

FEBRUARY 2018

THE

New Era



THE
SKINNY
LEG
SLEDDOGS
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REMEMBERING
PRESIDENT
THOMAS S.
MONSON
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PEACE
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FROZEN
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EXTRA EXTRA SMILE!



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

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THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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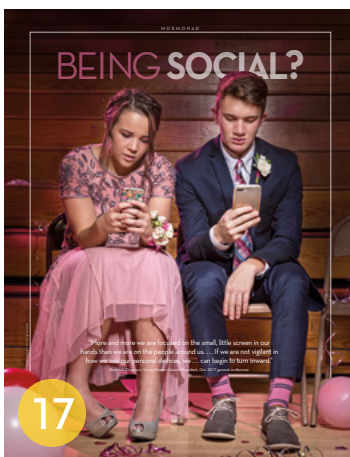
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An Example of OBEDIENCE & LOVE

PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON, 1927-2018



We will remember President Monson as someone whose sense of duty and love moved him to serve God and his fellowmen.



President Thomas Spencer Monson had a contagious, grinning smile, and he loved to make others laugh. But one of the most memorable things about President Monson was his storytelling. The stories he shared from his life gave us a glimpse of who he was: an obedient servant, an example to others, and a man dedicated to service.

1. An Obedient Servant

At the age of 22, President Monson was called as the bishop of the ward he grew up in. He had only been married for 18 months and was trying to move forward with a new job. Obviously, he was in a very new, busy stage of life! Yet he obediently accepted the call and “[trusted] in the Lord with all [his] heart” (Proverbs 3:5).

As bishop, President Monson learned the importance of obeying the Spirit. After failing to act on a prompting to visit an elderly ward member in the hospital, he was devastated to discover that the ward member had died calling his name. In that moment, he promised God he would always follow the Spirit, wherever it led him.¹ Because of his obedience, he was a blessing and a miracle in the lives of many.

2. An Example to Others

Wiggling his ears? During general conference? Yep. President Monson once did it to stump a young boy who was copying his every movement during a stake conference—and then he demonstrated his ear-wiggling skills again during general conference! Even though President Monson didn’t

realize it at first, he was being an example, just in the way he was sitting and moving.²

President Monson was an example in other ways as well. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared that President Monson was “like young Nephi in his humility and in his faith. In all that he . . . successfully accomplished, he [was] resolute in his commitment to ‘go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded’ (1 Nephi 3:7).”³ He was willing to stick to his beliefs at

“MAY WE EVER
CHOOSE THE HARDER
RIGHT INSTEAD OF THE
EASIER WRONG.”

navy boot camp, even when he felt alone.⁴ While visiting Louisiana for a stake conference, he was willing to rearrange his schedule and drive 80 miles to bless a 10-year-old girl who was sick with cancer.⁵ He followed the example of the Savior by following the Spirit and submitting himself to Heavenly Father’s will.

3. A Man Who Served with Compassion

President Monson dedicated his life to service. He often went out of his way to help others. As a boy, he frequently delivered hot meals to his lonely neighbor, “Old Bob.”⁶ As a young bishop, he visited all 84 widows in his ward every Christmas season.⁷ And on one birthday as the prophet, when he was asked what the ideal

birthday present would be from members of the Church, he said he wanted members to find someone they could serve.⁸ He strove to love others as Jesus Christ does, for “love is the very essence of the gospel.”⁹

Remembering President Monson

“For more than half a century, President Monson [gave] the suits off his back to the destitute. He . . . sat at the bedside of the ill and elderly. . . . He [would] go to someone in a wheelchair who [had] a hard time coming to him, ‘high-five’ a group of teenagers, and wiggle his ears at deacons on the front row. He [exhibited] great reverence for the lives of those he [described] as ‘unnoticed and unrecognized,’ known to few but their Father in Heaven.”¹⁰

We will always remember President Monson as the 16th President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. But more than that, we will remember him as a man who obeyed the Lord’s will, stood as a valiant example, and lovingly served all of God’s children. **NE**

More in This Issue

For information about President Monson, go to pages 45, 48, and 49 of this issue.

NOTES

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, “President Thomas S. Monson: Man of Action, Man of Faith, Always ‘on the Lord’s Errand,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1986, 11.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Examples of Righteousness,” Apr. 2008 general conference.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Man of Action, Man of Faith,” 11.
4. Thomas S. Monson, “Dare to Stand Alone,” Oct. 2011 general conference.
5. Jeffrey R. Holland, “President Thomas S. Monson: In the Footsteps of the Master,” Supplement to the *Ensign*, June 2008, 11.
6. Jeffrey R. Holland, “In the Footsteps of the Master,” 4.
7. Jeffrey R. Holland, “In the Footsteps of the Master,” 9.
8. Thomas S. Monson, “What Have I Done for Someone Today?” Oct. 2009 general conference.
9. Thomas S. Monson, “Love—the Essence of the Gospel,” Apr. 2014 general conference.
10. Heidi S. Swinton, “Have I Done Any Good in the World Today?” *Ensign*, Mar. 2012, 37.

JESUS CHRIST OUR SOURCE OF PEACE



**By Elder M. Russell
Ballard**

Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

AT THE END OF A FULL DAY of teaching and instruction, the Lord suggested to His disciples that they cross to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

While they were sailing that night, “there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

“And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

“And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm” (Mark 4:37–39).



*Peace for our troubled hearts
comes to us only as we follow
the Light of Christ.*



Can you imagine what the Apostles must have been thinking as they watched the very elements—the wind, the rain, and the sea—obey their Master’s calm command? Although they had only recently been called to the holy apostleship, they knew Him and they loved Him and believed in Him. They had left their work and their families to follow Him. In a relatively short period of time, they had heard Him teach incredible things, and they had seen Him perform mighty miracles. But this was beyond their comprehension, and the looks on their faces must have shown it.

“And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

“And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” (Mark 4:40–41).

In turbulent and sometimes frightening times, the Savior’s promise of infinite and eternal peace resonates with special power to us, just as His ability to calm the crashing waves must have profoundly affected those who were with Him on the Sea of Galilee that stormy night so long ago.

FINDING INNER PEACE

Like those who were alive at the time of His mortal ministry, there are some among us who look for physical peace and prosperity as signs of the Savior’s wondrous power. We sometimes fail to understand that the

AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER,
I BELIEVE EVERYONE
YEARNS FOR THE “PEACE
OF GOD, WHICH PASSETH
ALL UNDERSTANDING”
(PHILIPPIANS 4:7).

everlasting peace Jesus promises is an inner peace, born in faith, anchored by testimony, nurtured with love, and expressed through continual obedience and repentance. It is a peace of spirit that echoes through the heart and the soul. If one truly knows and experiences this inner peace, there is no fear from worldly disharmony or discord. One knows deep down inside that all is well as far as the things that really matter are concerned.

There is no peace in sin. There may be ease, popularity, fame, and even prosperity, but there is no peace. “Wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10). One cannot be at peace if one is living a life out of harmony with revealed truth. There is no peace in being mean-spirited or contentious. There is no peace in vulgarity, promiscuity, or permissiveness. There is no peace in addiction to drugs, alcohol, or pornography. There is no peace in being abusive to others in any way, whether it be emotionally, physically, or sexually, for those who are abusive will remain in mental and spiritual turmoil until they come to Christ in all humility and seek forgiveness through complete repentance.

At one time or another, I believe everyone yearns for the “peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (Philippians 4:7). That peace for our troubled hearts only comes to us as we follow the Light of Christ, which is “given to every man, that he may know

THE EVERLASTING PEACE JESUS PROMISES IS AN INNER PEACE, BORN IN FAITH, ANCHORED BY TESTIMONY, NURTURED WITH LOVE.

good from evil” (Moroni 7:16), as it leads us to repent of sins and seek forgiveness.

“PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU”

Just hours before He was to begin that glorious yet awful process of the Atonement, the Lord Jesus Christ made this significant promise to His Apostles: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you” (John 14:27).

Was He promising His beloved associates the kind of peace the world recognizes—safety, security, with the absence of contention or tribulation? Certainly the historical record would suggest otherwise. Those original Apostles knew much of trial and persecution throughout the remainder of their lives, which is probably why the Lord added this insight to His promise: “Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in *me* ye might have peace,”

He continued. “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33; emphasis added).

Peace—real peace, whole-souled to the very core of your being—comes only in and through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. When that precious truth is discovered and gospel principles are understood and applied, great peace can distill in the hearts and souls of our Heavenly Father’s children. Said the Savior through Joseph Smith, “Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me” (D&C 19:23).

I am grateful that I can witness to you that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. By following Him, in faith and trust, all may find the sweet inner peace the gospel offers to us. **NE**

From an April 2002 general conference address.

PEACE IN THE WORLD vs. PEACE IN CHRIST

Jesus Christ can give us lasting peace, even during hardships and trials.

By Sarah Hanson

In a world of social, political, and religious turmoil, what do you need in order to have peace? Good friends? A loving family? Safety and security? Sometimes we think our lives have to meet requirements like these so we can truly feel at peace. But life will never be 100 percent perfect

and easy. So how do we deal with trials and feel peace at the same time?

The world tells us that peace can be felt only when there isn't any conflict. But that isn't true! Through His gospel, Jesus Christ provides us with an inner peace that surpasses the peace the world offers. If we look to

Him with faith, we can feel peace in any circumstance.

The Savior taught, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: *not as the world giveth, give I unto you*" (John 14:27; emphasis added). Here are some ways the world's peace differs from Jesus Christ's peace.

PEACE IN THE WORLD

1. Peace should come instantly—we shouldn't have to wait for it!

2. You can't find peace during difficulties.

3. Peace is the absence of war.

4. Peace comes through living however you want to live.

5. Admitting your faults and weaknesses does not bring peace.

6. Peace comes from only focusing on your needs.

7. Peace comes from seeking others' approval.

8. We should try to provide our own peace.



PEACE IN CHRIST

1. Sometimes we have to wait for peace—but “don’t you quit. . . . Trust God and believe in good things to come.”¹

2. Peace can come even in the midst of trials.

3. Peace can be found in any circumstance.

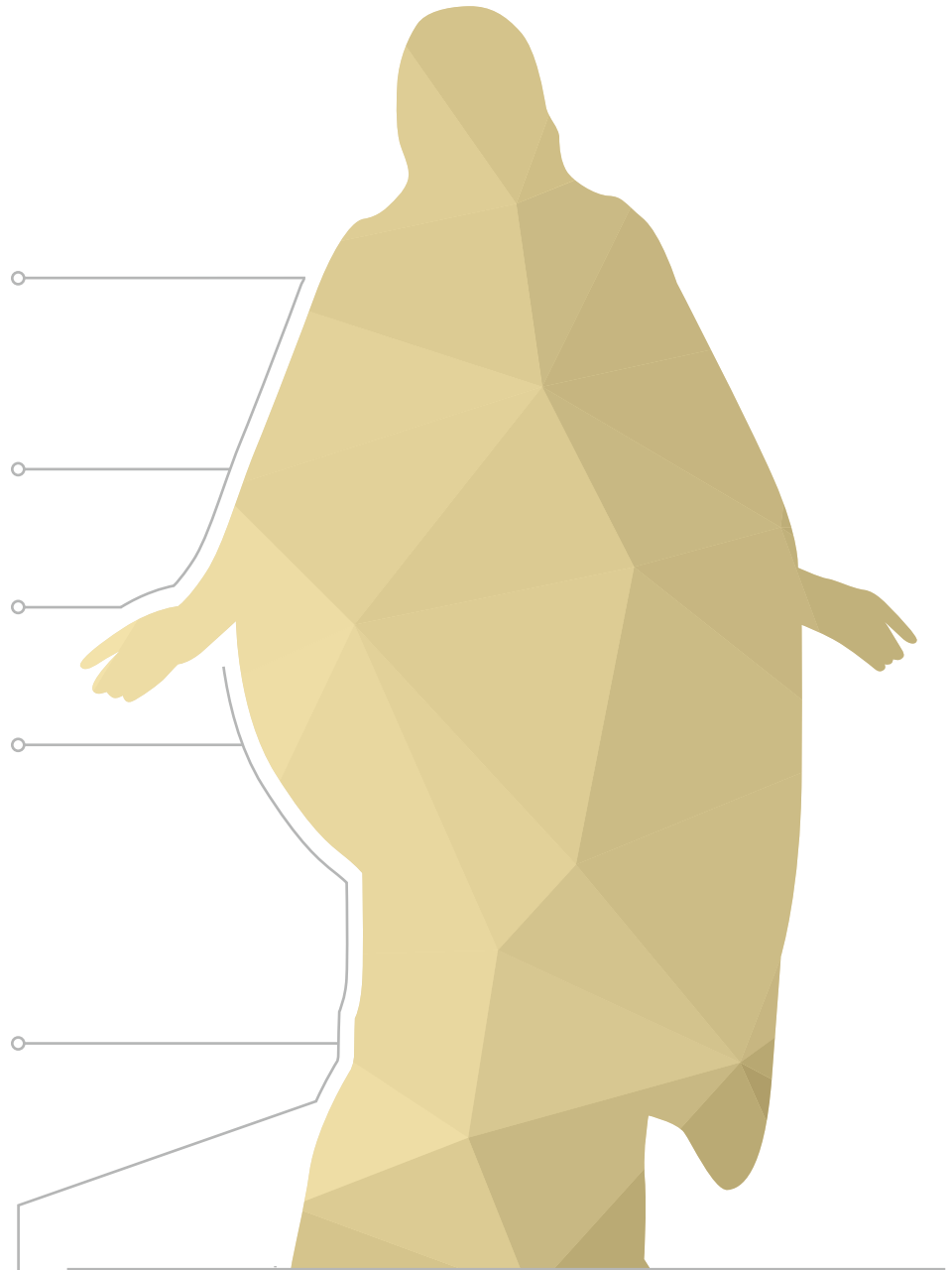
4. Peace comes through living the gospel and obeying the commandments.

5. Sincere repentance brings peace. “The very beauty of the word *repentance* is the promise of escaping old problems and old habits and old sorrows and old sins. It is among the most hopeful and encouraging—and yes, most peaceful—words in the gospel vocabulary.”²

6. Peace comes from serving and being a peacemaker for others.

7. Peace comes as we seek to be better disciples of Jesus Christ.

8. “The kind of peace that is the . . . reward of righteousness . . . is a promised gift of the Savior’s mission and atoning sacrifice.”³



If we make Jesus Christ the focus of our lives, we really will feel Him “speak peace to our souls” (Alma 58:11). In this world we will experience hard times, but we are blessed to know that we have someone we can turn to in any challenging circumstance. The Savior said, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have

tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Because of the Savior’s Atonement, peace is possible today and forever. **NE**

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, Oct. 1999 general conference.
2. Jeffrey R. Holland, Oct. 1996 general conference.
3. Quentin L. Cook, Apr. 2013 general conference.

Soak Up GOOD THINGS

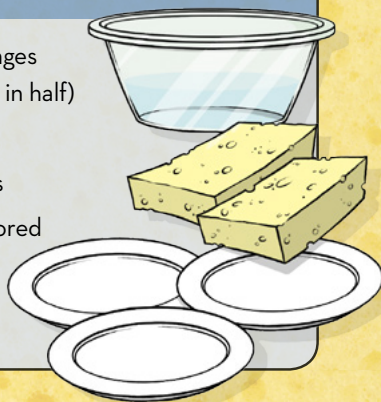
Your mind and spirit take in the influences around them. Try to saturate them with good.

By David Dickson

Church Magazines

MATERIALS

- Two clean, dry kitchen sponges (or you can cut one sponge in half)
- A bowl of clear water
- Three white plates or bowls
- Grape juice, other dark-colored juice, or water with food coloring



In a perfect world, none of us would ever stumble across inappropriate media, hear a heap of swear words on the short walk to math class, or bump into anything else that hurts our spirits. But our world isn't perfect quite yet.

President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) taught, “Where once the standards of the Church and the standards of society were mostly compatible, now there is a wide chasm between us, and it’s growing ever wider.”¹

In the kind of society we live in, we’re going to come across some things we wish we hadn’t, no matter how hard we try. But we *can* influence how much they affect us.

Object lesson time!

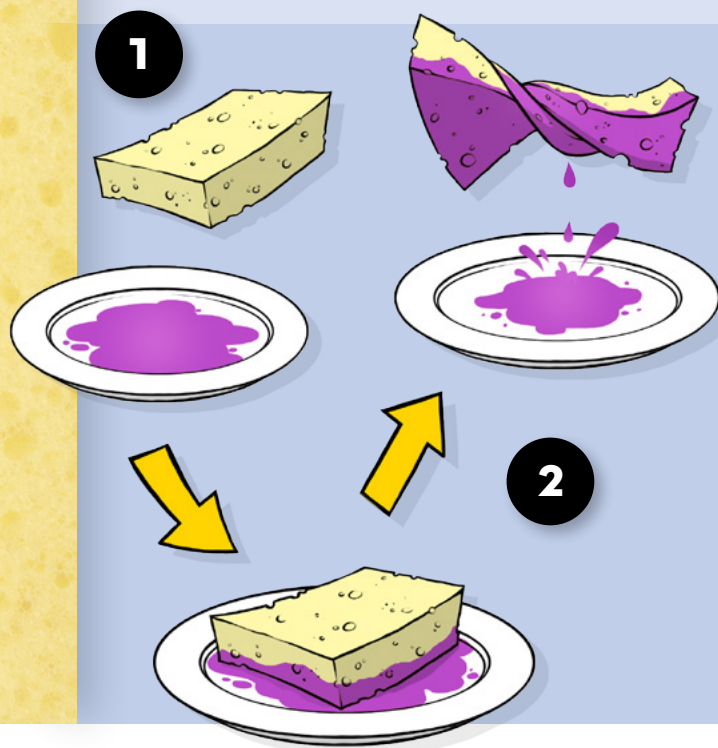
1. PREPARATION

Fill a bowl with enough clear water to submerge one of the sponges later in the lesson. Pour grape juice into one of the three white plates or bowls. Be sure and set up this object lesson on a surface that won’t become stained by spilled juice.

2. STARTING EMPTY

Share the President Monson quote from earlier. Chat with your family about how the world’s standards are different from the Church’s. Now point to the grape juice in the white dish. Explain that the juice represents some of the bad things in the world that come about as a result of those worldly standards.

Set the dry sponge in the juice for 10 seconds and then transfer it to one of the two empty white dishes. Squeeze until empty into the dish. Even within 10 short seconds, your sponge should have picked up a lot of grape juice.



3. FINDING HOPE

Discuss what happened. Why and how do bad things still affect us, even when we weren't looking for them? Sometimes we trip ourselves up by trying to believe we're unaffected by seeing and hearing things we shouldn't, but that's simply not true. This might seem like a downer, but don't worry. There's hope! Place the second sponge in the bowl of clear water.²

4. STAYING FULL

Tell your family the clear water represents the good and righteous things we can fill our minds with instead. Discuss what some of these good things might be (daily prayer and scripture study, taking the sacrament weekly, etc.). We always want to be *full* of these things, so make sure the sponge has been in the clear water at least 30 seconds.

Now, without squeezing the sponge, pull it from the bowl of water and set it into the grape juice. As before, count 10 seconds in the grape juice and then

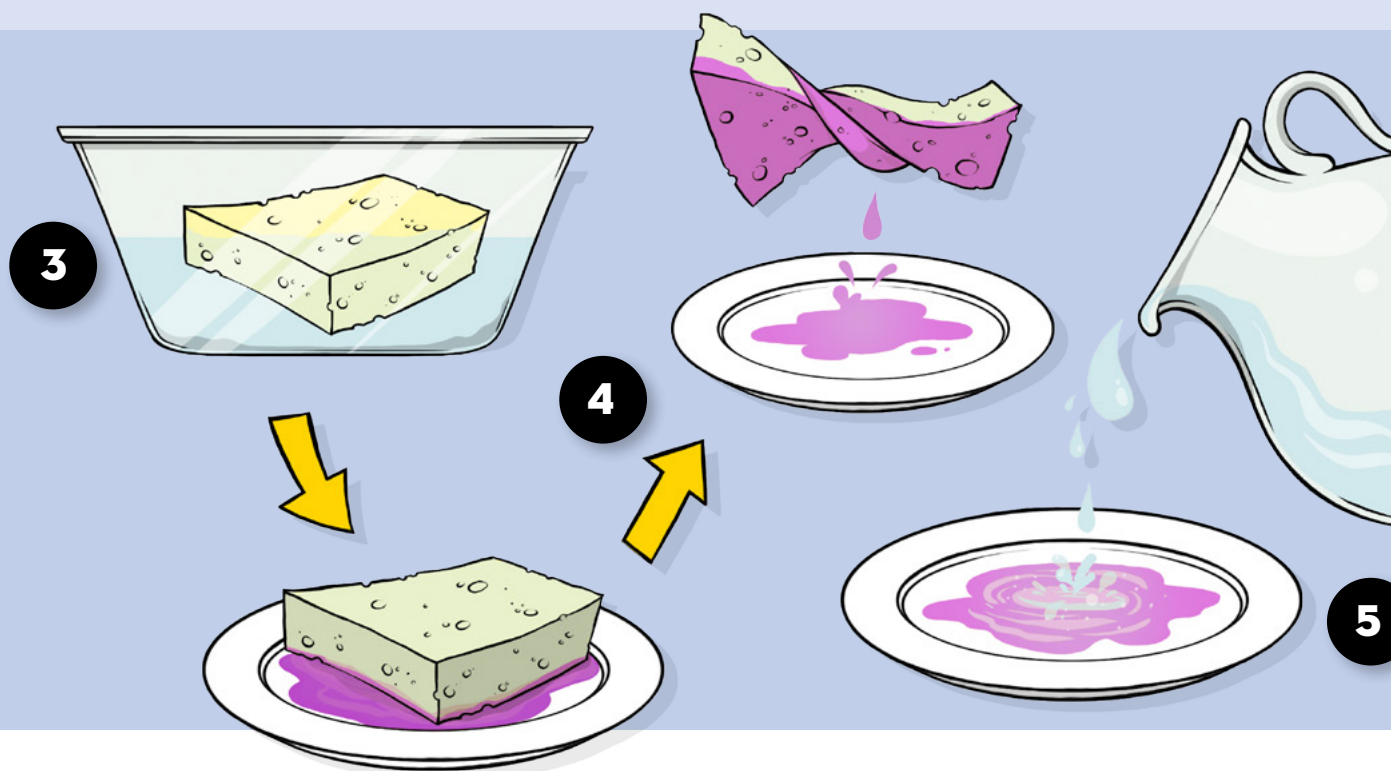
transfer to the last white dish. Squeeze the sponge into the dish and notice the difference. There should be *much* less juice than before!

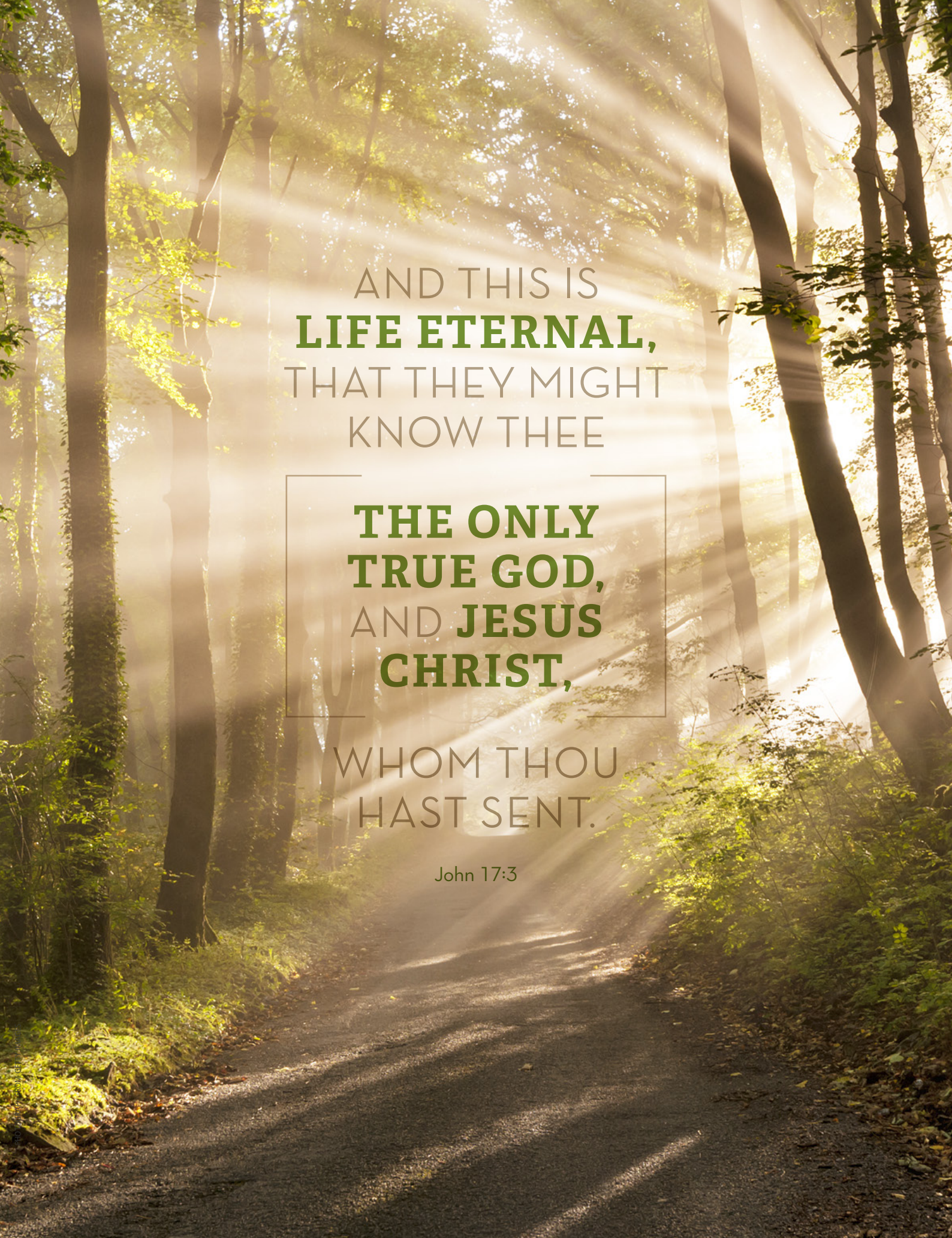
5. CONCLUSION

When we fill our minds and spirits with uplifting things, we have significantly less room for the bad stuff to enter or stick around for long. That alone should give you plenty of encouragement. But if you don't mind making a bit of a mess, start pouring clear water from the bowl into the last white dish to watch the water in the last dish get clearer and clearer as the old spills away. As we keep pouring good things into our minds and spirits, we fortify ourselves against the evil that might surround us. **NE**

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, "Priesthood Power," Apr. 2011 general conference.
2. Sometimes your sponge may seem stained by the juice, but that's not part of the object lesson. The Savior's Atonement can make it so that nothing will stain us permanently.



A vertical photograph of a forest path. Sunlight filters through the dense canopy of green trees, creating a series of bright, diagonal rays of light that illuminate the path and the surrounding foliage. The path is a dark, gravelly surface that leads from the bottom of the frame towards the center. The trees are tall and slender, with their trunks visible on either side of the path. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene.

AND THIS IS
LIFE ETERNAL,
THAT THEY MIGHT
KNOW THEE

**THE ONLY
TRUE GOD,
AND JESUS
CHRIST,**

WHOM THOU
HAST SENT.

John 17:3



Daters, WAITERS, AND Loophole Creators

When it comes to dating, different people have different questions. How would you answer them?

By David A. Edwards
Church Magazines

At the *New Era* we hear a lot of questions from young people about all kinds of topics. One of the most common areas of confusion (or aggravation—we can't always tell which) is dating.

The questions about dating seem to come from three basic types of questioners: daters, waiters, and loophole creators. These three groups have different backgrounds and motivations for their questions, but all of them deserve answers so that they can find peace and guidance. And you can help.

Here are some examples of questions from these three groups, as well as a copy of the “Dating” section of *For the Strength of Youth*. See if you can match up the questions to the statements in that section that give an answer. Or, if you know other answers from the scriptures or general conference, add those. It's a good exercise to see how well you know the guidelines and how well you can answer questions for yourself or others.

BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR ANSWERING QUESTIONS

- Have an attitude of faith.
- Try to see the issue from an eternal perspective.
- Go to the right sources—the scriptures, prophets, parents, and leaders, as well as asking Heavenly Father for the guidance of the Spirit.
- Be kind—a part of the answer to any question regarding how to deal with others.

Daters

When these people grew old enough, they decided to try out this dating thing. They've had some experiences, and as a result, they have some questions.

Here are a few of them:

For questions like these, you can sometimes find the answers right in *For the Strength of Youth*. But you may also need to talk to some people with a little experience who can offer some ideas for how to deal with people and situations both faithfully and tactfully.

MY ANSWERS

HOW CAN I HOLD TO OUR DATING STANDARDS WHEN MOST PEOPLE I KNOW DON'T ADHERE TO THEM—EVEN THE LDS ONES?

WHEN YOU'RE ON A DATE, HOW CAN YOU KEEP THE FUN AND CONVERSATION GOING SMOOTHLY WITHOUT IT GETTING AWKWARD?

IS IT OK TO DATE SOMEONE WHO'S NOT LDS?

I RECENTLY TOOK SOMEONE OUT FOR FUN, BUT NOW SHE WANTS A RELATIONSHIP. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

HOW CAN I AVOID STEADY DATING?

At what age can we start going on one-on-one dates instead of in groups?

Everybody else does it. And they think dating different people is like 'cheating'.



WAITERS

No, these are not servers at restaurants. They're people who are old enough and are either (a) choosing to wait a while before dating or (b) waiting for someone to finally ask them out on a date.

Here are their questions:

Some of these questions are a little harder to answer by quoting *For the Strength of Youth*. You'll need compassion, understanding, and sensitivity. Those choosing not to date aren't breaking any commandments, and those not being asked out don't have anything wrong with them. But people are still feeling anxious and hurt. You may want to talk to parents, older siblings, leaders, and others who can lend a sympathetic ear and offer good advice and perspective.

Dating

Virtue loveth virtue; light cleaveth unto light.
Doctrine and Covenants 88:40

A date is a planned activity that allows a young man and a young woman to get to know each other better. In cultures where dating is acceptable, it can help you learn and practice social skills, develop friendships, have wholesome fun, and eventually find an eternal companion.

You should not date until you are at least 16 years old. When you begin dating, go with one or more additional couples. Avoid going on frequent dates with the same person. Developing serious relationships too early in life can limit the number of other people you meet and can perhaps lead to immorality. Invite your parents to become acquainted with those you date.

Choose to date only those who have high moral standards and in whose company you can maintain your standards. Remember that a young man and a young woman on a date are responsible to protect each other's honor and virtue.

Plan dating activities that are safe, positive, and inexpensive and that will help you get to know each other. Go only to places where you can maintain your standards and remain close to the Spirit.

Young men generally take the initiative in asking for and planning dates. Always be kind and respectful when you ask for a date or when you accept or decline one. While on a date, be courteous as you listen to others and express your own feelings.

As you enter your adult years, make dating and marriage a high priority. Seek a companion who is worthy to go to the temple to be sealed to you for time and all eternity. Marrying in the temple and creating an eternal family are essential in God's plan of happiness.

I'M OLD ENOUGH,
BUT I DON'T REALLY
FEEL LIKE DATING YET.
IS THAT OK?

I'VE BEEN REJECTED
BY GIRLS. AND I DON'T
WANT TO ASK ANYONE
ON A DATE ANYMORE.
IS THAT OK?

Why date as a
teenager? What's
the point?

The LDS young
men in my area are my
friends, but they aren't
asking me on dates.
Why?

I'M ALMOST 18
AND I'VE NEVER BEEN
ASKED OUT ON A DATE.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?
WHAT'S WRONG WITH GUYS?

MY ANSWERS



Loophole Creators

People in this group can be anywhere from 12 to 18 years old, and their questions are all over the map. They're definitely sincere and deserve answers. But basically, they seem to be trying to carve out an exception to the rules so that they can feel good about doing what they want to do.

Here's just a sampling of their many questions:

Even if your initial reaction to some of these questions is some variation of “No,” “No way,” or “What are you thinking?” try to have understanding. These are sincere questions from people who really want an answer, so we don't want to be brusque or dismissive. Look at *For the Strength of Youth* and see how you might begin to form an answer. The key is not to just repeat the standard but to focus on the *why* behind the standard. *Why* no frequent dates with the same person? *Why* wait until you're older to date?

MY ANSWERS

WHAT'S THE DEFINITION OF A “DATE”?

IF I'M NOT OLD ENOUGH TO DATE YET, CAN I SPEND MOST OF MY TIME WITH A PERSON AS LONG AS WE'RE NOT DATING?

If I'm old enough to date and the person I want to go with isn't, is it OK to go out as long as they're not LDS so they won't be breaking their standards?


HOW MANY DATES WITH OTHER PEOPLE DO I NEED TO GO ON IN BETWEEN DATES WITH THE PERSON I REALLY LIKE?

IS IT OK TO HAVE A BOYFRIEND OR GIRLFRIEND AS LONG AS YOU'RE NOT DATING?

IS IT OK TO KISS WHEN YOU'RE YOUNGER AS LONG AS YOU'RE NOT DATING?



BEING SOCIAL?



“More and more we are focused on the small, little screen in our hands than we are on the people around us. . . . If we are not vigilant in how we use our personal devices, we . . . can begin to turn inward.”

Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women General President, Oct. 2017 general conference

YOU CANNOT FREEZE WHAT'S IN MY HEART

By Blossom Larynoh



When the Church first came to Ghana in 1978, the government didn't really understand it and its practices. That led to a lot of rumors.

As the Church grew over the next 10 years, so did the rumors. I remember hearing people say that the United States was sending men to spy on our government. That, combined with all the anti-Mormon literature being circulated, made the government very suspicious.

THE FREEZE

On June 14, 1989, the government closed our Church buildings, sent the missionaries home, and outlawed all official Church activities. We call this time "the freeze." But as an 18-year-old girl, all I knew was that one day it was announced that we couldn't go to church anymore. There were even soldiers guarding the buildings to make sure we stayed away.

Since we could no longer meet in our chapels, we got permission from Church leaders to have sacrament meetings in our homes. If you didn't have a priesthood holder in your home, you were encouraged to go to a home that did have one. It was a confusing time but also a very special one. We shared our testimonies, and it brought us closer together.

HOW CAN YOU CALL YOURSELF A MORMON?

At one time during the freeze, I had to leave my home to go to a boarding school. When I got there, one of the teachers heard that I was a Latter-day Saint. He singled me out to talk negatively about the Church to me. He had so many harsh words to say. I often wondered, "Why are you picking on me and saying these things? I believe in the teachings of the gospel, but I'm still a person."

One day he asked me how I could call myself a Mormon anymore. Didn't I know about the freeze? Now, in our culture, we don't talk back to adults. So the fact that he was a teacher meant that I couldn't challenge him. But in that moment, I realized that I really had a testimony. I don't

know how these words came out of my mouth, but the Spirit came to me, and I stood up and said, "The Church is in my heart. And nobody can freeze what's in my heart."

And after that he left me alone.

In November 1990 the government ended the freeze and said our Church members were free to worship again. We didn't have radios or televisions on school campus, so I only found out because that teacher heard and immediately sent someone to get me. When he saw me, my teacher said, "The ban on your Church has been lifted! You can go to church again." He was happy for me.

THEY CANNOT FREEZE WHAT'S IN YOUR HEART


Those who stayed in the Church and worshipped together during the freeze created stronger bonds. We became real brothers and sisters. Even now, when we have all traveled separate ways, if something happens to someone else, we all hear about it. We feel like we are pioneers.

I like to tell people that if you know your beliefs are true and you have a testimony of them, you can have trials but your faith doesn't have to be shaken. If you know something is true and you believe in it, nobody can take that away from you. They cannot freeze what's in your heart. **NE**

The author lives in California, USA.

THE FREEZE IN GHANA

On June 14, 1989, the Ghanaian government banned The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. All Church buildings were closed, but the 6,000 members were permitted to hold services in their homes. On November 29, 1990, the government lifted the ban and permitted the Church to resume all activities. Today there are over 72,000 members, a missionary training center, and a temple in Ghana.



Blossom was a young woman in Ghana when the government banned LDS Church meetings.

**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
THE GHANA FREEZE**

To learn more about the ban and how Ghanaian Saints continued to worship, you can watch the video "Our Homes Became the Sacrament Hall: Sabbath Day Worship During the Freeze" on [LDS.org](https://www.LDS.org).



By Elder Larry Y. Wilson

Of the Quorum of
the Seventy



*By attending the temple, you invite holiness
and the blessings of God into your life.*

When I was seven years old, I had one of the best experiences of my life—I went to the Idaho Falls Idaho Temple to be sealed to my parents. My mom had grown up without the Church, and my dad had been inactive, but one day they decided to commit themselves to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

They started making changes—my mom joined the Church, my dad quit smoking, and we started having family home evening and family prayer. But nothing captured their commitment more than being sealed in the temple. That affected our family in more ways than I can count! Because of my parents' commitment, I became the first person in my family in over *100 years* to serve a mission. I'm grateful for that binding, eternal relationship with my parents and siblings, and now with my wife and children.

The temple changed the course of my life, and I've seen it bless the lives of youth as well. Today, temples and the blessings of temple ordinances are much more available to you. This is a very exciting time! Young people are participating in temple work more than they ever have before.

THE Temple

A PLACE
OF HOLINESS

A PLACE TO BECOME HOLY

In the temple, we have one foot on earth and the other in heaven. We can feel what heaven and holiness are like. I recently heard a young man describe how when he was in the temple, he felt safe and as if he were in heaven. He testified that the temple is God's house and that he loved being there.

This young man was experiencing the holiness of the temple. The inscription on every temple reads, "Holiness to the Lord: The House of the Lord." We show holiness to the Lord as we keep the commandments, honor our covenants, and keep the Holy Ghost as our guide.¹ The temple certainly is a place where we can do those things and invite holiness into our lives.



Holiness is one of the chief characteristics of the Savior and our Father in Heaven. In the Book of Moses, the Lord proclaims, "Man of Holiness is my name" (Moses 7:35). The name illustrates the essence of Godhood. As you attend the temple and strive to be holy, you become more like Him.

Doctrine and Covenants 46:33 also mentions holiness: "Practice virtue and holiness before me continually." One way you can practice holiness is by attending the temple. "Practice" doesn't mean you're perfect—but it does mean you are trying to improve. It's going to take a lot of practice to achieve holiness. When you fall short,

keep repenting and striving to follow the Savior. You will find that you'll continually move toward holiness.

REPLACING DARKNESS WITH LIGHT

It's easy to feel the holiness of the temple while you're there. But how do you *keep* that holiness once you leave? In the world, there are many influences swirling around you. Look closely at the influences you can control, and make sure you have as much good as you can in your life. Evaluate your choices about media, entertainment, friends, the places you go, and the activities you do. Then, "chase darkness from among you" (D&C 50:25) by eliminating anything that is leaving a bad impact.

The temple helps you step back, see what influences surround you, keep the good ones, and erase the bad ones. There are plenty of uplifting sources all around you. There are also plenty of evil sources. You can choose which influences to invite into your life. The more you reinforce positive influences when you leave the temple, the more you maintain closeness with God and become holy, even outside the temple.

THE BLESSINGS OF THE TEMPLE

It is a blessing to attend the temple—don't lose sight of that blessing! For some of us, temples are not too far away, and when we've been attending for a while, we might begin to take it for granted. Now is the time for you to be in the Lord's house and gain the blessings that come from temple worship.

We can feel holiness as we continue to attend the Lord's house and do His work. There is no greater benefit from attending the temple than inviting God's presence into your life and gaining spiritual understanding. **NE**



LAST MONTH YOUTH AROUND THE WORLD

began participating in temple work in brand new ways.

- Under the direction of the temple presidency, young women may now be asked to assist with tasks in the temple baptismistry currently performed by adult sisters serving as temple ordinance workers or volunteers.
- Under the direction of the temple presidency, ordained priests may now be asked to officiate in baptisms for the dead, including performing baptisms and serving as witnesses.

Have you had the opportunity to serve in any of these new roles? What do these changes mean to you? Share your testimonies of serving in the temple by emailing newera@ldschurch.org.

NOTE

1. See Carol F. McConkie, Apr. 2017 general conference.

6

:

36

6

Name Withheld

I've talked to a lot of people about depression, and the majority of them say that the nighttime is when their depression is at its worst. For me, it has always been the morning. The prospect of facing a new and unknown day has always discouraged me. I recently had one of those mornings.

I heard my alarm go off at 6 a.m. How I hated, how I loathed that beeping sound. I naturally pressed the snooze button. I'm not sure why I always did; I never slept for the 15 minutes the alarm delayed. I just sort of stared at the ceiling, trying to postpone the inevitable. The alarm went off with that same dreadful beeping at 6:15. I reached over and turned the alarm off. I sat up, not ready to face the day. I slowly and sluggishly climbed into the shower. When I finished and went back to my room, I sat down on my bed again, trying not to feel the awful despair and gloom that was threatening to overwhelm me.

I glanced over at the alarm clock to check the time: 6:36 a.m. I stared. Something stirred in my memory. 6:36? I recalled an often-shared scripture in seminary, Doctrine and Covenants 6:36. I opened my scripture to the reference: "Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not." Tears welled up in my eyes. How could I have no doubts or fears when I was in such turmoil? I read verse 34 in the same chapter: "Therefore, fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail."

*Hope and healing came
in the most unexpected
way that morning.*

A.M.

I was openly weeping, but now with a sliver of hope. It surely felt like earth and hell were combined against me, but now it also felt like I had a mighty fortress on my side to defend me from their attacks. I gradually came out of my stupor with the words of Doctrine and Covenants 6:36 echoing in my mind. I was able to face that day with more courage than I had before. That day, I had no fear. I had no doubt that Heavenly Father was aware of me, and that He was protecting me and guiding me that day.

There are still days when I struggle with my depression, but with the help of doctors, trusted friends and family, and a loving Father in Heaven, I am learning to overcome my challenges. Elder Jeffery R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: “Don’t give up. . . . Don’t you quit. You keep walking. You keep trying. There is help and happiness ahead. . . . You keep your chin up. It will be all right in the end. Trust in God and believe in good things to come.”¹

I am eternally grateful to my Heavenly Father for bringing that scripture to my remembrance that wonderful morning. Every morning when I see the numbers 6:36 flashing from my clock, I offer a prayer of gratitude. He will be with us every step of the way. Life will not always be perfect, but we need never fear what the adversary can do because we have the greatest protection on our side. **NE**

NOTE

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

There’s a difference between feeling sad and experiencing depression. Depression is more than just sadness. Depression is a medical condition that affects millions of people of all ages and situations. It negatively affects how a person thinks, feels, and acts. Some of the symptoms include persistent sadness, lack of energy, and feelings of despair and hopelessness that can last weeks, months, or longer.

More on Depression

For more help in dealing with depression, see “Dealing with Depression,” *New Era*, Sept. 2016, 32; see also [lds.org/youth/article/dealing-with-depression](https://www.lds.org/youth/article/dealing-with-depression).



THE SKINNY “LEG” SLED DOGS

A BIRTH DEFECT
MEANT THAT SPENCER
HAD TO LOOK FOR A DIFFERENT
SPORT. HIS CHOICE HAS BEEN A
HOWLING SUCCESS.

By Sarah Hanson

The sound of dogs yipping, howling, and barking fills the crisp air. Their harnesses tug back and forth as some dogs excitedly jump in place. People line the sides of the snow-covered trail, craning their necks to get a view of the mushers (dogsled drivers) and teams. The announcer on the sideline

yells out a name—“Spencer!”—as a 16-year-old boy in a giant parka steps onto his dog sled.

Finally, the timekeeper gives a countdown. Three, two, one . . . and then all barking and howling stops.

“The instant we take off, the dogs go dead silent,” says Spencer. “All you hear is them breathing and their

paws hitting the snow. Everyone else fades away, and it’s just this tunnel vision of focus.”

Spencer is used to this kind of focus. He’s been a musher (dogsled driver) for the past six years, and he knows that keeping focused and managing his adrenaline is essential, no matter how exhausted he feels.

Often, Spencer and his dogs will run 200-to-400-mile dogsled races that last three to four days. During those races, he and the dogs have to run day and night in freezing temperatures, stopping only three times to down some food and fit in two or three hours of sleep.

Spencer has had to stay awake for three days straight. He even got hypothermia once. So, if it's so difficult, why does he keep coming back to dogsledding again and again? Well, part of it is because of his skinny leg.

THE CALL OF THE WILD

For Spencer, dogsledding came about in an unexpected way. "I was born with a birth defect in my left leg that causes the veins in my leg to be atrophied, so not enough blood goes to that leg," he





Spencer (below) and his dad (above) race with their own team of dogs.

explains. “There’s not a lot of growth and muscle mass, so my left leg is shorter and skinnier than the right.”

Growing up, he could walk and run, but some things were still difficult for him. “I grew up in a family and community of athletes. My two older brothers, Chase and Brandon, are both big football players, which led me to want to pursue football too.”

However, after playing football for two years in elementary school, Spencer soon realized the other kids were just too fast and it was too difficult for him to keep up. “I was sad. I struggled because I felt like I couldn’t have something to work toward.”

Then one day as he was reading *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London, an idea popped into his mind—what about *dogsledding*? “I was fascinated

by the idea of dogsledding. I was with my mom after school one day when I piped up and said, ‘We should start dogsledding!’ My mom stopped dead in her tracks and retorted, ‘You’ve been talking to your dad!’ It turned out that my dad had been thinking about getting a dogsled team too! It was destiny.”

A WHOLE LOT OF WORK

Spencer’s family held a meeting and agreed that dogsledding would be the perfect sport for Spencer. He says, “I figured it would be good for me because it doesn’t involve a lot of leg strength and speed, but it does require endurance, both physically and mentally.”

Pulling everything together for a team took a lot of work, though.



“My dad and I researched the sport and talked to several mushers who helped us get started,” Spencer says. “We got our Alaskan Huskies a few at a time until we had enough for two teams—one for me and one for my dad.” They affectionately named their team of dogs the “Skinny Leg Sled Dogs,” after Spencer’s skinny leg.

Of course, the work didn’t stop there. Spencer and his family now take care of 51 dogs at their home in Montana, USA, not to mention their other pets (two falcons, two cats, and some canaries).

“We spend an hour each day feeding the dogs, giving them water, and scooping up poop,” Spencer says. “In

the winter, we make 70 pounds of meat stew each day to feed them enough calories. We also do our own veterinary work, like vaccines and stitches. We train them for two to

three hours every day during fall and winter. And during the winter weekends, we’ll run about 100 miles. Then, of course, all of that culminates in the races, which are a lot of work.”

Spencer isn't afraid of hard work. In addition to his training time, he spends an hour each day making sure his dogs are well fed and cared for.



“SET HIGH GOALS FOR YOURSELF, AND BE WILLING TO WORK HARD TO ACHIEVE THEM. . . . HEAVENLY FATHER HAS GIVEN YOU GIFTS AND TALENTS AND KNOWS WHAT YOU ARE CAPABLE OF ACHIEVING.” FOR THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH, WORK AND SELF-RELIANCE



UNITED AS A FAMILY

Obviously, dogsledding is challenging and time-consuming. But Spencer says it has blessed his life in many ways, especially when it comes to his family. “Everything involved in dogsledding has taught me and my family to work hard. It has united us. It takes all of us to care for our dogs and run long races. My mom and my brothers are like my pit crew. They handle all the dogs during my races. And my dad and I work together to run it all.”



Spencer with his brothers, Brandon (middle) and Chase (right).

More than that, Spencer has realized why it is important for families to work hard. He says, “If you don’t put in the effort and nurture your relationships with your family members, you won’t be a real family—you’ll just passively be a family. You’ll miss out on the blessings of being a family.”

ENDURING SPIRITUALLY

Dogsledding also gives Spencer the motivation to move forward and achieve more. “I’ve learned to

push myself mentally and physically through bitter cold, darkness, fear, and sleep deprivation to achieve my goals. It’s given me the skills to stay alert and strong.”

Similarly, he thinks it’s important to learn how to endure spiritually in the gospel. “When the going gets tough, you’ve got to be tough. In dogsledding, you can’t stop trying or the dogs will stop trying, and then you won’t do as well. It’s the same in the gospel. To endure well, you must always

“IN DOGSLEDDING, YOU CAN’T STOP TRYING OR THE DOGS WILL STOP TRYING, AND THEN YOU WON’T DO AS WELL. IT’S THE SAME IN THE GOSPEL. TO ENDURE WELL, YOU MUST ALWAYS BE DILIGENT BY READING THE SCRIPTURES, PRAYING, AND TURNING TO FAMILY AND CHURCH LEADERS.”

be diligent by reading the scriptures, praying, and turning to family and Church leaders.”

Spencer also notes that progression and enduring well require effort. “You can’t just passively believe in the gospel. You have to work at it. All the best things in life come from work. To get a testimony, you have to show your dedication by doing things like praying and studying the scriptures. You have to show dedication in your calling and your family.” Though it may sound tiring, Spencer says, “Everything goes more smoothly with work.”

AN AMAZING WEAKNESS

In the end, Spencer keeps coming back to dogsledding because he’s being strengthened—physically, intellectually, and spiritually. “Dogsledding

is the coolest sport in the world. It has given me the motivation to achieve my goals. I have learned to push myself and be mentally engaged in what I do.”

And the remarkable thing is, Spencer is where he is today because of a supposed weakness. Who would have guessed a skinny leg would lead to training dogs and racing them hundreds of miles through the snow? “If it weren’t for my skinny leg, I wouldn’t be a musher. I think it was the Lord helping me turn my weakness into a strength [see Ether 12:27]. Not only has dogsledding made my body stronger, but because of my birth defect, I have developed a strong work ethic. The Lord has turned my weakness into something amazing.” **NE**

The author lives in Utah, USA.



FUN FACTS ABOUT SPENCER

- 1 He started dogsledding when he was 10 years old.
- 2 He was 12 years old when he did his first solo 100-mile race.
- 3 At 13, he won the junior division of Montana’s Race to the Sky 100-mile race, and he finished faster than any of the adults.
- 4 In 2017, he was the youngest musher ever to compete in the Race to the Sky 300-mile course.
- 5 Spencer has worked during the summer at Dairy Queen.
- 6 He has raced in Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, and Minnesota, USA.
- 7 During races, he sleeps on the dogsled in a sleeping bag.
- 8 His favorite scripture is Ether 12:27.
- 9 And his favorite animal? A dog, of course.



1 Nephi 3:7

The Lord commanded Nephi to go and do.



1 I WILL GO

“You show your trust in [God] when you listen with the intent to learn and repent and then you go and do whatever He asks. If you trust God enough to listen for His message in every sermon, song, and prayer in [each] conference, you will find it. And if you then go and do what He would have you do, your power to trust Him will grow, and in time you will be overwhelmed with gratitude to find that He has come to trust you.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Trust in God, Then Go and Do,” Oct. 2010 general conference.

2 DO

“I made this my rule: *When the Lord commands, do it.*”

Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 160.

2

7 And it came to pass that I, Nephi, said unto my father: I ^awill go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no ^bcommandments unto the children of men, save he shall ^cprepare a way for them that they may ^daccomplish the thing which he commandeth them.

4

5

3

3 THE LORD HATH COMMANDED

“Every commandment of the Lord is given for our development, progress, and growth.”

Elder Robert D. Hales (1932–2017) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 1996 general conference.

4 HE SHALL PREPARE A WAY

In the Old Testament, to prepare a way meant to establish a good, well-marked road (see Deuteronomy 19:3) or to clear a path by removing obstacles (see Isaiah 40:3).

When the Lord gives us a commandment, He will always prepare a way for us if we are willing to trust Him and obey. But like Nephi, we must first act in faith; then the way will present itself, for the Lord “worketh by power, according to the faith of the children of men” (Moroni 10:7).

5 ACCOMPLISH

“If ye have faith . . . nothing shall be impossible unto you.”

Matthew 17:20

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

By Craig Manning

Performance Psychology Consultant for BYU Athletics

and Joshua J. Perkey

Church Magazines


As a coach, I've seen a lot of self-doubt in athletes. What is self-doubt? Doubting your ability to accomplish something, or degrading yourself. When I was a young athlete, I struggled with it too. And not just in athletics, but in many aspects of my life.

But I learned something that changed my life. Applying what I learned has transformed mediocre athletes into Olympians. More importantly it can help you be your best self. And it all starts with your thoughts. I'll be honest, though—it took me a long time to learn. Let me share how it all started.

ACHIEVING YOUR POTENTIAL
IS PART OF THE WAY YOU
TALK TO YOURSELF.



HOW YOU
TALK TO
YOURSELF



When I graduated from high school, I was an accomplished tennis player, and I was selected to travel around Europe on a great team. While in France, we often played on fast indoor courts. I played well the first month and won a lot of matches.

Feeling really good about myself, I left France with my team and headed for Austria. The first tournament was on slow red clay. Going from fast indoor courts to slow red clay was a dramatic change. For the first time—and the only time in my 40 years of playing tennis—I lost 6–0 6–0, a double bagel, we call it. It rocked my world. Unwisely, I dwelt on my deficiencies from the match for days. A week later I was still dwelling on the loss.

I began to constantly doubt myself. Every time I messed up, I told myself I wasn't good at tennis. I would miss a backhand into the top of the net and say to myself, "Not again! Your backhand stinks. You can't make a backhand. Why do you even play this game? You just stink."

Then I had the opportunity to play tennis at Brigham Young University, and I thought it was the perfect time to reset. However, I quickly learned that the bad mental habit of self-doubt I had created wasn't going away anytime soon. I was working hard physically, but I wasn't working hard mentally.

The problem was that I didn't know how to fix my habit. How could I develop the belief that I could improve when I constantly doubted my God-given ability to do so?

And my doubts didn't just relate to sports. I had often told myself I wasn't a good student. As a result, I didn't study well and therefore didn't do as well in school as I could have. Receiving low grades just reinforced the cycle of self-doubt, negative talk, and negative performance. As I prayed and pondered about these things, the Lord taught me some valuable lessons that could apply in all areas of my life.



I NEEDED TO FILL MY MIND
WITH THE BELIEF THAT I
COULD EXCEL.

FILLING MY MIND WITH CONFIDENCE

One of the most important things I realized is how dangerous self-doubt is. When it gets into your mind, it hinders your ability to fulfill your potential and undermines confidence. However, confidence and fear, or positive and negative thoughts, cannot occupy your mind at the same time. To break my habit of self-doubt, I needed to fill my mind with the belief that I could excel.

I started working on thinking more positively. President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said, “We develop our talents first by thinking we can.”¹

CONFIDENCE BEGINS WITH TRUSTING GOD

But positive thinking by itself isn’t enough. I realized that because I have a divine nature and destiny, I can trust



EXCELLENCE IS WITHIN YOUR REACH

"Men cannot really long rest content with mediocrity once they see excellence is within their reach."

President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018),
"To the Rescue," Apr. 2001 general conference.

in God to help me improve in *all areas* of my life. And as I listen to the Holy Ghost, I can make good choices, develop my talents, and work to reach my divine potential.

What's more, God *wants* me to become my best self as I strive to become like Him. As Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "It matters not the size or the quantity but the effort we put forth to develop the talents and abilities we have received. You are not competing with anyone else. You are only competing with yourself to do the best with whatever you have received. Each talent that is developed will be greatly needed and will give you tremendous fulfillment and satisfaction during your life. . . .

" . . . We are instructed not to idle away our time nor bury our talents and not use them. We are expected to make our lives better through our own initiatives and efforts."²

As I exercise faith in
God, ask Him for
guidance
and

FAITH IN GOD BUILDS TRUST
AND CONFIDENCE. THAT TRUST
SUSTAINS ME EVEN WHEN
THINGS DON'T TURN OUT THE
WAY I HOPE.



help to fulfill my divine potential, and trust that He *will* help me, I gain trust, confidence, and a growing sense of self-worth.

Of course, that doesn't mean things always work out the way you or I hope—you may not always win the game, the girl may not say yes when you ask her on a date, and you may not ace or even pass the test—but trusting God *does* sustain us through those circumstances.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE BY HOW YOU TALK TO YOURSELF

The Lord also taught me that increasing confidence has a lot to do with how you talk to yourself. Every time I caught myself thinking or talking to myself in negative, reactive ways like, “Your backhand stinks” or “Don’t miss that backhand,” I would stop that thought and immediately replace it with thoughts such as, “I love my backhand” or “I am going to rip it down the line.” And instead of saying to myself, “School is tough; my classes are too hard for me,” I started telling myself, “I’ve got this; I can get good grades.”

It took some time, but everything started to change. I was playing amazing tennis (at least for me), and I was studying and getting better grades. More importantly, it chased out fear. This change in thinking was a continual work in progress, and I constantly battled to apply what I had learned. As my fear disappeared, my confidence grew.

The Lord also taught me that it was important to remind myself of my worth and potential when I started doubting or talking negatively about myself. I started thinking

of short phrases that would remind me of my divine worth when I am under pressure

or discouraged. Doing this is a lot

like using a scripture or hymn

to lift you up when you

feel down or want

to stay strong

in the

face of temptation—only personalized to your particular situation. When used at critical moments, doing this can flood the mind with positive, strong thoughts and instantly squeeze out any negative thoughts and emotions.

As an example, when I applied this process to my coaching, I was amazed by the dramatic increase in performance from the athletes I worked with. One was a U.S. Olympic mogul skier who was not ranked very high.

As I worked with her, she worked hard on training her thoughts to be positive and on using positive phrases to purify her thought patterns. As her thoughts improved, so did her performance. Eventually she was selected to join the World Cup touring team.

After the prequalifying races, this athlete was in fourth place. She told me after the event that when she had gotten on the chairlift to go up for her finals run, doubt had gotten into her mind. She began to accept her doubt, thinking, “It’s OK. No one expected me to do this well. My family will still love me.”

But then she caught herself and said: “No! Today is my day! I am making it happen today!”

And guess what? She ended up skiing faster than she had ever skied before and finished tied for first place.

Here’s the really cool thing: This doesn’t just work for skiing. You can think of personalized, positive reminders to replace negative thoughts when you struggle with grades or feel like you don’t fit in or that you are not worth much because you aren’t popular.

DON'T DWELL ON DOUBT

Dwelling obsessively on what we do wrong prevents us from maximizing our potential. It is one of the adversary’s greatest tools. But using language to build confidence and trusting in God to help you do your best no matter the result builds confidence in your abilities and chases away doubt. That concept has changed my life.

When we trust in God, we achieve our greatest potential because we become who *He* wants us to be. We can replace fear with confidence and pessimism with optimism as we strive to do our best. **NE**

NOTES

1. James E. Faust, “I Believe I Can, I Knew I Could,” Oct. 2002 general conference.
2. L. Tom Perry, Oct. 1998 general conference.

HOW TO CHANGE YOUR THINKING

You can change fear into confidence.

By Joshua J. Perkey

Church Magazines

The words we use to talk to ourselves have a huge impact on how we feel, how we act, and what we accomplish. Wholesome language inspires; degrading language tears us down.

Just as the Olympic skier in Craig Manning's article experienced, the way we think and talk to ourselves can enhance or weaken our capability.

As you strive to live worthy of the Spirit and to rely on Heavenly Father to help you overcome self-doubt and negative thoughts, you can change your thinking. That can change how you feel, act, and what you accomplish! As it says in Proverbs 23:7, "As [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he."

Here's an exercise you can use to help you write phrases to help change your thinking:

- 1 Pick something you want to improve—something you want to do better or something you want to change so you can become the kind of person you want to be. Write that down.
- 2 Imagine what it would be like if you actually improved that thing you wanted to improve. Write down what you're imagining, with lots of description.
- 3 Write a single statement that summarizes what you wrote in step 2. Make it as strong and straightforward as you can. This will be your new positive reminder you use to counteract the negative thoughts.
- 4 Whenever you feel doubt, frustration, disappointment, or like you are losing control over your goal, stop what you are thinking right away and use your new

reminder to shift your thinking, feelings, and actions. You'll be amazed at what you can do!

Here's an example of how a young man who struggles with self-esteem might use this process:

Old Belief

"I always say the wrong thing. No one wants to talk to me."

New Belief

"I can talk to people! Heavenly Father can help me know what to say!"

Here's some space for you to practice:

- 1 _____

- 2 _____

- 3 _____

4 Remember to use it!

YOU CAN DO THIS!

You can create positive reminders to address different situations. Below are four examples of areas of your life where changing your thinking can be a great benefit. They include relationships, health, spirituality, and finances.

Those are just a starting point. You might think of different areas that work for you, and you might want more than one positive reminder in each area. Do what works for you. But remember these three important points:

1. This process works when you use it consistently as your new belief gets challenged by your old belief.
2. Trust in God. You will accomplish many awesome things with His help, but sometimes things don't work out the way we hope. In those cases, be careful not to blame God or get discouraged. Your goal is to create a positive mental, emotional, and spiritual environment so that you can do your best and become your best.
3. Ask God for guidance. Heavenly Father loves you and will guide you in your decisions (see Luke 11:9; 3 Nephi 14:7; D&C 88:63). Prayerfully consider how to grow and change, and the Spirit will help you.

As you use this process to intentionally direct your life, you'll be amazed at how much you improve, how successful you can become, and how quickly you can achieve more in your life!

▶ RELATIONSHIPS

Old Belief

Example: My parents got divorced, so I probably will too.

New Belief

Example: I make righteous choices that determine my future! With Heavenly Father's help, I can have a great marriage relationship and choose to be faithful to my spouse!

▶ HEALTH

Old Belief

Example: I hate exercise and really would rather just play video games. Besides, if I'm too weak or tired to walk a block to my friend's house, someone will just drive me.

New Belief

Example: My body is a gift from God. I can strengthen it, get healthier, and feel great about myself!

▶ SPIRITUAL

Old Belief

Example: The scriptures are too hard to read. I'll just do something else instead.

New Belief

Example: I love the scriptures! I can learn to read them, strengthen my testimony, and grow closer to Heavenly Father.

▶ FINANCIAL

Old Belief

Example: I'll never be able to afford to go on a mission or to college. It's just too expensive.

New Belief

Example: With the Lord's help, I will find a job or another way to finance my mission! And I can earn scholarships and work my way through college! I can do this!

My name is Sylvie L., I'm 17 years old, and I'm from Germany.

I like to dance and draw. Mostly I like hip-hop and modern dance. I draw Manga or just whatever comes into my head, mostly from nature. When I draw, I feel peaceful and relaxed. When I dance, it's just fun.

My favorite scripture is 1 Nephi 2:15: "And my father dwelt in a tent." That may sound a bit odd, but that's my favorite scripture because I have a reading disability and when we would read the scriptures together as a family, I always got to read that verse out loud because it wasn't as difficult for me. Besides that, I've also learned that there's more to this verse than it seems. For example, it shows that Nephi's father was a wealthy trader, because not everyone could have afforded a good tent and traveled with it. So there's more to the scriptures than we sometimes think.

The scriptures bring me peace. When the thought comes to me to read the scriptures, I know that it's the Holy Ghost, because most of the time when I follow that first thought, I read something that's very relevant to me.



Benjamin P., 16, England



Hi, my name is Benjamin! I am a YouTuber, filmmaker, and photographer. I love making videos, creating films, and taking pictures because I like to be creative and use my imagination. I love the gospel because it teaches us that we are all important to Heavenly Father and we are all His children. He loves us and wants us to return to live with Him again!



Dallin P., 17, Arizona, USA



I'm Dallin. I love singing, acting, playing instruments, and doing basically anything outdoors. My teacher asked me to join her choir. I told her I would but I would not perform on Sunday. She said she had other Mormons in her choir, so she never had performances on Sunday. I was so happy that there were others before me who stood up for their standards. I know Heavenly Father will provide a way for you to be happy and keep your standards.



For more stories like this one from Germany, go to [@LDSYouth](#) on Instagram. And send your own photos and testimonies to newera@ldschurch.org.

FUN STOP



Should You Go to the Next Church Dance?

Start Here



Are you 14 or older?

Yes

No

Clear some space on the living room floor and hone your dancing skills for now. After your 14th birthday, the world will never be the same.



Which of the following best describes your dancing skill level?

I have the coordination of a three-legged wildebeast tumbling down a mountain.

I step on my dance partner's feet several times during a slow song.

I don't dance. I'm a professional back-wall-leaner.

I do alright. I mostly just blend in.

My moves are legendary, heroic, and epic!

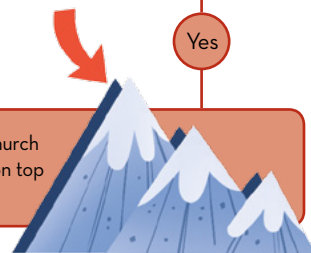
Excellent! There's no risk of bodily harm. Attend.

How lucky are you?! What a view! Attend, and dance within a protective circle of your more coordinated friends.

No

Yes

Will the next Church dance be held on top of a mountain?



Nothing cures dancing insecurity faster than having your toes stepped on. Attend, and boost the self-confidence of your dance partners all night long.

Are the walls well decorated at your church dances?

No

Yes

The room would be bland without you. Enjoy visiting with friends between songs, and make those walls shine.

You'll enjoy the decorations more than anyone else in the room! Attend, and bask in the fruits of your profession.

You clearly have the talent to become an international superspy some day. Attend, and further sharpen your skills at blending in.

'Legendary'? 'Epic'? It's possible you've been reading too many fantasy novels lately. Go to the dance for a change of pace and to teach dance moves to your friends.



BROTHER JONES CAN NEVER RESIST PLAYING HIS FAVORITE SONG FROM HIGH SCHOOL AT LEAST ONCE DURING EVERY STAKE DANCE.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOSH TALBOT

VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

A Question of Ownership

WHAT BELONGS TO YOU BUT IS USED MORE OFTEN BY OTHERS?

To solve, first unscramble the mixed-up letters and write them in the spaces beneath each word. **Copy all the letters inside circles and triangles to the bottom, then unscramble each set to find the answer.**

1.

L K E



2.

Y A T P R



3.

H C C U O



4.

D I N M



Unscramble here:



RYAN STOKER



KEVIN BECKSTROM

Solve before Sampling

Your sneaky math teacher brought treats for the whole class on Valentine's Day ... but with a catch! You first must **answer the riddle** before delving into the sugary goodness.

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF  ?

$$\text{heart} + \text{strawberry} = 12$$

$$\text{heart} - \text{strawberry} = \text{strawberry}$$

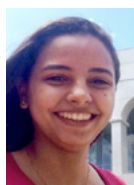
$$\text{strawberry} + \text{strawberry} = \text{heart}$$



“How can I ask my friends not to talk unkindly or inappropriately about others?”

Gossip, unkind words, vulgarity—you’ve probably heard all of these things while walking your school hallways. Sometimes your friends are the ones participating, and you might feel uncomfortable and unsure of how to respond, but you can make a difference by being a good example.

Stand assured—true friends will respect you for your decision to use clean, uplifting language that emphasizes the positive qualities of others.



Ask for God’s Help

Prayer will help you get strength from God to know how to speak to others. First, ask the Lord

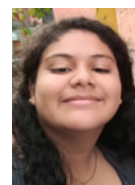
to know what to say to your friends. Also ask Him to help your friends understand the importance of looking at everyone as beloved children of Heavenly Father. Emphasize the importance of seeing the best in people and not saying bad things about them.

Victória Kércia M., 19, Piauí, Brazil

Be Direct

You can just tell your friends nicely, “Hey, stop that. I don’t appreciate it,” or “Please don’t talk like that. That is rude.” After all, one of two great commandments is to “love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:39).

Clayton P., 14, Arizona, USA



Have Courage

Just like Esther, Joseph Smith, Joseph of Egypt, and many other scriptural figures, you can

have the courage to stop your friends from speaking inappropriately about others. I was going through the same situation, and I had the courage to talk to my friends in a loving and understanding way. In the end, they accepted and understood how important it is to use pure and worthy language! Besides reading the scriptures and praying, fasting helps a lot in those situations. Pray and ask with faith that our Heavenly Father will give you the courage to speak and touch the hearts of your friends.

Paola H., 17, San Salvador, El Salvador



Help Each Other to Stay Positive

My friends and I got bracelets, and every time one of us said something mean about another person, we would flick the speaker's bracelet. This was a good constant

reminder to keep our thoughts and words positive.

Caroline J., 18, Utah, USA

Embrace Differences with Love

My friends must know that because we each have different strengths, we can benefit one another. In spite of people's imperfections, we must always have more love for them, and we must also believe in the power to change that is found in the Savior's atoning sacrifice.

Esther M., 19, Kasai-Oriental, Democratic Republic of the Congo



Be an Example

The best way to do this is by setting the example. Take the initiative to say good and positive things about whoever is being talked about. You will be amazed

by how fast the conversation can change.

Elder Eads, 24, Korea Seoul South Mission

Explain the Drawbacks

Tell your friends how many positive experiences and interactions with other people they are missing out on. Explain that saying curse words is not good because it distances you from other people and pollutes your mind. Plus, good people avoid you if you use bad language.

Elisa Ferreira S., 16, Minas Gerais, Brazil

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



How do I know if I've fully repented?

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught that "repentance means striving to change" and that "real change may require repeated attempts." He has also said that "for our turning to the Lord to be complete, it must include nothing less than a covenant of obedience to Him," which is contained in the baptismal covenant and the sacrament (Oct. 2011 general conference). Full repentance also means making up for any harm you did to others. In addition, the Lord has said that a person who fully repents of his sins "will confess them and forsake them" (D&C 58:43). You should confess all sins to Heavenly Father and serious sins to your bishop as well. (When in doubt, talk to the bishop. He's there to help.)

After doing these things, a way to know you've fully repented is to see and feel the effects of repentance—changes in your desires, feelings, outlook, relationships, and behavior. And, most importantly, full repentance will bring the companionship of the Holy Ghost. **NE**

Tell Us What You Think:

"I've been struggling with the same temptations for a long time. It's frustrating. How can I move past them?"

Send your answer and photo by March 15, 2018.

Go to newera.lds.org, and 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.

EMOTIONAL SKILLS

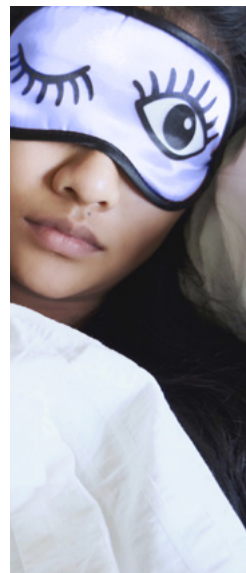
Humor. Sorrow. Anger. Excitement!

Emotions are a massive part of life. And they sometimes arise without warning.

When we try to cultivate healthy emotional skills, we sometimes think we have to start or stop feeling certain emotions. That's not always easy, and sometimes not really possible. Here are some things that can make a big difference.



TRY IT OUT!



1

There will be times in life when you won't always have access to your favorite hobbies and emotional outlets. Practice giving up one such hobby or outlet for a week and see how it goes.

2

Healthy food and regular exercise help stabilize your emotions. Find an activity you enjoy that raises your heart rate, then commit to doing that three times or more each week.

3

Practice writing a gratitude journal. Find three or more things every day that you're grateful for and write them down.

4

Getting enough sleep helps steady emotions and maintain good health. Practice going to bed at 10:30 p.m. and getting up at 6:30 a.m. every day for a week, including the weekend. If missionaries can do it, so can you!

5

Write down something that you look forward to doing in the next week and in the next few months. Put that paper where you can see it regularly, and update it often so there's always a little hope ahead.

“For emotional health and spiritual stamina, everyone needs to be able to look forward to some respite, to something pleasant and renewing and hopeful, whether that blessing be near at hand or still some distance ahead.” —Jeffrey R. Holland, Oct. 1999 general conference.

ANSWERS (from pages 44-45) A Question of Ownership: 1. elk, 2. party, 3. couch, 4. mind, Solution: YOUR NAME. Solve before Sampling: Heart=8, Strawberry=4.

SERVICE MILESTONE

President Monson speaking at his first general conference as the prophet in April 2008.

Served as a General Authority
for almost

54
YEARS

2008–2018

Thomas S. Monson served as the 16th President of the Church.

WORDS OF WISDOM Scripture Vocab

PRUDENCE: good judgment; self-discipline

“Every herb in the season thereof, and every fruit in the season thereof; all these to be used with prudence and thanksgiving” (D&C 89:11).

HOSANNA: save now

This word was used during the Lord’s triumphal entry.

“And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Mark 11:9).

APPELLATION: a name

“And thus Moroni put an end to those king-men, that there were not any known by the appellation of king-men” (Alma 51:21).

WHO KNEW?

Church facts, news & trends

PRESIDENT
THOMAS S. MONSON
Improvement Era, Feb.
1967, p. 48

5

Guideposts to Living

1

When you see sin, shun it.

2

When you have a duty, do it.

3

When you enjoy freedom, protect it.

4

When you have the truth, live it.

5

When you have a testimony, share it.

CHURCH STATS from AROUND THE WORLD

POLAND

1,940

Total Church Membership

13

Congregations

1

Missions

0

Temples

In 1989, Sister Urszula Adamska was the first missionary called from Poland.

COSTA RICA

47,474

Total Church Membership

75

Congregations

2

Missions

1

Temple

Missionaries first arrived in Costa Rica in 1946.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

25,856

Total Church Membership

76

Congregations

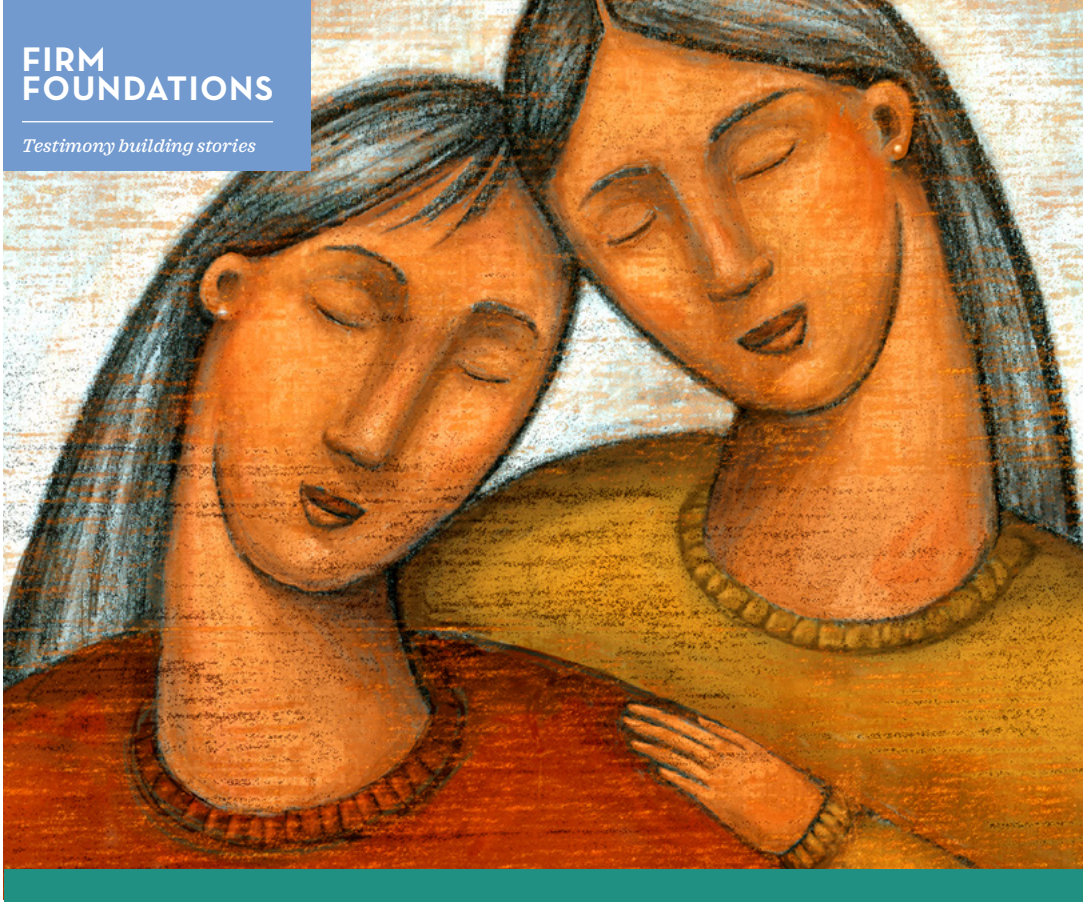
2

Missions

0

Temples

The first stake on the island was created in 1995.



HOW WOULD WE GET HOME?

ONE DAY MY FRIEND Viviana and I heard about an important fireside from our Young Women leaders. They encouraged us to go, even though it was far away from where we lived.

We were not familiar with how to get there by bus, and we couldn't afford a taxi. However, we trusted in the Lord and went on the bus. On the ride, my friend saw someone she knew, and the woman suggested that we catch the metro at the next stop. So we did. When we got off, we were already quite close to the

stake center. And since the metro ride happened to be free because of its recent grand opening, we were able to use that money to pay for a taxi to our destination.

After we got to the fireside, we had a problem: we were out of money! We didn't tell anyone, but when the fireside ended, our bishop came and gave each of us a tithing envelope with money in it. He said, "I'm afraid you put more money into your envelopes than you had recorded on the donation slip, and here is what you overpaid."

At that moment, Viviana and I embraced each other. We knew that because of our diligence in following our leaders and paying our tithing, our Heavenly Father was blessing us. That experience reminds me how much He is aware of me and loves me. I know that when we obey His commandments in faith, He will bless us.

Maria C., Venezuela

"Some people say, 'I can't afford to pay tithing.' Those who place their faith in the Lord's promises say, 'I can't afford not to pay tithing.'"

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,
Apr. 1994 general conference.

Why Do We Pay Tithing?

1. It's a commandment (see Leviticus 27:30-34). While paying tithing may be a sacrifice, obedience will help strengthen our faith.
2. Tithing funds are used to help further the Lord's work (see D&C 120).
3. We're promised spiritual and temporal blessings when we pay our tithing (see Malachi 3:10-11; 3 Nephi 24:10).
4. Tithing is a privilege and a way to show gratitude to God (see "Tithing," Gospel Topics, [topics.lds.org](https://www.lds.org/topics)).

MESSAGES FOR ME

BEFORE WORKING on my Virtue value project for Personal Progress, I had read the Book of Mormon many times, but I didn't feel like I had a testimony of it. I would read the Book of Mormon, ask God if it was true, and feel OK about it, so I figured that was a good enough answer and would move on, never really taking more time on it. I thought since I had a testimony of everything else, that was good enough.

When I began to read the Book of Mormon for my Virtue value project, I really studied and tried to gain a testimony of it for myself. It came through finding that the Book of Mormon held messages for me! It held things that Heavenly Father needed me to know at that point in my life.

The Book of Mormon is for us. It helps us to be better and to have the Spirit more in our lives. I'm so grateful for this testimony I've gained. Now I can gladly say that I know the Book of Mormon is true!

Ashley H., Utah, USA



SHARING THE LIGHT IN MY HEART

AT SCHOOL ONE DAY, my teacher turned on a movie for us and left the classroom. As soon as my teacher left, I felt that something was wrong. As the movie went on, it began to show inappropriate images. I knew I had to leave the room. Then I remembered what I'd learned in seminary recently. We had talked about being "the light of the world" and how we can share that light with others (see Matthew 5:14–16). This was an opportunity to share my light!

I confidently stood up and told my classmates that we shouldn't be watching this movie. One of my classmates said with a teasing voice, "There's nothing wrong with this movie! We're mature enough to watch stuff like this." My other classmates agreed with him. I sat down, feeling sad and discouraged. I felt like I had no light—so how could I influence them to do good? I prayed and felt prompted to leave the room. And without hesitation, I got up and left by myself.

Miraculously, a minute later, a few of my classmates also left the room. As I watched them come out, I realized that my light wasn't useless after all. I'm glad I can be a light to others. Sometimes it can be hard to combat evil, but we can always remember that we have a light within our hearts, and that light is our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Man Fai S., Philippines



A Prophet's Invitation: Study the Book of Mormon

By President Thomas S. Monson
(1927-2018)

From an April 2017 general conference address.

I speak about the power of the Book of Mormon and the critical need we have as members of this Church to study, ponder, and apply its teachings in our lives. The importance of having a firm and sure testimony of the Book of Mormon cannot be overstated.

We live in a time of great trouble and wickedness. What will protect us from the sin and evil so prevalent in the world today? I maintain that a strong testimony of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and of His gospel will help see us through to safety. If you are not reading the Book of Mormon each day, please do so. If you will read it prayerfully and with a sincere desire to know the truth, the Holy Ghost will manifest its truth to you. If it is true—and I solemnly testify that it is—then Joseph Smith was a prophet who saw God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Because the Book of Mormon is true, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord's Church on the earth, and the holy priesthood of God has been restored for the benefit and blessing of His children.

If you do not have a firm testimony of these things, do that which is necessary to obtain one. It is essential for you to have your own testimony in these difficult times, for the testimonies of others will carry you only so far. However, once obtained, a testimony needs to be kept vital and alive through continued obedience to the commandments of God and through daily prayer and scripture study.

I implore each of us to prayerfully study and ponder the Book of Mormon each day. As we do so, we will be in a position to hear the voice of the Spirit, to resist temptation, to overcome doubt and fear, and to receive heaven's help in our lives. **NE**

Met his wife,
Frances,
at a dance.

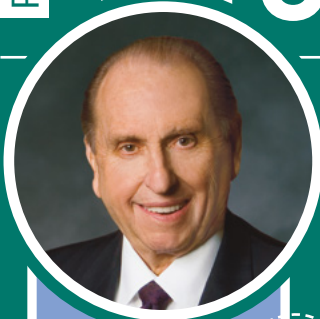


He worked in the
newspaper and
printing industry.



When he was eight
years old, he started a
**fire in a
canyon.**

PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON



Sustained as the
**16th
president**

of
The Church of
Jesus Christ
of Latter-day
Saints
on April 5, 2008



While serving
as an Apostle,
he earned his



**master's
degree**
at BYU.



Born August 21, 1927, and
died January 2, 2018, in
Salt Lake City, Utah, USA



He studied
business at the
University of Utah.

He was called
to be an Apostle on
October 3, 1963.



**Joined
the
Navy**
in 1945,
at age 18



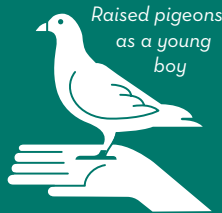
Married
Frances Johnson
October 7, 1948, in
the Salt Lake Temple



In 1959,
he was called to be
a mission president
in Toronto, Canada.



He was
called as a bishop
in 1950. The ward had
1,060 members.



Raised pigeons
as a young
boy

In the October 2008
general conference, he
wiggled
his ears as he told
a story.



Loved to go **fishing.**

**He was good
at checkers.**



**He
donated**
his own suits,
dress shirts, and
shoes to give
**to people
in East
Germany**
when he was on
assignment.



3 children, 8 grandchildren, and
12 great-grandchildren

Dig into Your Roots

February 28–March 3, 2018
Salt Lake City, Utah, USA



You don't live near Salt Lake City? No Problem!

SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 2018
Family Discovery Day

11:00 AM	FAMILY HISTORY FUN: CONNECT. BELONG. Hank Smith and Jason Hewlett MAIN STAGE	Consultant Class: Start with the Heart BALLROOM B	Using Family History to do Missionary Work BALLROOM C	FamilySearch and Ancestry: Discover More BALLROOM F	Records of Your Hispanic Ancestors on FamilySearch BALLROOM G
1:00 PM	FAMILY DISCOVERY DAY GENERAL SESSION Elder Dallin H. Oaks and Sister Kristen M. Oaks MAIN STAGE				
2:30 PM	MUSIC: A BRIDGE ACROSS GENERATIONS Evie Clair, Kenya Clark, Alex Melecio MAIN STAGE	Consultant Class: Ministering to Others Brings Joy BALLROOM D	Discover, Grow, and Strengthen Your Family BALLROOM E	FamilySearch Mobile App: Family History, Anytime, Anywhere BALLROOM F	10 Easy FamilySearch.org Tasks BALLROOM G

Livestream the RootsTech Family Discovery Day on Saturday, March 3, 2018, at LDS.org starting at 1:00 p.m. MST, or find videos at lds.org/discoverfamily.