

SNIPPETS FROM THIS ISSUE

No dark dart of fear stands a chance when you are protected with the Lord's brilliant armor. —page 6 · I woke up the next morning with the terrifying realization that I had lost my friends. —page 19 · Ballet, as many dancers know, is a very fragile world. —page 25 · That's not all there is to say about pornography. —page 36 · I saw that there was much more to him than simply this ugly problem. —page 39 · Is competition a bad thing? —page 41 · It was a miracle—I hadn't put that money in my scriptures. —page 46 · It takes exactly as long to repent as it takes you to say "I'll change"—and mean it. —page 48



Cover: "The Pointe of Achieving Balance," p. 24 **Cover photograph:** Luis Pons

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WHAT'S INSIDE

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

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FEATURES

2 5 Ways to Conquer Fear I would like to address different types of fears and then suggest several ways to conquer them.

Elder Gary E. Stevenson

- 13 Showing Gratitude on the Sabbath Youth talk about how they give thanks on the Sabbath.
- 14 What God Wanted for Me Hear stories from youth who sought God's will and chose to follow it no matter what.



18 At a Crossroads with My Friends I finally realized how uncomfortable I was with my friends' behavior. Stephen W. Owen 21 Turn Your Life Over to God An inspirational poster with a quote from President Ezra Taft Benson.

22 8 Things Church Leaders
Have Said about You
Find out what Church leaders think of who you are
and what you can become.

24 The Pointe
of Achieving
Balance
A highachieving
ballerina keeps
gospel priorities
on center stage.

- **30** Find, Take, Teach Find out how to join the temple challenge.
- 32 Three Ways to Be Involved in Family History
 Youth share different ways they have engaged in family history.
- My Family Tree
 A young woman's project
 revealed some surprising
 connections.

35 Personal Progress on



36 Pornography's Innocent Victims
Find out what to do when a loved one is using pornography.









PLUS...

- 7 MORMONAD
- 8 FHE OBJECT LESSON
- 10 FOR THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH
- **40** LINE UPON LINE
- 41 TO THE POINT
- 42 QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
- **44** COME, FOLLOW ME CARDS
- 45 THE EXTRA SMILE
- **46** INSTANT MESSAGES
- 48 FROM CHURCH LEADERS
- 49 POSTER





By Elder Gary E.Stevenson Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

CONQUER No dark dart of fear stands a chance when you are protected with the Lord's brilliant armor.

ome years ago, I was in the mountains camping and hiking with my sons and friends. I wanted to head out on my own, so I informed the group of the terrain where I would be hiking and set off for the afternoon. As I enjoyed a beautiful, brisk, fall day, I hiked a considerable distance in just a few hours.

After a while, I determined I had better head back if I wanted to return to the campsite before dark. Too soon, however, darkness began to set in. I had a general idea where I was, and knew I couldn't be too far from the base camp, yet the darker it became, the more difficult it was to orient myself towards camp.

I stopped and tried to logically direct myself, which became more and more difficult in the dark. As my heart started to pound harder and my breathing began to increase, fear began to take over. I found myself walking faster, almost wanting to run, but without knowing which direction to head. Adrenaline coursed through my bloodstream. I realized I needed to take special care so as to not lose rationality or allow panic to overtake my emotions. This, unexpectedly, required considerable concentration.

By now it was dark enough and the temperature cool enough for me to know that our group would be comfortably settled around a campfire, and that if I found the right vantage point, the fire would be visible from a long distance.





It was with great relief that I spotted a golden flicker far off in the distance. Remarkably, this small speck of light provided the perspective necessary to immediately reorient myself and plot my return course. The fear that had been building inside of me dissipated faster than it came and was replaced with peace.

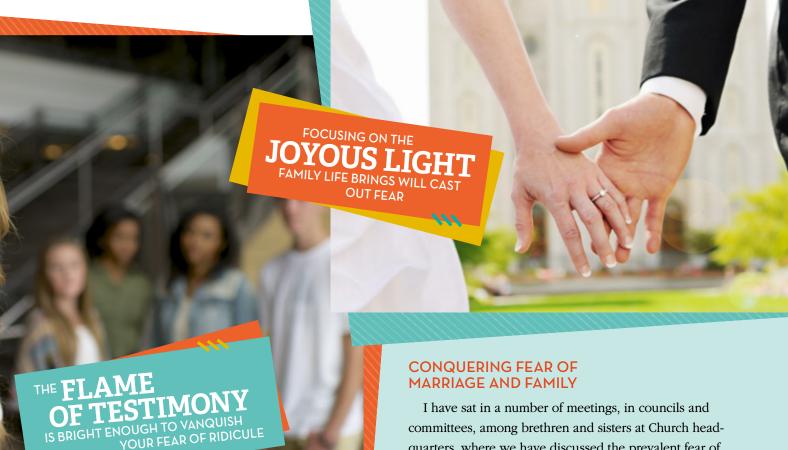
This type of fear is a normal part of life. In fact, many suggest it is a survival mechanism built into our DNA to protect us. I can rattle off a list of many common fears: fear of flying, fear of the dark, fear of heights, fear of spiders, fear of crowds, fear of closed-in spaces, fear of germs, and the list goes on. But I would like to address different types of fears, which hold more eternal significance, and then suggest several ways to conquer them.

CONQUERING FEAR OF FAILURE

A prevalent fear is the fear of failure. This fear can be so paralyzing that it prevents us from taking the bold actions necessary to succeed. Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook, said, "Don't let your fears overwhelm your desire. Let the barriers you face—and there will be barriers—be external, not internal. Fortune does favor the bold, and I promise that you will never know what you're capable of unless you try." 1

Now, I have a bit of bad news to share. If you take this advice and move forward with bold faith, you are most likely going to have a few failures in your life. You are going to take a few scrapes and bruises. There will be dark patches on the road ahead.

But you are sons and daughters of God. As such, you have an inexhaustible, divine source of strength burning inside of you. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, . . . and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7). "Wherefore, be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you" (D&C 68:6). Let the knowledge of who you truly are and who is on your side burn away your fear of failure. With God as your Father, no failure will be final.



CONQUERING FEAR OF RIDICULE

Today's cultural landscape is full of those who would mock and ridicule our beliefs. We worry that if we express our peculiar beliefs—and they are peculiar—that this will somehow become an embarrassment, or ultimately, a disadvantage in our relationships. But we shouldn't hide among the shadows, trying to blend in. "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (Matthew 5:14). Remember how far away I was from the campfire when I was lost, and how penetrating a single spark can be in the black of night.

It is more important than ever to be willing to express your values and beliefs—particularly in today's society, where people are stumbling around in the midst of darkness. You can express your faith with words, but especially by the way you live your life. "Be strong and of good courage" (Joshua 10:25). There are those out there who are hungry for the light of truth that you have. "Let your light so shine before men" (Matthew 5:16).

Remember that the flame of conviction, truth, and testimony inside you is bright enough to vanquish your fear of ridicule for your beliefs.

I have sat in a number of meetings, in councils and committees, among brethren and sisters at Church head-quarters, where we have discussed the prevalent fear of entering into marriage and starting a family. Many of you are worried about the economic and political climate we live in. You may worry that you'll need to finish school, or pay off debt, or buy a home, or establish your career before getting married and starting a family. For some, it is fear that marital bliss may not be so blissful, or even worse, that it could end in a divorce. Let me offer my perspective on these feelings.

Satan understands that the family is central to the Lord's plan of happiness. His strategy is to cast shadows of skepticism in your life. He is striving to sow the dark seeds of fear in your heart, anything to keep you from experiencing the most glorious, rewarding part of mortality: the bright holiness and happiness that comes from finding an eternal partner and bringing Heavenly Father's children into this world.

As you face the decision to start your own eternal family in the future, do not wait because you are afraid. Remember the scripture, "Be not afraid, only believe" (Mark 5:36). My marriage and family are the center of my life and are a literal personal manifestation of the great plan of happiness for me. I promise you that the same can be true for you. Focusing on the joyous light family life brings will cast out fear.



CONQUERING ADDITIONAL FEARS

In early General Authority training I received, I well remember these words from President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency: "Don't take counsel from your fears." These words have had a profound impact on my life. If I may, I would like to suggest two more ways you can conquer the fears I've already mentioned, and any others that may come your way.

First, armor up. I often stand in front of the mirror as I am preparing to begin the day and say aloud, "Time to buckle on the armor." I visualize myself putting on the armor of God, grasping in my hand a gleaming sword of the Spirit and safeguarding myself with a shining shield of faith. Brothers and sisters, make the daily choices that arm you with spiritual power. No dark dart of fear stands a chance when you are protected with the Lord's brilliant armor (see Ephesians 6:11–17).

Second, think more about the welfare of others than you think about yourself. Martin Luther King Jr. noted on the parable of the Good Samaritan: "I imagine that the first question which the priest and the Levite asked was, 'If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?' But by the very nature of his concern, the Good Samaritan reversed the question: 'If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?'" Dr. King understood that service and selflessness could eradicate fear.

YOU CAN CONQUER FEAR

And so we end where we began. Once again, out in the darkness, looking for the way back to camp, paralyzed by fear, and then rescued by the vision of a tiny spark of light—the fire of faith, the flame of testimony, the burning brilliance of divine strength, the shining gleam of spiritual armor, and the golden glow of selfless service. These will restore peace, provide direction, and eliminate fear. NE

From a BYU–Hawaii commencement address given on Apr. 18, 2015.

NOTES

- Sheryl Sandberg, commencement address at Barnard College, May 17, 2011, barnard.edu/ headlines/transcript-and-video-speech-sherylsandberg-chief-operating-officer-facebook.
- 2. Martin Luther King Jr., *Strength to Love* (1963), 20.

FIREPROOFING YOURSELF AGAINST NEGATIVITY

By Hadley Griggs

How just a little bit of "positive influence" can keep your day from popping.

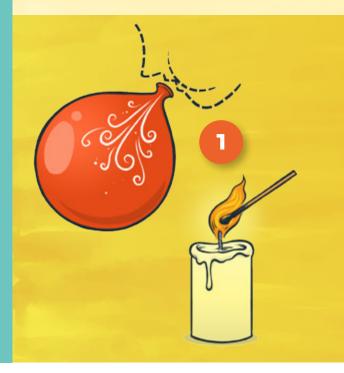
MATERIALS

- Two unfilled balloons
- Candle
- Match or lighter
- Some water



ome days, it can seem like everyone is against you—a friend at school spreads a mean rumor about you, your older sibling yells at you, and even when you look in the mirror you just don't feel your best. It's easy to get discouraged. But you are awe-some! President Thomas S. Monson tells us that "in this challenging world, the youth of the Church are the very best ever." And lucky for us, there are ways to protect ourselves from all that negativity! Use this fun experiment to see how.

- Fill one of the balloons with air and tie it off. Explain that the balloon represents one day. Now light the candle.
- The candle represents all of the negative things that people can say or do to us. And when you hold the balloon above the candle flame, it's as if you're exposing your day to all of the negativity that can and does bombard you. Lower the balloon closer and closer to the flame, and watch out—the balloon will pop! Explain that when we come into contact with negative influences, without the proper preparation and protection, it's very hard to stay positive, and we can feel like the day was terrible.





Now, take the second balloon. This balloon also represents one day. But before you fill it with any air, add a few ounces of water. The water represents all of the positive ways we can arm ourselves against negativity: we love our families, we pray daily, we remind ourselves of Christ's love, we serve others, we smile. Now, fill the balloon with air and tie it off. (Be careful not to let go before you tie it off, or you'll spray yourself with water!)

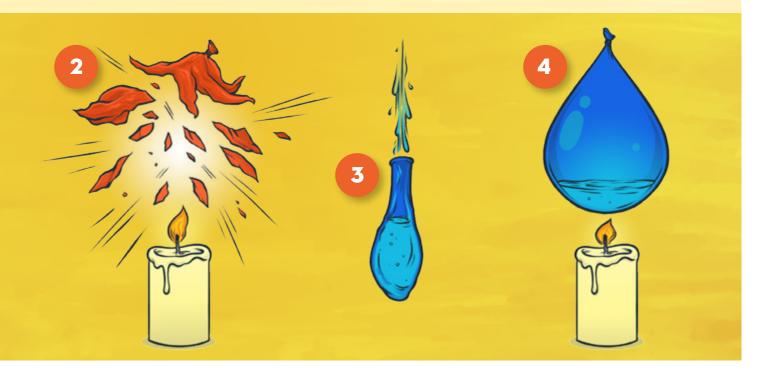
Hold this balloon above the candle. Now lower it down until it's touching the flame. Guess what? It doesn't pop! The water conducts the heat from the candle away from the latex of the balloon and protects it from popping. Cool! This shows us the way that our daily efforts to stay positive can protect us from letting the negative influences of the world ruin our day.

After your amazing trick, discuss with your family how you can all make goals to have the "water" necessary to protect your day from the candle flame. Consider the words of President Thomas S. Monson: "So much in life depends on our attitude. The way we choose to see things and respond to others makes all the difference. To do the best we can and then to choose to be happy about our circumstances, whatever they may be, can bring peace and contentment. . . . We can't direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails. For maximum happiness, peace, and contentment, may we *choose* a positive attitude." *NE The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

- Thomas S. Monson, "Constant Truths for Changing Times," Apr. 2005 general conference.
- 2. Thomas S. Monson, "Living the Abundant Life," Ensign, Jan. 2012, 4.
- 3. Jeffrey R. Holland, "Like a Broken Vessel," Oct. 2013 general conference.

Note: Severe depression is "more than mere discouragement" and won't go away if we "just square [our] shoulders and think more positively." We should "seek the advice of reputable people with certified training, professional skills, and good values [and] prayerfully and responsibly consider the counsel they give."





Caring for our bodies helps us to feel the Spirit, think and make good decisions, and serve those around us.

thletes know better than anyone that if you want your body to perform at its best, you need to take good care of it. Training for top athletes includes getting enough sleep, getting the right nutrition, and avoiding harmful things like drugs and alcohol.

But did you know that living that way can strengthen our spirits as well as our bodies? The body and the spirit are connected. It takes both of them together to become a living soul (see D&C 88:15). Caring for our bodies helps us to feel the Spirit, think and make good decisions, and serve those around us.

Satan wants us to believe that we can do whatever we want with our bodies with no consequences, but how we treat our bodies affects us physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

Here are just some of the ways we can strengthen our spirits by taking care of our bodies.









GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP

The scriptures tell us not to "sleep longer than is needful" and to go to bed early and "arise early, that [our] bodies and [our] minds may be invigorated" (D&C 88:124). When we don't get enough sleep, or get too much, our minds are often sluggish and distracted. A clear mind is important to receiving and understanding the promptings of the Holy Ghost. Getting enough sleep also helps our bodies have the physical strength to go throughout the day doing the things Jesus Christ wants us to do.

EATING HEALTHY

The Word of Wisdom, found in Doctrine and Covenants 89, tells us what we should eat and what we should keep out of our bodies. It teaches us to avoid overindulgence and make nutritional choices with "prudence and thanksgiving" (D&C 89:11). If we follow its principles, including

eating grains, meat, fruits, and vegetables in variety and moderation, we get the physical reward of being able to "run and not be weary, and . . . walk and not faint" (D&C 89:20). But we also get the amazing spiritual reward of "wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures" and the promise that "the destroying angel shall pass by [us]" (D&C 89:19, 21). By following the Word of Wisdom and eating nutritiously and wisely, we "gain the blessings of a healthy body, an alert mind, and the guidance of the Holy Ghost." ¹

EXERCISING REGULARLY

Regular exercise is also an important way to take care of our bodies. It has been shown to help with many emotional issues, including anxiety and depression, which can sometimes makes it harder to feel the Spirit. "As you do physical things, you train not only your body but also your







mind. Exercise strengthens emotional health."2 If we keep our bodies in good shape, we will also be more capable of serving those around us now and in the future on full-time missions. Jesus Christ does not want His disciples to be lazy or slothful.

AVOIDING ADDICTION

Drugs and alcohol inhibit our brain's ability to make good decisions, weaken our self-control, and make it difficult to hear the Spirit's promptings. They can lead to addiction and "destroy your mind and your body."3 Addictions "limit your ability to make choices for yourself." 4 Following the Word of Wisdom by avoiding drugs and alcohol, as well as tea, coffee, and tobacco, will allow you to "remain free from harmful addictions and have control over your life."5

REGULATING YOUR EMOTIONS

It's also important to be aware of your emotional health. It's normal to have discouraging, depressing, or anxious moments or days, but "if you have prolonged feelings of sadness, hopelessness, anxiety, or depression, talk with your parents and your bishop and seek help."6

FULFILLING YOUR POTENTIAL

In all areas of our physical health, we should "practice balance and moderation."7 Avoid extremes in diets or exercise that could harm your body. "Seek healthy solutions to problems. Do all you can to safeguard your physical and emotional health so that you can fulfill your divine potential as a son or daughter of God."8

Just like athletes know that taking care of their bodies doesn't guarantee a gold medal, we know that following the Word of Wisdom and other guidelines in the scriptures "does not promise you perfect health, but it teaches how to keep the body you were born with in the best condition and your mind alert to delicate spiritual promptings."9 NE

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

- 1. For the Strength of Youth (2011), 25.
- 2. Adrián Ochoa, "Be Strong, Be Healthy, Be Smart," New Era, Oct. 2013, 43.
- 3. For the Strength of Youth, 26.
- 4. For the Strength of Youth, 27.
- 5. For the Strength of Youth, 25.
- 6. For the Strength of Youth, 27.
- 7. For the Strength of Youth, 25.
- 8. For the Strength of Youth, 27. 9. Boyd K. Packer, Apr. 1996 general conference.

Participating in Church meetings shows gratitude since you are showing that you're glad to be there and thankful for the Sabbath day. The most important way to do this is to prepare yourself for the sacrament, to show the Savior that you're thankful for the Atonement and all that He did for us.

Read the scriptures, and read them like it's your favorite food and you want to savor each bite. When I read the scriptures slowly and really take in each word and try to understand its meaning for me, it helps me to be grateful as I feel the Spirit whisper to me that it's true.

> Nicolas H., 15, Utah, USA, from youth.lds.org

Focus on the Lord

and His work. Serve Him and study His word, and keep His day holy. We can show we are grateful for all He has given us by doing what He has asked us to do.

Sariah C., 13, Utah, USA

Do things that show you love the Lord, such as family history work, scripture study, spending time with family, anything that helps you think of Him. Try and avoid things that distract you from the purpose of the Sabbath day. The Sabbath is a day for us to renew our covenants through partaking of the sacrament and to remember Christ and His atoning sacrifice.

> Colby H., 18, Utah, USA, from youth.lds.org

Showing Gratitude

ON THE SABBATH

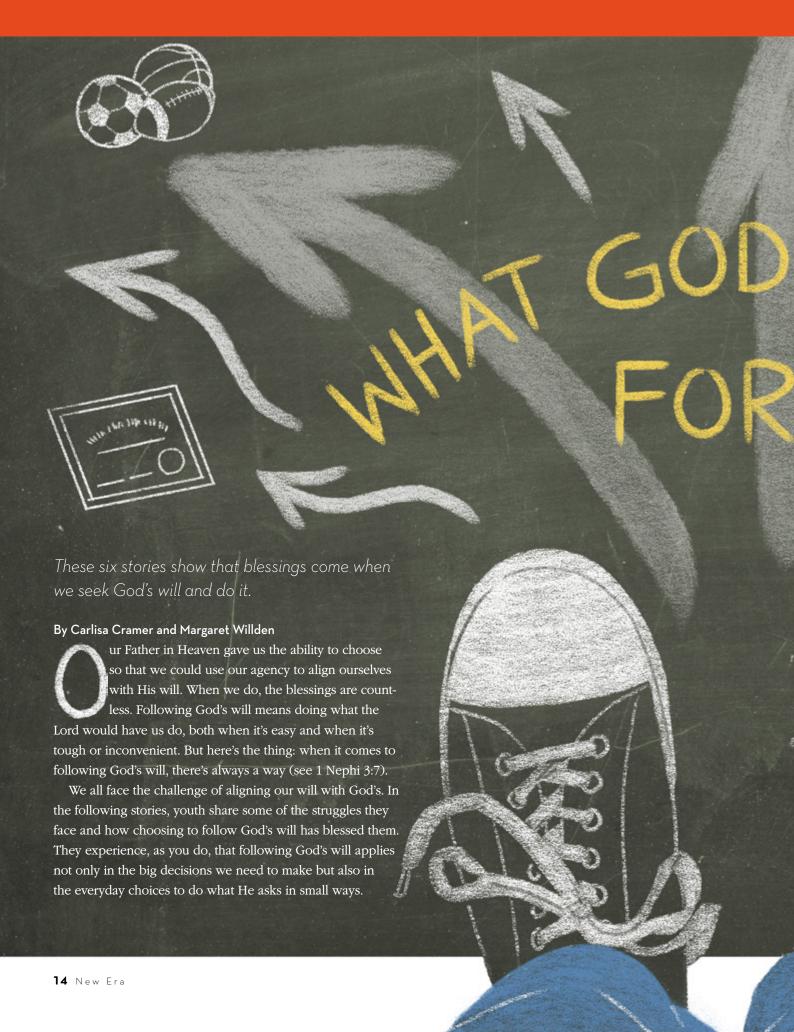
o you ever feel stretched to the breaking point with everything on your to-do list? That seems to be a common problem in our fast-paced world. And that's one reason the Lord gave us the Sabbath: to remember Him and to help us focus on what matters most.

While listening to the October 2016 general conference, Lexi N., 15, of Utah, USA, realized the importance of the Sabbath. "The talks on keeping the Sabbath day holy really impacted me," she says. "They taught me to worship the Lord on Sunday, not worldly things."

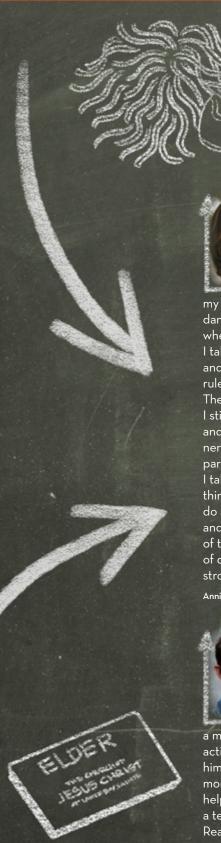
And Scarlett N., 15, of Idaho, USA, reports, "Elder J. Devn Cornish gave an amazing talk called 'Am I Good Enough? Will I Make It?' His talk inspired me to keep the Sabbath day more holy, and has helped me to understand that nobody is perfect. And by understanding that, it has helped me to focus on how I can be better myself. It has really helped with my Sabbath day."

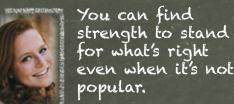
When we think of all the Lord does for us, spending the Sabbath serving Him makes the day refreshing and a delight (see Isaiah 58:13), and we are grateful to Him.

For additional ideas on showing gratitude for the Sabbath, see lds.org/go/80ldeasNE217 and lds.org/go/FSOYsabbathNE217.









I'm on a cheer-dance team at my school, and they're known for doing some dance moves that aren't very appropriate. So when I joined the squad last year, my mom and I talked with one of the school administrators and asked if they would enforce the school rules that didn't allow inappropriate behavior. They said they'd try to enforce the rules better. I still had to go up to my coach a couple times and talk with her about it. That was really nerve-racking, but I'd always talk with my parents and pray about it beforehand. After I talked with my coach, I knew I did the right thing, even though it wasn't the cool thing to do and some of the girls still don't understand and think it's weird. But in the end, I was proud of the decision I made. I was glad that instead of doing what was popular, I chose to stay strong in what I believed.

Annie B., California, USA



You can increase your desire to follow the Savior.

My brother is a big role model for me, so when he decided he wanted to serve

a mission, I decided I was also going to take action to strengthen my own testimony to help him prepare. I started reading my scriptures more and paying more attention in church. It's helped me so much, and I've been able to gain a testimony. I now know the Church is true. Reading my scriptures every night has also made my days better and has made me want to read more and pray more to continue strengthening my testimony.

Chase G., Utah, USA



You can find an appreciation for the opportunities that God has given you to grow.

When seminary started my freshman year, I was pumped and ready for it—but that excitement lasted probably about a week and a half. By then I was just tired, and I was going to bed late and waking up so early. Every morning, I just thought, "This is such a bummer." And even though seminary was held at my kitchen table in my own home, I didn't want to go. It was becoming such a burden for me.

Eventually I said to myself, "Why am I even going? I don't need to go!" But then I decided to change my attitude. I started writing down something I'd learned every morning, and I did that for the rest of the year. At the end of the year, I read the things I'd written. Going to seminary and writing down insights every day helped me appreciate seminary and have a stronger testimony of the gospel—especially when I read through all of it and realized how much I'd grown.

Annie P., Texas, USA



You can feel peace in making decisions.

When the mission age changes were announced, I felt excitement reverberate throughout the

meetinghouse where I was watching it. Yet when I considered serving a mission, I felt hesitant and knew I needed to truly ponder the opportunity. Soon after graduating high school, I realized I could start my mission papers and began to feel that almost every lesson in church focused on either missionary

work or discovering the will of the Father. The Spirit was prompting me to seek answers to my questions concerning a mission.

I began to pray for courage to accept God's will for me. I can't pinpoint the exact moment of decision, but after studying the scriptures, continuing to pray for guidance, talking with my parents, and pondering in my heart, I felt that serving a mission was not the right path for me. I inquired of the Lord to receive confirmation of this choice and was blessed with peace.

Katie G., Idaho, USA



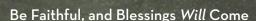
You'll find that the Lord has better things in store for you.

At school, all of my friends were causing drama. They

were fighting with each other, lying, and back-stabbing. They tried to make everyone choose sides. There was a lot of conflict. I became very confused, so I turned to God by praying and fasting. I came to the conclusion that I needed different friends—friends who wouldn't put me in difficult situations. But I was so afraid. I didn't know how I could get new friends. But the more I thought about it, the more confident I felt that I could find new friends and move on.

I received answers in different ways. My family gave me advice. I also tried hanging out with new people and realized that I felt different with them. Since then I've been happier and more joyful. I've discovered more friends who help me feel great. I believe that when we follow God's will, we can receive greater blessings and do greater things. Everything will work out in His plan.

Mekeli H., Colorado, USA



We're each different, so each of our experiences in aligning our will to the Lord's may be different, too. But no matter what, if we choose to trust in the Lord and act on what He's asked of us, we will be blessed. Sometimes we don't see immediate blessings, but as Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, "Some blessings come soon, some come late, and some don't come until heaven; but for those who embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ, *they come*." The Lord knows what we want, but He also knows what we *need* in order to help us grow and become better people. And we don't have to do it alone—we can trust Him, and He will lead the way. **NE**

The authors live in Utah, USA.

NOTE

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, Oct. 1999 general conference.



By Stephen W. Owen Young Men General President

hen I was 14, I made a decision friends. That is that changed everything. I was middle: I four that changed everything. I was we usually did.

Walking down the street with some friends to my friends on a Friday night, and I knew friends on a Friday night, and I knew friends a problem, and I knew something about it. I just wasn't smoking.

But tonight there was a problem, and I knew friends had I was smoking with cigarettes and alcohol.

I had to do something about it. I just wasn't somoking with cigarettes and alcohol.

Sure I could.

For the Past couple of years, my friends had I was started experimenting with cigarettes and alcohol.

Started experimenting with cigarettes and alcohol.

Started experimenting with spriday came, they regulated experimenting with a single street when we were out alone.

It was slow at first, just a once or twice sort of they regulated experimenting with a started experimenting with cigarettes and alcohol.

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The made a decision of them. That is a started to my friends had to my friend

something wasn't right with my friends. And my friends could tell that my parents didn't approve of them. That left me in the uncomfortable middle: I found myself repeatedly defending my innounce. I would my parents and defending my parents friends to my parents and defending my parents So there we were that Friday night, walking down the street. My friends started drinking and smoking, and I finally realized how uncomfortable I Was With their behavior. So I made a choice. to my friends. I walked to the other side of the road. My friends laughed at me. They called me a "goody-goody." And they said that if I stayed over Well, We got to the end of the road. My friends there, I wouldn't be their friend anymore. wen, we gove and I turned right. I Was two miles

dean, I course, my Parenny friends. Of course, my Parenny friends.

helped each other go on missions. When we got back, We were college roommates. We helped each other find the right Women to marry and kept each other on the strait and narrow path all the way to the temple and after. All these years later, We're still good (3.2 km) from home, and they were the lonfriends. And it all started with a simple gest two miles I'd ever walked. You might think I would feel good about making such a phone call, right when I needed it. courageous choice, but in that moment, I felt awful. I woke up the next morning with the terrifying realization that I had lost my friends A Mother's Influence At least, that's how I thought and that I was now alone. For a 14-year-old, it had all started. Imagine my surprise when, years later, I found out that it was my that was devastating. mom, working behind the Not too many days later, I got a phone I found myself call from a member of the Church I knew scenes, who had orchesnamed Dave. He asked if I wanted to come to repeatedly A New Friend his house on Saturday night. He also invited trated our friendship! defending my me to join his family for dinner the next day. Soon after I lost my friends to It sounded like a lot more fun than I was currently having with no friends, so I agreed. old friends, she my parents noticed something and defending

my parents

to my friends.

think that maybe—just maybe—things were Dave and I became best friends. We played football together, Went to school together,

Dave and I had a good time together

getting better.

and, of course, there were no cigarettes or

alcohol. As Histened to Dave's dad say the

prayer at dinner, I felt so good. I began to

was wrong with

me, so she



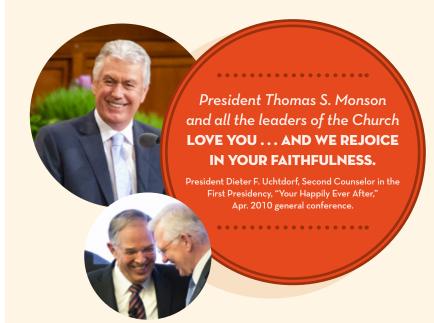
"Men and women who turn their lives over to God will discover that He can make a lot more out of their lives than they can. He will deepen their joys, expand their vision, quicken their minds, strengthen their muscles, lift their spirits, multiply their blessings, increase their opportunities, comfort their souls, raise up friends, and pour out peace. Whoever will lose his life in the service of God will find eternal life." President Ezra Taft Benson (1899-1994), "Jesus Christ–Gifts and

Expectations," Ensign, Dec. 1988, 4.





Prophets and apostles love you and have confidence in you.



Yours is a **CHOSEN GENERATION** of destiny.... ... You are His son or His daughter. HE MADE YOUR SPIRIT STRONG AND CAPABLE of being resilient to the whirlwinds of life.

> Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2014 general conference.



WE ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE RISING GENERATION TO SEE THEIR OWN POTENTIAL TO BUILD **GREAT SPIRITUAL STRENGTH....**

Of all the help we can give these young people, the greatest will be to let them feel our confidence that they are on the path

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "Help Them on Their Way Home," Apr. 2010 general conference.

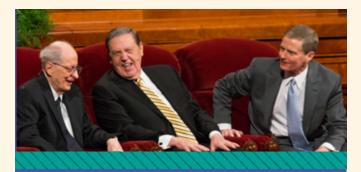
We have great confidence in you.

You are beloved sons and daughters of God and **He is mindful of you.**... It is our fervent prayer that you will remain steadfast and valiant.

"Message to the Youth from the First Presidency," For the Strength of Youth (2011), ii-iii.

You have come to this earth at a glorious time.
THE OPPORTUNITIES
BEFORE YOU ARE
NEARLY LIMITLESS.

President Thomas S. Monson, "May You Have Courage,"
Apr. 2009 general conference.



I want to say to ... the vast majority of the youth of the Church whom I meet around the world how **extraordinarily proud we are of you....**

... I wish to raise my voice in **praise** of you, to **express** my **love**, my **encouragement**, and my **admiration** for you....

... Your Father in Heaven ... knows what you can become through faith in Him. ... [You] are empowered through obedience to

become a rightful heir in His eternal kingdom."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Oct. 2005 general conference.

I want you to know that President Monson, his counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and the leaders of this Church love you immensely. I can only imagine the love that Heavenly Father and our Savior have for you is so great and so complete—but I want you to know that we love you.

Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Face to Face with Elder Rasband, Sister Oscarson, and Brother Owen," Jan. 2016, lds.org/youth/activities.

As "youth of the noble birthright" ["Carry On," Hymns, no. 255], you are literally sons and daughters of God, born at this particular time in the world's history for a most sacred purpose.

... YOUTH OF THIS CHURCH ARE TO BE STANDARD BEARERS OF THE LORD AND BEACONS OF LIGHT TO ATTRACT OTHERS TO HIM. YOUR IDENTITY AND PURPOSE ARE UNIQUE.

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "What Will You Choose?" *Ensign*, Jan. 2015, 31.



HOTOGRAPHS BY MARK DAVIS, LUCKYLEO/HEATHER WALKEF IND COURTESY OF JENICA B.

JENICA'S SCHEDULE BARELY GAVE HER TIME FOR WHAT SHE NEEDED. BUT WITH A FOCUS ON PRIORITIES, LIFE GAVE HER EVEN MORE OPPORTUNITIES THAN SHE EXPECTED.

By Bethany Bartholomew

Church Magazines

t had been a rough freshman year of high school. Jenica B., 17, of Illinois, USA, had ballet training, demanding high school courses, and Church and family responsibilities that were all competing for her attention. She was running on four to five hours of sleep, and it was exhausting. Jenica and her parents all knew something needed to change.

"I would love to have a professional career in ballet," Jenica says, "but ballet, as many dancers know, is a very fragile world, and it's very difficult."

Jenica wanted to keep training her hardest, but she also knew she wanted to make her education a priority. "We'd heard of other dancers who had done online school," she says. "I knew that we had to find a program that would be perfect for me."

So her mom found an accredited online school program that would allow Jenica to participate in extracurricular activities, and prepare for college while maintaining a rigorous ballet training schedule. And she'd have time for homework, scripture study, and rest. They jumped on the opportunity.

"That was truly a blessing," Jenica explained. "That was when I started training [in ballet] in Chicago, and I was still able to attend seminary. And I got so much more time to be with my dad because he also works in the city. I was even blessed with incredible opportunities to share the gospel with friends who were curious. It was a really good experience."

SHARING WITH FRIENDS

Some of Jenica's opportunities to share the gospel have come when dancing has taken her away from home. She has found ways to maintain her standards and even to share her beliefs with friends. One summer, she was able to attend summer ballet trainings in both Arizona and New York City. While in New York City, she posted a picture of the Manhattan New York Temple





on social media. She also likes to post dance images on social media with an inspiring quote from a Church leader or an uplifting thought.

"We can all use social media to spread the gospel," she says. "It doesn't have to be a big post about everything. It can just be a simple something that sparks interest or hope in somebody." In the end, she says, "other people will be grateful for our courage to share in such a public space."

Sharing with her friends and maintaining those friendships has helped Jenica to maintain her standards as well. "They're very respectful of my beliefs," she says, "and I'm grateful for that, because it makes it easier for me to live them."

FINDING THE BALANCE

Even with Jenica's new schedule and new opportunities, balancing all of her responsibilities isn't easy. She attends early-morning seminary, catches some time with her dad on the train into Chicago, trains in ballet for the day, and then focuses on homework, scripture reading, and Church activities in the evening.

So how does she do all of it? "It's very difficult," Jenica says. But through all of her scheduling and organizing, she asks a simple question: "What do I want most at the end of the day? Because at the end of the day I want to be the best at ballet that I can be but also maintain my schoolwork and be able and prepared to go to college when the time comes, and so it's a sacrifice now."

She adds, "I had a ballet teacher who stressed that we need to put God and our families and our education first and then ballet, because ordering our priorities that way truly helps us focus on what is most important in this life. Having incredible examples like my ballet teacher and the people who guide the Church has helped me understand how to make this happen."

STANDING UP AND STANDING OUT

One thing Jenica has decided to keep high on her list of priorities is keeping her standards. Fortunately, most studios she has worked with have asked ballet students to maintain modest dress standards, making it easier for Jenica to uphold her own standards. But outside the studio, she says people notice a difference in what she wears.

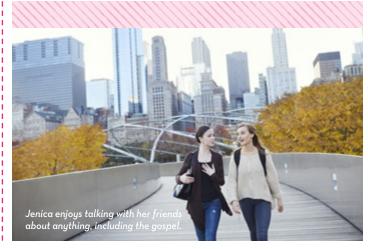
"My friends do ask, and I've told them what the Church standards are that I hold, and they definitely think that it's interesting, but they see where I'm coming from and where my beliefs are coming from so it tends not to be a problem."

And people notice differences besides the clothing Jenica chooses to wear.

"People have definitely mentioned to me how they know people in the

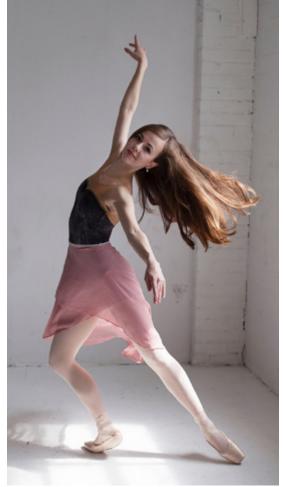


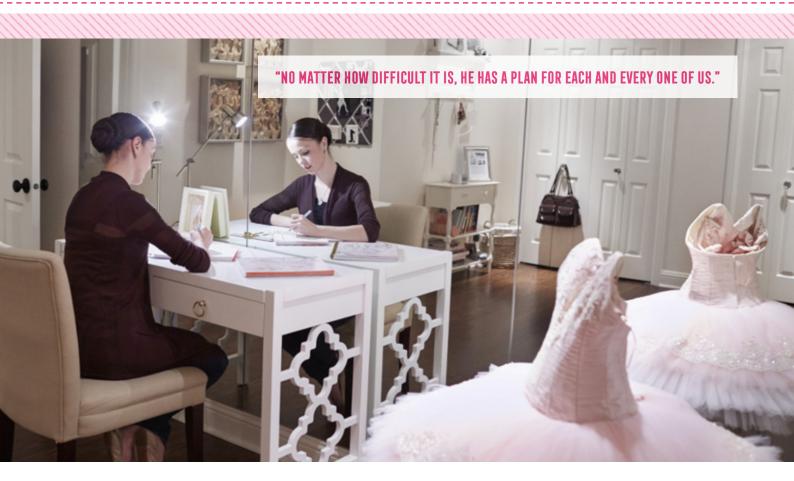






Church and they're just very happy—they live happy lives—and they notice the light that we share even if we don't think that other people are watching. They notice differences. They notice when we choose to not use certain language. They notice when we choose not to use things that would be harmful to us, and for the most part they definitely value our strength to stand for what we believe in."





A PASSION FOR SERVICE

Jenica has also found many opportunities to make service a priority in her busy schedule. For her online school's National Honor Society program, she worked at the bishop's storehouse and with an international organization to earn service hours. And when she was working toward earning her Young Women Honor Bee, she found a way to incorporate her passion for dancing in her community efforts. She started volunteering for two hours on Saturdays to teach ballet to inner-city children.

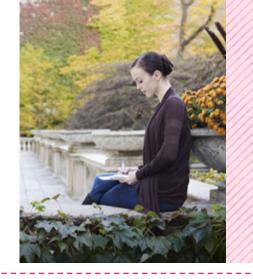
"I've come to realize my passion for service," she says. "I love feeling like I can make a difference in the world. Even here in Illinois, when I assemble food packs, I can help someone all the way across the globe—and with my own hands. And it helps me realize—even though I don't know them—the love that God has for His children."

KEEPING PERSPECTIVE

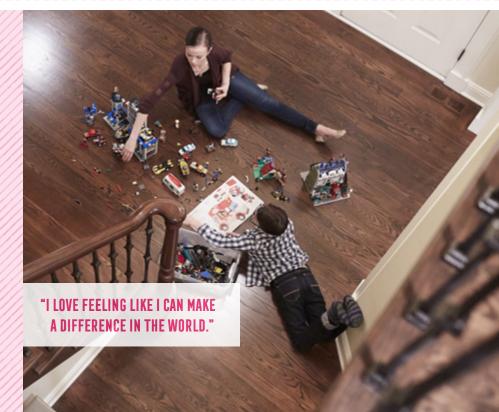
Through all of her experiences in dancing, finding service opportunities, sharing the gospel, and organizing her responsibilities, Jenica has found a great appreciation for the things that matter most in life.

"There are things that we value in life and that we want to pursue, and I know that Heavenly Father will provide a way for us to do that if we continue to keep our faith in Him," she says. "Sometimes we can lose our sight on what's truly important and we lose sight of how much He has helped us in these things that we've been trying to achieve." Jenica says she's learned that "some things don't go the way that we planned, but no

matter how difficult it is, He has a plan for each and every one of us and if we truly pray and ask Him for help, He will provide a way for us to achieve what we want to if it's in His plan for us. And we just have to wait and be ready to accept what He wants us to do." NE









ARTIST RENDERING OF THE LISBON PORTUGAL TEMPLE

New Era Staff

lder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has invited the youth to "prepare as many names for the temple as baptisms you perform in the temple, and help someone else to do the same." Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles also promised that participating in this Apostolic challenge can bring spiritual protection and healing for families. ²

Think about it—Apostles of the Lord have encouraged everyone to join in family history work by taking their own family names to the temple. Wouldn't it be great if every ordinance you performed in the temple was for your own family? Elder Andersen has invited youth around the world to do just that *and* to help friends and family do the same.

As you accept this challenge, you can feel the Spirit, increase your testimony, and enhance your temple experience. Not sure how to start? Let's break the challenge down step by step:



"You are sons and daughters of God, children of the covenant, and builders of the kingdom. You need not wait... to fulfill your responsibility to assist in the work of salvation for the human family."

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Oct. 2011 general conference.

FIND

First, find names to take to the temple and add them on **FamilySearch.org**. If you have over four generations complete, try FamilySearch's Descendancy view. Or if your family tree is pretty empty, you can start by checking out **FamilySearch.org/findnames**.

TAKE

After reserving and printing the ordinances through FamilySearch.org, then, with a recommend, you can take the names to the temple for baptisms and confirmations! Invite endowed family or friends to complete the rest of the ordinances, or submit them to temples through FamilySearch to have the work done.

TEACH

Share the joy of family history with those around you! Have a family history night with your friends, or sit down with your parents and siblings and fill out your family tree together. You can share your experience on social media using #TempleChallenge.

A CHALLENGE MET

"I'd heard the promises and blessings that would be given to me if I accepted the temple challenge, and so I decided to put those words to the test. I strongly felt the Spirit and I knew that on the other side of the veil, other spirits were just as excited."

Wesley R., France

Are You Ready?

No matter your experiences with family history, there are many ways that you can participate in the challenge. Think about how you can help the Lord's work move forward today. **NE NOTES**

- 1. Neil L. Andersen, "Sharing the Temple Challenge" (address at RootsTech conference, Feb. 14, 2015), lds.org/topics/family-history.
- 2. See Dale G. Renlund, in "Opening General Session" (address at RootsTech conference, Feb. 6, 2016), lds.org/topics/family-history.

Accept, accomplish, and share the challenge at **templechallenge.lds.org**. Share your experience with #TempleChallenge. When you discover your family's story, you learn about yourself in the process.







THREE **WAYS**

TO BE INVOLVED IN **FAMILY HISTORY**

By Sally Johnson Odekirk Church Magazines

hen Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, "Your fingers have been trained to text and tweet to accelerate and advance the work of the Lord—not just to communicate quickly with your friends," he was talking about you! He then said, "I encourage you to study, to search out your ancestors, and to prepare yourselves to perform proxy baptisms in the house of the Lord for your kindred dead" (Oct. 2011 general conference).

Thousands of young men and young women all over the world have accepted his invitation to search out their ancestors and perform proxy baptisms for them. One young woman, Kaitlen D., discovered that when she takes family names to the temple, it becomes a more meaningful experience.

She says, "When I began doing family temple ordinances, I realized that in the midst of the raging world that I live in, the only time I was able to be still and settle myself was within the walls of that holy place. I also began to feel closer to those on the other side of the veil. When performing the baptisms and confirmations, I began to think of all those people who had been waiting for so long for this to happen. It's a nearly indescribable feeling—full of love and hope—that has increased my testimony so much."

There are many different ways to get involved in family history and temple work, so where do you start? Three youth share their experiences of learning about family stories, interviewing family members, and finding family names to take to the temple.

My Ancestors Are Good Examples to Me

By Kyle S., Texas, USA

y parents and I listened to Elder Bednar in the October 2011 general conference when he said that working on family history would give us protection against the adversary. We started working on our family history then. I keep learning and growing from family history; it's really fun.

I like finding out about where I'm from and about my ancestors. I learn from their experiences and use them in my life to help me be a better person. It's amazing to discover who they were, what they did for a living, what life was like, and how hard it was for them.

For example, I enjoyed learning about one of my ancestors who moved with his family from Tennessee to Texas, USA, in the 1870s to be a cattle rancher. He faced many challenges in his life, and from him I learned that life can be hard, so it's important to stand up for what you believe.

When I have challenges in my life, working on family history makes me feel like my ancestors are always with me and will help me through hard trials, just as Elder Bednar promised us.

How to Find Your Family Stories

Collect stories of what your ancestors liked to do.

Help make your ancestors come alive and find common ground with them. What sports did they play? What foods did they eat? What was their school like?

Talk to your parents and grandparents about stories from their lives. You can use the Church's *My Family* booklet to get started with gathering and sharing family stories. On FamilySearch.org, you can add photos, stories, sources of information, audio recordings, and documents to help others in your family get to know your ancestors. Visit FamilySearch.org and click "Memories" to get started.



HOW FAMILY HISTORY CHANGES US

"When our hearts turn to our ancestors, something changes inside us. We feel part of something greater than ourselves. Our inborn yearnings for family connections are fulfilled when we are linked to our ancestors through sacred ordinances of the temple."

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2010 general conference.



Recording My Grandparents' Stories

By Matias M., Utah, USA

y grandparents live in Uruguay. When my maternal grandparents visited my family, I took the opportunity to interview them and learn about their story of how they became members of the Church. I had never heard their story before, so hearing the story from my grandparents was truly an amazing experience.

I took notes while interviewing them, and I also recorded them using my phone so that I could listen to it whenever I want to hear it again. I uploaded that audio file to FamilySearch so that others could benefit from listening to their story, both now and in the future.

A few months later I was able to record and upload an interview with my paternal grandparents. I learned so much that I hadn't known before, and they told me a lot more about their lives than what I expected.

It was so great to hear my own grandparents tell their story and to listen to some advice they had for me. I know that having just taken a few minutes to do these interviews will help me to "persuade [my] children . . . to believe in Christ" (2 Nephi 25:23) as the prophet Nephi in the Book of Mormon did for his descendants. I know that when my children hear my grandparents' testimonies, their testimonies will be strengthened also.

How to Interview Family Members

For a ward or branch activity, you and the other youth could interview older family members. Think of a question or two that you would like to ask your parents, grandparents, or other relatives. Then sit down with them, ask them a question about their lives, and film or record it on your phone. When you are done, you can upload it to the memories section of FamilySearch.org.

My Goal: Take 10 Family Names to the Temple

By Rajane S., Jamaica

have always been fascinated by genealogy work, so when our Area Presidency gave the youth the goal of gathering 10 ancestors' names to do baptisms and confirmations for them at the temple, I was ecstatic.

I started my research without any help, but I wasn't getting anywhere. I had three names without any information, and at that point I felt stuck both spiritually and physically. I decided to ask my mother for help. She suggested that I call her mother. When I called my grandmother, she was more than happy to help. She even gave me permission to act as proxy on behalf of the names we talked about. I was overjoyed and grateful.

The temple trip was approaching, and I had no names from my father's side. A few hours before I was to leave home, I felt impressed to go to the cemetery and have my father call his aunt to come. We went to the cemetery, and as I watched my father and great-aunt walk around the cemetery, I felt myself being led toward some of my ancestors' headstones. I felt their willingness to be part of the gospel. With help from the Holy Ghost and from my family members, I had reached my target. I had the names of 16 temple-ready ancestors!

When I went to the temple, I could feel the enthusiasm and excitement of my ancestors who were ready and waiting. During the baptisms and confirmations, I could feel their souls filled with joy and peace. I felt amazing, and all I wanted to do was thank them for giving me the opportunity to be a part of something so special. NE

How to Find Your Family Names for the Temple

Try the Descendancy view at FamilySearch.org to help you look for ancestors who need to have their temple work done. Then take the youth temple challenge: see page 30 in this issue.



Personal Progress on MY FAMILY TREE

My brother and I are the only members of my family in the Church—at least that's what I thought before beginning my family history work.

By Raisa Marcondes

had always procrastinated doing my genealogy. But my desire to serve a mission led me to set goals to help prepare myself to be a better missionary. With the help of an inspired bishop, I decided to begin working on Personal Progress. In order to accomplish certain goals and good works projects, I needed to become involved in genealogy. So I went to work.

I know the Spirit guided me, because one Sunday night, after only three hours of work, something amazing happened.

As soon as I began, I remembered that my great-great-grandfather had been the governor of the state of Amazonas, Brazil. So I typed his name into an online search engine, and to my surprise, I found a Wikipedia page about both my great-great-grandfather and my great-great-grandmother! I immediately recognized in them talents and gifts I have, and emotion began to well up inside me. But there was still much more to discover.

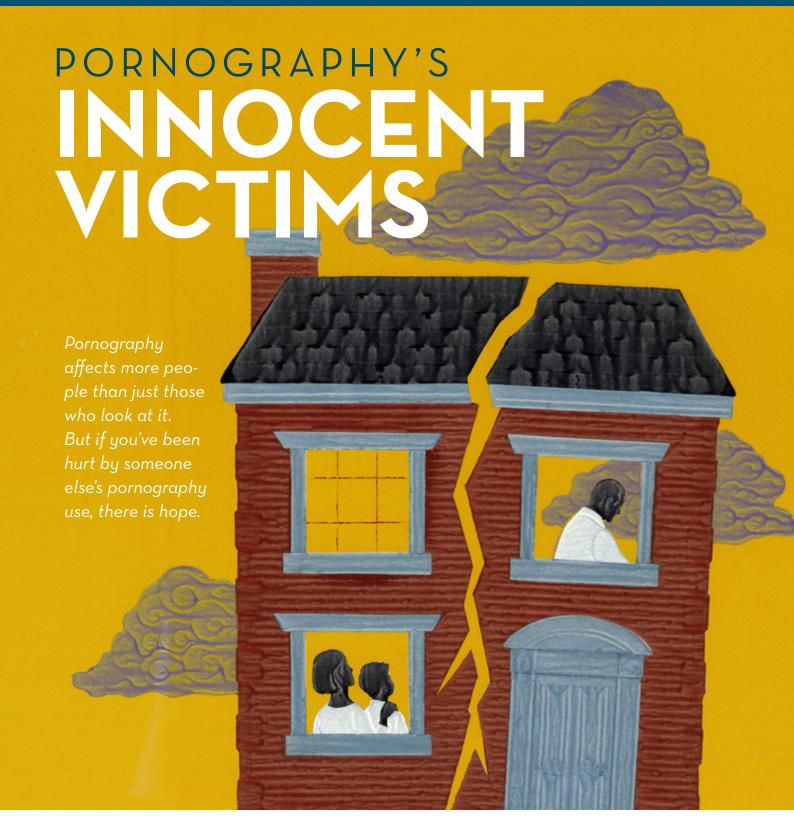
Looking through the links on the page, I noticed one of them said "family tree." I clicked on it, and I found branches of my family I'd had no idea even existed. But what most caught my attention was the name of my great-aunt, Rosalina Meireles, who apparently lived in Utah, USA.

I was astonished. I thought only my brother and I were members of the Church. Could there really be other Church members in my family? When I clicked on her name, I saw a link to a Facebook page, so I contacted her. Within two days I received a message from her, confirming that we were related and that she too was a member of the Church.

I felt immensely grateful to Heavenly Father for allowing me to feel such great joy as I felt in that moment.

I continued searching for my deceased ancestors, and Heavenly Father blessed me with so many family names that I could take to the temple. But He also helped me find living family members who are faithful in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. And I owe it all to Personal Progress, family history work, and my desire to serve a mission. **NE**

The author lives in Manaus, Brazil.



any of you feel that you've heard more than enough about pornography already. You feel you've heard every possible variation of "Stay away! It can ruin your life!" and "If you're caught in its snare, all is not lost!"

Of course, these messages are repeated often because they're important. But that's not all there is to say about pornography. There are many innocent people who suffer from someone else's pornography use. Here are a few things you can do to find support, help, and healing.

WHAT TO DO WHEN A PARENT IS USING PORNOGRAPHY

Recognize that there is hope.

Never give up. There is always hope. The situation you're in isn't easy, but it isn't hopeless—for you or for your parent. People in such situations often feel and express a sense that it can never get better. That just isn't true. People have come through experiences like the one you and your parent are going through. It may take time and tears, but it can get better.

Learn ways to respond appropriately to the person's pornography use. Keep all doors of communication open. Let them know how you feel and how it's affecting you, but don't express shock or anger when you find out that a parent has been viewing pornography. Express love. Don't condemn the person.

Don't feel ashamed—it's not your fault or burden to bear.

You are not in control of your parent's pornography use, so don't burden yourself with feelings of responsibility, shame, or guilt. You can love, support, and help them in their recovery, but the outcome will be determined by *their* choices.

Find out how to be supportive but also set appropriate boundaries. Although it's important that your parent knows that you'll support and help them it's also important that they know what your limits are. Set boundaries so that they know what they can reasonably expect from you in terms of your investment of time, effort, and emotional energy. Doing so will help keep you sane and safe.

Find someone you trust whom you can talk to. If someone in a family is viewing pornography, children often feel like they're sworn to secrecy about it, particularly if it's a parent. But everyone needs someone to talk to. Your other parent, your bishop, another Church leader or teacher, a counselor, or even a very trusted friend can help comfort you in your anguish and perhaps offer advice.

Learn how to help make your home a safe place to talk about these things.

When people in your home talk about sex and pornography, speak calmly.

Allow people to express

themselves without feeling judged. Be sincere in your expressions of love and support. And offer forgiveness when problems are being appropriately dealt with.

Remember that Heavenly
Father loves you. Even
though you are in a time of
trial—and perhaps because
you are in a time of trial—
your Heavenly Father
has not forgotten you but
will bless you with what
you need to get through.
Remember this, and trust
in His love.

Remember that Heavenly
Father loves them. Your
parent's poor decisions
and unrighteous actions do

not disqualify them from Heavenly Father's love. The Savior said that the Good Shepherd is especially interested in saving the one lost sheep who has strayed from the ninety and nine (see Luke 15:1–6). It will be difficult, but your parent can repent. When they do, there will be joy in heaven (see Luke 15:7).

Pray to Heavenly Father for your parent and for hope and healing to come to you. Your Father in Heaven does hear your prayers. Remember your parent in your prayers, and also remember your own need for healing, guidance, peace, and strength. NE

WHAT DO I SAY TO MY BROTHER, SISTER, COUSIN, OR FRIEND?

If you discover that a loved one your age (a brother, sister, cousin, or friend) is viewing pornography, let them know you love them. In a kind and loving way, let them know that they need to quit and that complete repentance and healing are possible. Tell them that they need to talk to their parents, their bishop, or another trusted adult to get help. If they refuse to do so, let them know that because you love them, you will help them get help by talking to someone for them.



For a spouse and family support guide and more, go to overcomingpornography.org/spouses-and-families.



Name withheld

y father is a good man. But when you're 12 and you find pornography hidden in a remote file folder on your father's computer, your emotions get sliced open. I felt like it would be difficult to see him in the same way again.

Two years later, when I was 14, I was looking through the computer's history files and again stumbled upon a few websites he had viewed and was forced to admit that maybe my father had a problem. I knew I had to talk to my mother.

She and I were driving together in the car when I blurted it out.

To my astonishment, she was not surprised.

She sighed. "Your father's been struggling with this for a while now," she said. "He'd told me he'd stopped, but I guess not."

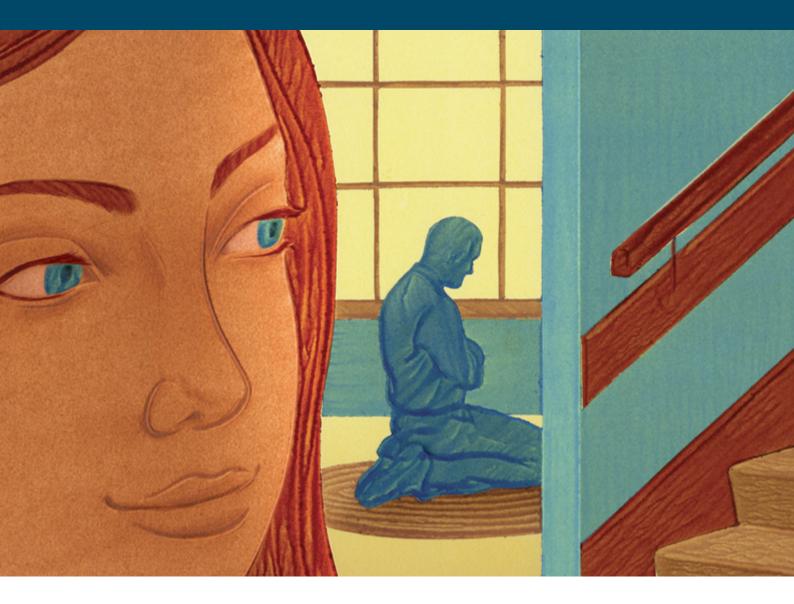
When we got home, I watched as she typed a letter

to my father explaining what I had told her. After that, I tried to put it out of my mind again.

My father and I argued bitterly during my early teen years. I didn't trust him, I didn't like him, I didn't respect him. I mistakenly thought, "Nobody else's dad looks at pictures like that. He must be a bad person."

It escalated when I was 15. Sometimes I would come into the room and glance at his computer screen and see that a pornography site was minimized to the task bar. He would pretend to have been playing a game of solitaire. I watched as my father didn't take the sacrament, and I listened as my mother explained how my father had finally been convinced to go to the bishop. I felt burdened by humiliation.

What I didn't realize at first, of course, was that these were incredibly wonderful steps on the path to full repentance. I later stumbled once or twice upon



my father deep in fervent, aching prayer. This image is burned into my brain just as deeply as that file I'd found when I was 12.

At 16, the problem had not gone away. Once, I was doing homework late at night and overheard my mother sobbing and shouting at my father.

I crept back to my room, knowing from my father's silence that he was suffering. I felt his remorse radiate through the house, as well as his sense of helplessness.

My brother and sister knew nothing about it, and I wanted it to stay that way. The only thing they knew was that sometimes, especially when Mommy wasn't home, Daddy would come out of his room in an awful mood.

My father was trying. The bishop sent him to a support group for men with problems like his. I had learned to respect him again, learned how, on the good weeks when we read scriptures as a family every morning and

he whistled hymns, to like and even love him again. I saw that there was much more to him than simply this ugly problem. I learned to let him ask me about school without turning it into an argument. I learned to pray for him.

Good men can do wrong things. My father gives a generous fast offering, he's always willing to lend a helping hand, he serves in his Church calling readily, he never swears or speaks vulgarly, but most of all he wants to be better. He knows that what he's done is wrong, and he is hopeful that he will change.

To anyone else in my situation: Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and He will carry you through. He will carry you through not only if you're the one who struggles under the burden of sin, but also if you are the one who stands by, watching as the one you love fights for salvation. **NE**

1 Corinthians 10:13

The Apostle Paul taught us how we are able to bear temptation.



TEMPTATION

"The adversary . . . knows where, when, and how to tempt us. If we are obedient to

the promptings of the Holy Ghost, we can learn to recognize the adversary's enticements. . . .

"Our success is never measured by how strongly we are tempted but by how faithfully we respond. We must ask for help from our Heavenly Father and seek strength through the Atonement of His Son, Jesus Christ."

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2009 general conference.

GOD IS FAITHFUL

Faithful—trustworthy, loyal. We can trust God's promises that He will help us bear and escape temptation.

A WAY TO ESCAPE

There's always an escape—another choice, another place to go, another thing to do. When all else fails, follow the example of Joseph of Egypt and just run away (see Genesis 39:7-12).

ABOVE THAT YE ARE ABLE

We should try to avoid temptation. Sometimes we make it harder on ourselves by not rejecting temptation as soon as it arrives. As Elder Neal A Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, "Of course Jesus noticed the tremendous temptations that came to him, but He did not process and reprocess them. Instead, He rejected them promptly. If we entertain temptations, soon they begin entertaining us!" (Apr. 1987 general conference).

13 There hath no temptation ataken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be btempted above that ye are able; but will with the ctemptation also make a way to descape, that ye may be able to ebear it.

COMMON TO MAN

We may all have different temptations, but all are tempted. Temptation is necessary, for "it must needs be that the devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be agents unto themselves" (D&C 29:39).

ABLE TO BEAR IT

The scriptures give us some keys to help us in our responsibility to avoid temptation so we can bear it:

- Watch and pray always (see Matthew 26:41; Alma 13:28; 31:10; 34:39; 3 Nephi 18:18; D&C 31:12).
- Rely on Jesus Christ (see Alma 37:33), because "in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:18; see also Alma 7:11).
- "Humble yourselves before the Lord" (Alma 13:28) and "beware of pride" (D&C 23:1).
- "Hearken unto the word of God, and . . . hold fast unto it" (1 Nephi 15:24).

Editors' note: This page is not meant to be a comprehensive explanation of the selected scripture verse, only a starting point for your own study.

How can I know if something I hear is "official doctrine"?

This question can sometimes take some work to answer, but you have the tools to do it. If you wonder if a statement is official doctrine, try to find out where it came from. Is the idea in the scriptures? Has it been taught by the living prophets and apostles? Has it recently been officially published by the Church (such as in general conference, manuals, magazines, and Church websites)? If the answer to each of these questions is no, you can probably safely conclude that it's not official doctrine.

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, don't stop there. Keep comparing the statement to the scriptures and other official sources. For instance, don't assume that a statement made one time by a past or current Church leader is official Church doctrine. Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has given us a good rule of thumb on this: "The doctrine [of the Church] is taught by all 15 members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve. It is not hidden in an obscure paragraph of one talk. True principles are taught frequently and by many. Our doctrine is not difficult to find" (Oct. 2012 general conference). NE



Is competition a bad thing?

ike so many things, competition can be either good or bad, depending on how you approach it. It's bad if you define it as "seeking to humiliate and destroy others" or "obsessively comparing myself to others" or "placing winning above everything, including my character, integrity, love of others, and covenants with God." But it can be good if it's about coming together with others to bring out everyone's best or have harmless fun. When it's done in the right spirit, it can make winning and losing less a matter of ego and can help you take joy in the accomplishments of others (as well as yourself).

Whether it's sports, board games, a dance contest, or any other endeavor, healthy competition can sometimes enhance the experience for everyone. Unhealthy competition, on the other hand, can make everyone miserable. You can usually tell which is which by the spirit that accompanies it. (See 2 Corinthians 10:12–13.) **NE**

"How do I make time for Church activities, family home evening, and scripture study when homework takes so much time?"

magine eating nothing but ice cream every day. Sounds pretty great—until your body doesn't feel so good. But can you be healthy by eating only broccoli? No, good health requires a balanced variety of foods.

Now think about the many activities in our lives. Our spirituality, relationships, and education are all key to our growth. So how do you prioritize the important things?

Look at what's most important to you right now and pray to know what to focus on. Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles encourages, "Keep foremost in mind the sacred covenants you have made with the Lord as you write down your daily schedules." Everything works out when you put the Lord first.

Remember that "some things are better, and others are best." 2 Seek the Holy Ghost to help you decide what is most important. You might comfort a crying sibling before doing homework, but going to Mutual may come before seeing a movie with your friends. You might also identify distractions in your life. How about spending time with the scriptures before your Facebook friends?

Above all, don't forget to rely on the Lord for energy so that you can "walk, and not faint" (see Isaiah 40:31).

- 1. M. Russell Ballard, Apr. 1987 general conference.
- 2. Dallin H. Oaks, Oct. 2007 general conference.

Just Do It

If you just say, "Oh, I'll do it when the time comes," Satan will tempt you to never do it. Put time aside to do these spiritually uplifting activities, even if it means turning down other activities. Allison R., 20, Utah, USA

Make Time for Things That Matter

If we can't make time for the gospel, it means that we are doing too much and need to cut back a little bit. We need to plan activities around the gospel and our duties. This way we will have time for the gospel and the things that truly matter.

Noah H., 13, Arizona, USA



Study Scriptures First

I do scripture study before doing homework. When you do

scripture study before your school studies, you'll be more awake, and you'll retain more of the information. With the weekly activities, you just need to plan those into your week first—then squeeze in everything else around them.

Elder Clark, 20, Chile Concepción South Mission

Plan Your Time

It hasn't been easy planning my time as a student. But I drew a timetable

to plan my weekly activities, which involves classes, morning devotionals with my roommates, personal scripture study, institute classes, and others. I also place them on a scale in order of importance. Planning my activities helped me overcome procrastination.

Daniel A., 19, Edo, Nigeria



Remember the Eternal Things

I try to remember my mom's words: we should give priority

to eternal things, which last forever (unlike temporal things, which only last for a while). I have learned that when I give priority to God, all other things fall into the place where they ought to be. I am sure that when we do God's work, God will help us do our work.

Vaishali K., 18, Andhra Pradesh, India

Work Smart

When I get home from school, I do my homework assignments so that I will not get behind and so I will have more time for Church activities. One thing that also helps is when my mother makes up a schedule with time slots for each thing that I will do every day. That makes it easier for me to participate in activities, do homework, and read the scriptures.

Rachel O., 13, São Paulo, Brazil

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Create a Schedule

When you first wake up, you can read your scriptures, even if it is just a few verses. That

might mean waking up five minutes earlier to read your scriptures. For family study, set a time with your family during which you can all take a break from what you are doing and study together. As for youth activities, the time is already set, so just go and bond with the youth in your ward. *Elena F., 15, Idaho, USA*



Put the Lord First

Learning to set priorities helps us have time for everything we need to do, mainly for the

things of the Lord. One of my main priorities was to attend seminary every day. If I attended seminary in the morning and then went to school, the day seemed to have more than



THE SOURCE OF STRENGTH

"Strength comes not from frantic activity but from being settled on a firm foundation of truth and light. It comes from placing our attention and efforts on the basics of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. It comes from paying attention to the divine things that matter most."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "Of Things That Matter Most," Oct. 2010 general conference.

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24 hours. Schoolwork was easier, and reading the scriptures personally and as a family became a delight. Remembering to put the Lord first in our lives helps us see everything else with a new perspective and helps us set priorities and reach our goals.

Bianca S., 19, Paysandú, Uruguay

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

UPCOMING QUESTION

"How can I ask my friends not to talk unkindly or inappropriately about others?" Send your answer and photo by March 15, 2017.

Go to newera.lds.org, click "Submit Your Work." Sign in with your LDS Account and then select "New Era" under "Choose Magazine." Click "Add File" to select your file and photos, and then click "Submit" to upload and send us your file.

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



The Plan of Salvation

Knowing that our Heavenly Father has a plan for our happiness is central to what we often call an eternal perspective. At the October 2016 general conference, many speakers taught us important principles related to that plan. For instance:

- "The Perfect Path to Happiness," by President Thomas S. Monson
- "O How Great the Plan of Our God!" by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf
- "To Whom Shall We Go?" by Elder M. Russell Ballard
- "The Doctrine of Christ," by Brian K. Ashton
- "The Master Healer," by Carole M. Stephens
- "The Great Plan of Redemption," by Linda S. Reeves

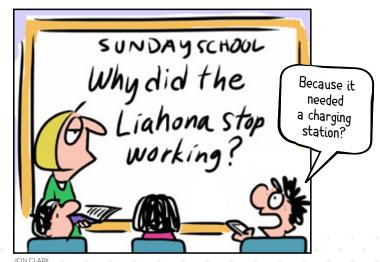
Find these and more at **conference.lds.org**.

Share These Cards
Give yourself an easy reminder to think about this month's theme. Just place these cards in your scriptures, locker, or bedroom. You can also download or share them online at lds.org/go/cardsNE217.



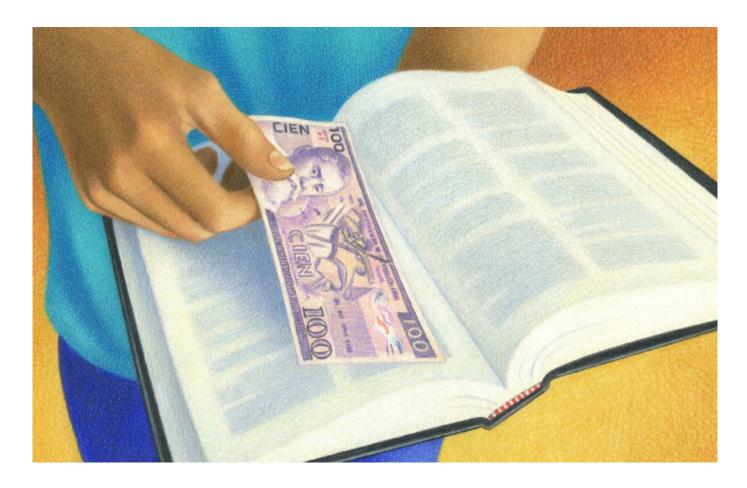








ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF



THE MIRACLE OF TITHING

had been a member of the Church for only one month when I paid my first full tithe. I was the only member in my family, and tithing was complicated for my family to understand. My mother discouraged me from paying tithing and wanted me to give her the money instead.

One day before work, I realized that there was no food in the refrigerator and I'd have to buy something to eat. I didn't have any money with me, so I asked my mom to lend me money for lunch. She refused and said I didn't have money because I had paid my tithing.

I went to get my Book of Mormon and told her that this book would give me my nourishment for the day-my spiritual nourishment. I opened it in front of my mother and found 100 pesos (enough to buy some lunch) tucked inside. It was a miracle—I hadn't put that money in my scriptures. I learned a great lesson: although challenges and temptations are everywhere, I will always be blessed as I pay a full tithe and keep the commandments.

Montserrat L., Culhuacán, Mexico

TIME FOR THE TEMPLE

my first temple recommend. I'll never forget that first temple experience. The peace I felt was so unique. Though my home in southern Taiwan was four hours from the temple, I decided to go once a month on our stake temple day. I went even if no one could accompany me.

Soon I started inviting my Church friends to go with me. Though they didn't show much interest at first, now they go every month. Many people in the ward also started going to the temple. Now no matter how often our ward plans a temple trip, many people come—more than our stake has ever seen before.

Soon after my decision to attend monthly, my family decided to go every month. Even if we have tests at school the day after our temple day, my family and I attend regularly. I've been frequently attending the temple with my family for seven years now. The temple is the house of the Lord, and we know the importance of going to the temple.

Sister Liu, California Fresno Mission

GETTING BENCHED

or most of the four years I played high school basketball, I'd been a starter and never missed a game. So when my coach told me that I wasn't doing enough for the team and wouldn't be starting the next game, something inside me broke. I'd been benched.

Trying not to cry, I ran out of the gym and, for the first time in my life, felt like giving up. And right then, for some reason, the word *fortitude* came to mind.

Fortitude means "courage in pain or adversity." I lifted my head. Fortitude. No one was asking me to do this alone. Hands shaking, I opened my phone and searched the lyrics to "Come, Come, Ye Saints" (*Hymns*, no. 30). As I read the words, I felt I was being gently reminded of two things.

First, the lyrics ask, "Why should we mourn or think our lot is hard? 'Tis not so; all is right. Why should we think to earn

a great reward if we now shun the fight?" And I remembered to be grateful.

Then, second, I read, "Gird up your loins; fresh courage take. Our God will never us forsake; and soon we'll have this tale to tell—all is well! All is well!" And I remembered to be brave.

Grace H., Utah, USA



SHARE MY TESTIMONY?

ne day while studying the scriptures, I felt impressed to share my testimony at the upcoming fast and testimony meeting. I'd thought about doing it before, but I hadn't since I was really young.

When fast Sunday came, I passed the sacrament and felt the impression even stronger than before. I knew it was the Spirit telling me to bear my testimony. But then thoughts began flowing into my mind, like "You're too nervous," "You can do it next month," and "What will people think of you?"

I was about to give in to my doubts and remain seated when my uncle handed me a small piece of paper and whispered, "This is from your aunt."

Written on the paper was the oneword question "Testimony?" I immediately decided to do it. When I spoke, I wasn't even nervous because I felt the Spirit so strongly. I was also happier and felt more grateful after I went up. The Spirit really does work through other people to help us.

Jordan B., Utah, USA



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

HOW TO CHANGE

hen you have sinned and recognized the seriousness of your mistakes, your most crucial challenge will be to believe that you can change, that there can be a different you. To disbelieve that is clearly a Satanic device designed to discourage and defeat you. Repentance is not a foreboding word. It is, following faith, the most encouraging word in the Christian vocabulary. You can change! You can be anything you want to be in righteousness.

If there is one lament I cannot abide, it is the poor, pitiful, withered cry, "Well, that's just the way I am." If you want to talk about discouraging attitudes, that is one that discourages me. Please spare me your speeches about "That's just the way I am." I've heard that from too many people who wanted to sin and call it psychology.

And I use the word sin to cover a vast range of habits which bring discouragement and doubt and despair.

You can change anything you want to change and you can do it very fast. It is another Satanic falsehood to believe that it takes years and years and eons of eternity to repent. It takes exactly as long to repent as it takes you to say "I'll change"—and mean it. Of course there will be problems to work out and restitutions to make. You may well **spend**—indeed, you had better spend—the rest of your life proving your repentance by its permanence. But change, growth, renewal, and repentance can come for you as instantaneously as it did for Alma and the sons of Mosiah.

Do not misunderstand. Repentance is not easy or painless or convenient. It can be a bitter cup from hell. But only



Share Your Experiences Share how you have found the faith to make needed changes in your life and read the experiences of other youth at

Satan would have you think that a necessary and required acknowledgement of sin is more distasteful than permanent residence in it. Only he would say, "You can't change. You won't change. It's too long and too hard to change. Give up. Give in. Don't repent. You are just the way you are." That, my friends, is a lie born of desperation. Don't fall for it. NE

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on March 18, 1980.



WHAT'S ONLINE



FAITH in the Plan

It's easy to talk about the plan of salvation, but when real tragedy strikes, it can be hard to have faith. In this video, one family holds fast to the plan of salvation to remember what it means to be together forever and how that can comfort them now. Watch "We're Still a Family" at Ids.org/go/planNE217.



LOVE at Home

We all know the hymn "Love at Home"—but you probably haven't heard it like this! Check out this version of the hymn "Love at Home" sung by LDS artists in the Philippines.

GOING FORTHOne by One

When Christ came to the Nephites, He invited them to come and see Him (see 3 Nephi 11). The Nephites came up "one by one"—and Christ recognized each of them individually. He loved them personally.



