss [lds.org/go/theme2014](http://lds.org/go/theme2014). See how other youth are coming unto Christ in "Come with Us" and "Strengthened in the Lord," and share what you're doing with those around you!



### NEW MUSIC DOWNLOADS

Tune in to some inspiration. Download free music from artists like BYU Men's Chorus, Mindy Gledhill, and Hillary Weeks. You'll find it at [lds.org/go/youthmusic](http://lds.org/go/youthmusic). New music is added regularly!

## MORE FOR SUNDAY LESSONS ON FAMILY



As you think about marriage and family this month, don't miss out on these videos and articles:

- "Shining Forth in the Family" at [lds.org/go/forthNE8](http://lds.org/go/forthNE8)
- "Why Temple Marriage?" at [lds.org/go/templeNE8](http://lds.org/go/templeNE8)
- Mormonad: "You're Covered" at [lds.org/go/coveredNE8](http://lds.org/go/coveredNE8)
- "More Than 'Just a Mom'" at [lds.org/go/momNE8](http://lds.org/go/momNE8)

THE CHURCH OF  
JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS