

# THE New Era



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THE GOSPEL  
AND  
SERVING  
A MISSION**

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# IN THE LORD'S HANDS

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**By Elder Ulisses Soares**

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

*We all have the potential to become beautiful works of art in the Lord's hands.*

I am certain you have heard of Michelangelo, the Italian sculptor. Besides being a sculptor, he was a painter, a poet, and an architect, and he is considered one of the foremost artists of Western civilization.

One of his most famous sculptures is called the *Pietà*. This statue portrays Mary, the mother of Jesus, seated with Jesus Christ lying in her arms after He was crucified. It depicts Mary's profound sadness and the physical and emotional suffering Jesus accumulated after taking upon Him the sins of the world and being nailed to the cross.

I had the privilege of viewing this sculpture during a visit to Saint Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. I was impressed to learn that Michelangelo used basically two main tools to accomplish his works of art: a hammer and a chisel. It is truly incredible

that he could create such an enormous and beautiful work of art from a piece of raw marble using these two tools.

When I think about the works he produced and the results he achieved, I think about the wonderful plan of love our Heavenly Father developed in consideration for each of us and for what He hoped we might become when He sent us here to earth.

Figuratively, we all have the potential to become beautiful works of art in the Lord's hands. In this sense, He is the sculptor and He is able to mold us through our experiences day by day. If we allow the Lord to shape us, we can turn our lives in the direction of God and become like Him, and the result will be wonderful.



## Hold to the Iron Rod

Without question, this world offers many distractions that can pull our focus away from the primary reason we are living here on this earth. These distractions can turn into detours in our lives that prevent us from being transformed into works of art.

In Lehi's vision about the tree of life, Lehi saw a tree "whose fruit was desirable

to make one happy" (1 Nephi 8:10). He also saw a straight and narrow path alongside an iron rod that led to the tree (see 1 Nephi 8:19–20). A dense mist of darkness covered the path leading to the tree of life. Because of this mist, several people who had started along the path to the tree of life wandered away from it and became lost (see 1 Nephi 8:22–23).

Nephi explained that "the mists of darkness are the temptations of the devil, which blindeth the eyes, and hardeneth the hearts of the children of men, and leadeth them away into broad roads, that they perish and are lost" (1 Nephi 12:17). Here we find the primary weapon the enemy uses to distract us: temptation.

Nephi explained to his brothers that the only weapon we have to avoid this distraction is to hold onto the iron rod (see 1 Nephi 15:24–25).

"And I said unto them that it [the iron rod] was the word of God; and whoso would hearken unto the word of God, and would hold fast unto it, they would never perish; neither could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary overpower them unto blindness, to lead them away to destruction" (1 Nephi 15:24).

## The Light of Christ

There is a simple formula that President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) often quoted that can help us avoid the



MINERVA TEICHERT (1888–1976), *THE HOUSE OF THE WORLD*, 1949–1951, OIL ON MASONITE, 36 X 48 INCHES, BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART, 1969.

# ALLOW THE LORD TO MOLD AND TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE INTO YOUR POTENTIAL.

distraction of temptation and keep us moving in the right direction. He said, “You can’t be right by doing wrong, and you can’t be wrong by doing right.”<sup>1</sup>

President Monson’s formula is simple and direct. If we exercise faith and are diligent in obeying the commandments of the Lord, we will easily find the right way to go when we face daily small choices.

We are able to find the right way because our Heavenly Father has given us the Light of Christ. The Light of Christ is the divine energy, power, or influence that proceeds from God through Christ and gives life and light to all things. It helps a person choose between right and wrong. This wonderful gift helps us identify what is right, and the Holy Ghost testifies of the truth and helps guide our decisions on which path to follow. These two gifts are available to help to guide our lives in the Lord’s direction.

## The Blessing of Repentance

Let us imagine that for some reason we have been deceived or confused by temptation and we end up sinning. What should we do? If we fall into temptation and sin, we have to reconcile ourselves with God. In the language of the scriptures, this means we must repent.

I like very much what Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught about repentance:

“When we sin, we turn away from God. When we repent, we turn back toward God.

“The invitation to repent is rarely a voice of chastisement but rather a loving appeal to turn around and to ‘re-turn’ toward God [see Helaman 7:17]. It is the beckoning of a loving Father and His Only Begotten Son to be more than we are, to reach up to a higher way of life, to change, and to feel the happiness of keeping the commandments. Being disciples of Christ, we rejoice in the blessing of repenting and the joy of being forgiven. They become part of us, shaping the way we think and feel.”<sup>2</sup>

My dear young people, repentance is a wonderful gift that is available to all who desire to return to God. It is available to those who have the desire to hold onto the iron rod and allow the Lord to shape their lives into wonderful works of art.

## Shaping Our Souls Each Day

We were born with the seed of divinity in our spirits because we are God’s children. This seed needs to grow. It develops as we use our agency in righteousness, as

we make correct decisions, and as we use the Light of Christ and the Holy Ghost to guide us in the decisions we make during the course of our lives. In this way we shape our spirits so that they become admirable works of art.

Our choices shape our souls. Recognizing our dedication and perseverance, the Lord will give us what we are unable to obtain by ourselves. He will shape us because He sees our efforts to overcome our imperfections and human weaknesses.


My invitation is for all of us to allow the Lord to mold and transform our lives into our potential—into that which our Heavenly Father has planned for us.

Let us understand our eternal perspective and turn our lives into beautiful works of art that were planned by a loving Heavenly Father who developed a plan of redemption so that we could return to His presence. **NE**

*From a Brigham Young University devotional address given on November 5, 2013.*

## NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “In Harm’s Way,” Apr. 1998 general conference.
2. Neil L. Andersen, Oct. 2009 general conference.



*Even if we don't know the reason for our trials,  
we can know that the Lord will never abandon us.*

# WE DON'T ALWAYS KNOW

**By Chakell Wardleigh**  
Church Magazines

## ***“Why?”***

Have you ever asked this simple question but not received an equally simple answer? Sometimes when bad things happen to us or to people we love, we want to know why. “Why did my grandma have to die?” “Why did my friend’s dad lose his job?” “Why did I fail my test when I studied so hard?”

Just wanting to know “why” seems like such a small thing to ask for. That’s all we really want to know when we’re facing difficult trials, right? To just have someone sit down and explain all the reasons why you’re going through what you’re going through. Right then and there.

But unfortunately, that’s not usually how this life works. There are some things we may not ever completely understand here on the earth. And when we don’t get a straightforward answer, it’s easy to get discouraged or frustrated.

### **Why do we not always know “why”?**

We know Heavenly Father has a plan for us, and we know we will all have to face trials throughout this adventure we call life. But trusting the Lord without knowing all the answers while feeling that looming fear of the unknown can be really hard sometimes.

So how can we do it? How can we trust in God’s plan for us, have faith, and feel joy when we’re



# “WHY”

faced with all sorts of trials that don't always make sense? Well, the key is understanding that sometimes not knowing all the answers is all part of learning to trust God and His plan.

Moving forward with faith without knowing “why” allows us to turn to the Lord for help and grow closer to Him. Nephi was a great example of this!

In 1 Nephi 11:17, he says, “I know that [God] loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things.” So, when you're feeling bad about not understanding everything, remember that even Nephi didn't always know all the answers. But he kept going and trusting, and so can you!

## Why doesn't God just take trials away?

When I was facing some difficult challenges as a teenager, I remember praying to Heavenly Father and asking Him to just take them away from me. I knew He could. I knew He had the power to. But every morning when I woke up, the trials would still be there! I would be devastated. My heart would sink, my faith in the Lord would dwindle. I would feel completely abandoned.

Sometimes I thought my trials were given just to torment me. I couldn't see any point to them.

One day, I came across these words from Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “When those moments come and issues surface, the resolution of which is not immediately

“When those moments come and issues surface, the resolution of which is not immediately forthcoming, *hold fast to what you already know and stand strong until additional knowledge comes.*”

—ELDER JEFFREY R. HOLLAND



forthcoming, *hold fast to what you already know and stand strong until additional knowledge comes.*”<sup>1</sup>

I decided to focus on what I did know instead of what I didn't know. And I did know deep down that if God wasn't taking my trials away, there had to be a reason for what I was going through, even if I didn't understand what that reason was at the time. So I continued to put my faith and trust in Him. I kept hoping some “additional knowledge” would come.

And for some of my trials, that knowledge finally did come. And for others I was blessed with more patience to continue on the right path without knowing all the reasons why for now.

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught that without trials and challenges in life, “there would be no test of strength, no development of character, no growth of powers, no free agency, only satanic controls.”<sup>2</sup>

There has to be opposition in all things (see 2 Nephi 2:11). Otherwise, how would we ever appreciate the good without the bad? How would we ever feel triumphant when we beat a challenge? We wouldn't be able to grow if God just magically waved trials away when we asked Him to! When I realized this, my whole perspective on adversity and trials changed. I began to see the good in them.

### How can you find the good, even in the hardest trials?

Trials bring goodness, growth, and strength like nothing else can. But sometimes it can take a while to recognize that goodness. For example, I've faced a heavy trial for years, and I may have to face it for the rest of my life.

This particular trial has stretched me, pushed me, and almost defeated me a few times. But now that I look back on everything this trial has put me through, I can honestly say that I am thankful for it. I'm thankful for all my trials.

I'm a different person now because of them. I'm more compassionate, more patient, more forgiving, more resilient, and more hopeful. Through it all, I've grown closer to my Heavenly Father and the Savior more than I ever thought I could. I wouldn't be who I am today without all my trials.

Adversity is meant to shape you into the person Heavenly Father wants you to become. Trials are definitely challenging, yes, but through it all, they allow you to reach out to God for help, and to feel the comfort, peace, and joy only He can offer you.

If you are struggling to see the good in your trials now, be patient, keep praying, and have faith. Heavenly Father can strengthen you to endure them well as you continue to put your trust in Him.

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught: “Challenges, difficulties, questions, doubts—these are part of our mortality. But we are not alone. As disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have enormous spiritual reservoirs of light and truth available to us.”<sup>3</sup>

If you're facing a difficult trial, you're in good company. The Lord is very close to you. He will not abandon you. And He can give you more strength and more courage and more faith than you can imagine.

## Can you be happy when you're facing trials?

Though it may seem impossible, you truly can have joy in your trials! In fact, President Russell M. Nelson has taught: "When the focus of our lives is on God's plan of salvation . . . and Jesus Christ and His gospel, we can feel joy regardless of what is happening—or not happening—in our lives. Joy comes from and because of Him. He is the source of all joy."<sup>4</sup>

Having joy in your trials comes from focusing on gratitude, having a good attitude, serving others, and always remembering how much God loves you. He is on your side! He wants what's best for you. He has a plan. Trust Him. He can bring you true happiness. Things might not always be easy in this life, but it is possible to have joy in whatever circumstances we find ourselves in!

Whenever you're feeling discouraged, remember that everything will make sense one day. We will have all the answers to our "whys."

Doctrine and Covenants 101:32–33 says: "In that day when the Lord shall come, he shall reveal all things—things which have passed, and hidden things which no man knew, things of the earth, by which it was made, and the purpose and the end thereof."

I look forward to that day when everything will make sense. When all the dots finally connect. When everything will absolutely work out. Because it will! Though the tunnels of trials we enter may be long sometimes, the light at the end will never go out. It will always be there to guide us. Just keep going. Just keep trusting in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. They will be with you! And you will find true joy throughout this adventure we call life. **NE**

### NOTES

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, Apr. 2013 general conference.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 15.
3. Neil L. Andersen, Oct. 2008 general conference.
4. Russell M. Nelson, Oct. 2016 general conference.



## HOW TO HELP A FRIEND THROUGH TRIALS

**If** you have a friend who is facing a difficult trial, the first thing you probably want to do is fix it, right? You want to see your friend's bright smile and hear their contagious laughter, and you're willing to do anything to get them to feel like themselves again. Sometimes you can't fix everything, but here a few pointers on how you can help your friend.

### 1. LISTENING, NOT TELLING

Instead of telling your friend what to do or giving them advice, just listen. Only give advice if they ask for it. A good listener is the best medicine for someone who is struggling.

### 2. ACTING, NOT JUST ASKING

Instead of asking "What can I do for you?" Choose to act too. Extra love can always help

someone who's struggling. Show them your love by visiting them or doing something to serve them. Act. Don't just ask.

### 3. SUPPORTING, NOT SOLVING

Sometimes there are problems you can't fix. But what you can do is try to support and understand your friend instead of trying to solve their problems. Put yourself in their shoes. Try to see things from their point

of view, figure out how they feel and where they're coming from. Instead of just trying to cheer them up, validate their feelings.

Tell them it's OK to feel angry or sad or frustrated. Remember to be patient with your friend too. It might take a while for them to feel better. Just show them that you want to understand and that you're always there to support them.

By Elder  
David F. Evans  
Of the Seventy



# Will

**M**y years in high school and my first year of college occurred during the Vietnam War. By the time I started college, the Church had entered into an agreement with the U.S. government concerning how many missionaries could serve. The agreement was that each ward could send out only two missionaries per year, and the rest of the young men would not be called and perhaps be drafted into the military. Despite my wanting to serve a mission all my life, it seemed very unlikely that I would be able to go.

I enrolled at the University of Utah in the fall of 1969. By the end of January 1970, I met and started dating my future wife, and by that spring we had fallen in love.

## The Bishop Called

One hot afternoon in July, I came home and my mother said to me, “David, the bishop called. He wants to meet with you.”

*If the Lord asks you  
to go, will you serve  
a mission?*

I responded, “I’m busy.”

My mother looked at me and said, “If you are too busy to go meet with the bishop, you pick up the phone and you call him and tell him that.”

I knew that I wasn’t *that* busy, so I went to meet with my bishop in his office. He was sitting at his desk, which was unusually cleared off. I could quickly tell that this interview was not at all what I thought it was going to be.

“David,” he said, “there is another ward that can’t use one of their missionary spots. We’ve been given the opportunity to send one more missionary. As a bishopric, we felt impressed to ask Heavenly Father if there was someone who ought to go right now.”





# You Go?

What I can tell you is this: now is the time the Lord would have you serve your mission.”

I was stunned by what he said. I had thought that because of the war and the quota, I would never be able to go on a mission. I asked if I could take some time to think about it. He asked how much time I would need, and I told him that I would like a week.

We then ended the interview, and I walked out—still stunned—to my car. I started driving around Salt Lake City, letting the afternoon’s events sink in.

## Deciding to Serve

Within a few minutes, I drove back to the church, parked the car, and walked back into the bishop’s office. He was still sitting there with absolutely nothing on his desk.

I looked at him and asked, “Bishop, what are you doing?”

He kindly responded, “I’m waiting for you.”

I then stated, “Well, Bishop, if now is the time that the

Lord would have me serve, of course I’ll serve.”

When I got home, my mother was in the kitchen. I was afraid if I told her everything I felt, then I would start to cry. So instead I said, “Mom, I can’t talk about it right now, but you should know that I’m going on a mission, and I’m going soon.”

Later that afternoon, I talked with my father about my decision. He gave me the sweetest, most encouraging counsel. Then I found my girlfriend (who is now my wife) and told her about my decision. We walked and talked and cried and talked some more. But there was no hesitation for either of us. If I could go, I should go, and I would go.

I received my call to serve in Japan in August, and on October 10, 1970, I left on my mission.

## When the Lord Calls, Will You Go?

In chapter 24 of Alma, the recently converted

Anti-Nephi-Lehies make a promise to never shed blood again. When their enemies come to attack them, they are willing to die rather than violate that promise. Then in chapter 27, Ammon suggests to the king that they leave their lands and join the Nephites, but the king declines, believing that the Nephites will also not accept them (see Alma 27:3–6). Ammon asks the king, “I will go and inquire of the Lord, and if he says unto us, go . . . , will ye go?” (Alma 27:7). The king of the Anti-Nephi-Lehies responds, “Inquire of the Lord, and if he saith unto us go, we will go; otherwise we will perish in the land” (Alma 27:10). Ammon asks, and the Lord commands them to leave. Without hesitation, the Anti-Nephi-Lehies leave.

Throughout your life, the Lord will ask you to “go.” When He does, will you go? Will you do it when He asks you to do it? I know from my own experience that much of the spiritual growth and blessings we experience in our lives are ultimately tied back to our decision to respond when the Lord calls. President Russell M. Nelson has said, “Each day is a day of decision, and our decisions determine our destiny” (Oct. 2013 general conference).

During my mission in Japan, I had the opportunity to teach the gospel to people I came to love.

**Counsel with  
your parents,  
counsel with  
your bishop,  
and counsel  
with the Lord  
through prayer.**

**When you know it is  
the right time to go,  
then you should go.**

In 1998, 26 years after my mission concluded, I was called as a mission president in Japan. I was in a different area this time, but I was back with the people I loved and who have loved me. My entire family was able to partake of this remarkable experience building up the Lord’s Church in Japan.

A few years after my wife and I returned home from our mission, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) asked us to meet with him. During that meeting, he extended a call to me to serve as a General Authority. He reflected on my experiences as a young missionary and as a mission president and told us that although there were many people who were qualified to be General Authorities, the Lord would use me because of my previous experiences and decisions.

Since President Thomas S. Monson announced the change in the missionary age, young people have been asked to counsel with their parents, counsel with their bishops, and counsel with the Lord through prayer. When you know it is the right time to go, then you should go. As you have patience and exercise faith, I know that the Lord will make His will known unto you.

I testify that as you are obedient to the will of the Lord, you will be blessed beyond measure. **NE**





By Marie Arnold

**A**s a young woman, I participated in Personal Progress. There were activities to do, projects to create, and goals to achieve.

For one project, I decided to read the words for all the songs in the hymnbook, look up the scriptures referenced for each song, and learn to play them on the piano.

I thought it was a practical project that would help me in the future, so I went to work reading, studying, and practicing the hymns.

Fast-forward a few years.

I served a mission in Argentina, and one of my challenges was speaking a different language. At first it was very hard to put words together fast enough to be able to share my thoughts with anyone. However, I learned that I could find a hymn that said just what I wanted to say faster than I could translate my thoughts. I would find the hymn I wanted to share, and even though the words were in another language,

the tune and the message were the same. I sang my testimony to many people and was able to share gospel truths this way until I became fluent in the Spanish language. I had the Lord to thank for the inspiration behind my Personal Progress project.

Because I know the words of the hymns, God has been able to send very specific messages to me many times. If I didn't know the words, I wouldn't have been able to receive the messages of hope, encouragement, and love that were there. I may have been able to feel the Spirit and be uplifted by the music, but without knowing the words, I would have missed the full message.

This was an unforeseen blessing of my practical Personal Progress project. Heavenly Father has been able to send profound and timely messages to my heart through the hymns. **NE**

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

# YOUR MTC EXPERIENCE

WANT TO HAVE AN AMAZING MISSION? THE MISSIONARY  
TRAINING CENTER WILL TEACH YOU HOW.

By Joshua J. Perkey  
Church Magazines

Imagine that today you finally received your mission call. Your assignment will include a specific place, mission language, and starting date. And on that date, you will likely report to one of 12 missionary training centers (MTCs) around the world. What will your experience at the MTC be like? Let's find out.

## YOUR FIRST DAY

Unless you live close enough to the MTC to drive there, the Church will arrange for your travel.

At the MTC in Provo, Utah, USA, missionaries and staff direct you to a line in the parking area where you say goodbye to family, meet your host missionaries, and then check in. The host missionaries—missionaries who have been at the MTC for a few weeks—become your guides as you arrive. They make sure your bags get to your residence while you receive your name tag and find your classroom.

"Everyone is so nice. No matter if they're in your district or a random missionary you meet, everyone is willing to help you," says Sister Hanks, one of nine missionaries we interviewed at the Provo MTC who are learning Mandarin Chinese. Missionaries from her district will be serving in Taiwan, Canada, and California, USA.

Sister Prestwich says, "That was the coolest thing ever, knowing that you're finally here and you finally get to do this wonderful thing that you know you've been asked to do."



PERU MTC

PROVO MTC



*"That was the coolest thing ever, knowing that you're finally here and you finally get to do this wonderful thing that you know you've been asked to do."*

—Sister Prestwich

GUATEMALA MTC



PROVO MTC

## YOUR FIRST CLASS

When you enter the MTC, learning begins quickly. On your first day, you'll enter your classroom and begin learning and practicing how to teach the gospel.

Sister Singleton says, "We walked into our classroom and all the older people in our zone were speaking Chinese and our teachers were speaking in Chinese."

Elder Adams says, "It took some time, but once you start picking it up, learning how to study effectively, your learning grows exponentially. It was just a positive growth cycle as you learn."

The training curriculum is exactly the same at all MTCs. At smaller MTCs, you will be interviewed by, taught by, and interact a lot with the MTC president and his wife. When members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles give a devotional talk at the Provo MTC, it is broadcast to the other MTCs.

## YOUR NEW BRANCH

At larger MTCs, the missionaries are assigned to a branch with a branch presidency (local Melchizedek Priesthood holders called to serve at the MTC). They meet with their branch for sacrament meeting on Sundays. At smaller MTCs, missionaries meet together under the direction of the MTC presidency.

At larger MTCs, each missionary is assigned to a zone made up of several districts. This is the same organization the missionaries will experience in the mission field. In the MTC, districts may have only a couple of companionships, or they may have five or six. Zones may be made up of a couple of districts or a half dozen. The organization helps with training and learning. MTC presidencies and branch presidencies and their wives also provide counseling and support for missionaries as they adjust to missionary life.





## FUN FACTS

- ▶ Approximately 40,000 missionaries pass through the MTCs each year.
- ▶ In smaller MTCs, as few as 35 to 150 missionaries may be there at one time.
- ▶ At the Provo MTC, there may be as many as 2,000 missionaries at one time.
- ▶ The Mexico MTC usually has several hundred missionaries but has the capacity for as many as 1,200.
- ▶ A total of 58 languages are taught at the various MTCs.
- ▶ Missionaries not learning a new language spend three weeks at the MTC.
- ▶ Missionaries learning a new language spend six to nine weeks at the MTC.



ENGLAND MTC



BRAZIL MTC



PHILIPPINES MTC



GHANA MTC



COLOMBIA MTC



BRAZIL MTC



PROVO MTC

*"Before I got here, I thought maybe this was going to be hard, almost a little miserable. But it's just a fun experience. It's a blast. We're having fun and working hard."*

—Elder Jackson

## YOUR WEEKLY ROUTINE

Missionaries sleep in rooms they share with their companions and other missionaries—usually four to a room. Each day, they have exercise time (except for Sundays), planning time, and time for meals. The bulk of their time is spent in a classroom, where they receive training on gospel doctrine, language (if needed), and how to find people to teach, how to teach by the Spirit, and how to plan their time. This training is the primary purpose of the MTC—to hone your understanding of the gospel and learn how to effectively share the message of the gospel with others. Your teachers will be returned missionaries who know how to help you develop the missionary skills you need. The daily schedule is demanding but also rewarding.

Elder Jackson says, "Before I got here, I thought maybe this was going to be hard, almost a little miserable. But it's just a fun experience. It's a blast. We're having fun and working hard."

Missionaries also have service opportunities and a preparation day. This day gives them time to do laundry, clean their rooms, and write home. This is also a time when missionaries can visit the temple.

On Sundays missionaries attend church with their fellow missionaries. They may be invited to speak in sacrament meeting and teach priesthood or Relief Society meetings. Elders

participate in the blessing and passing of the sacrament. Outside of the regular Church meetings, missionaries also participate in district meetings, have interviews with their branch or MTC presidency, watch Church media, have companionship conversations, and do personal study. Missionaries assigned to serve as zone leaders, district leaders, and sister training leaders have leadership training on Sundays as well.

While most of the daily schedule for missionaries is outlined, they do have some unstructured time. Sister Hanks says she feels responsible to spend her time well: "You choose how you spend your time. It's up to you how you use God's time."

## YOUR FIRST COMPANION

Adjusting to missionary life can be challenging—feeling homesick, eating different food, having a demanding learning experience. An excellent resource is the Church publication *Adjusting to Missionary Life*, available in print, online at LDS.org, and in the Gospel Library app.

One of the biggest adjustments to life as a missionary is having a companion with you all the time. He or she may come from a different country, speak a different language, or have a different perspective on doing missionary work together. Missionaries have to learn to be comfortable spending so much time with someone else. And they have to learn how to teach together. Elder Juilfs recalls, "We had one lesson that was really rough. We had different ideas and were going against each other. But we learned how important it is to teach as a companionship and let ideas flow."

How do you make that kind of adjustment? With love, humility, and communication. As Elder Lee explains, "There are companionship inventories where you take some time to review the day or week to understand your companion, how he would do things,

*"We had one lesson that was really rough. We had different ideas and were going against each other. But we learned how important it is to teach as a companionship and let ideas flow."*

—Elder Juilfs

and set yourself up so you can help the other person and you can grow together.”

As you strive to serve and show kindness to your companion, you also learn the power of unity. Elder Shaw says, “You have to forget about yourself a little bit, focus on your companionship as a team. Once you’re able to get that unity, it’s so powerful, and it’s so incredible.”

## YOU MIGHT FEEL HOMESICK

As a new missionary at the MTC, you might find the stress of the work and being away from home challenging. Sister Saliva says, “It’s normal to be homesick in the first few days. But then it gets better because we find comfort with each other, and our leaders comfort us. Focusing on studying helps me. I still miss my family, but my focus is on doing the work.”

It’s normal to feel stress, and it’s normal to feel some ups and downs. Elder Juilfs says, “You’re going to have some really good highs, and for some reason, sometimes you’ll just feel a little bit down. But you just have to step back and remember: ‘I’m not learning this for me; I’m learning it for those I will teach. As long as I’m trying my best, it’ll come.’”

But there is a great support system, including trainers, leaders, and your companion. Sister Singleton says, “One time I was really discouraged from a lesson, and things kind of piled up. But I talked to my companion, and we went on a little walk. That’s what helped me—to talk about it, cry a little bit. Focusing on the work and having a positive attitude—that helps so much.”

## YOU’LL LEAVE PREPARED

No matter your personal circumstances, if you come to the MTC with an open heart and a willingness to learn, trusting in the Lord to sustain you, the MTC will be a powerful training ground for your missionary service. Your testimony will be strengthened, you’ll learn to connect with and love the people you teach and those you serve with, and you’ll learn the language of the Spirit. You’ll also deepen your understanding of the gospel and learn how to teach it more effectively and how to adjust to different circumstances and challenges. When the time comes for you to depart for your mission, you’ll have greater confidence in yourself and in the Lord. **NE**



### Provo UTAH



**AREAS SERVED:**  
*Worldwide*

**TRAINING LANGUAGES:**  
**57**  
*different languages*

**MISSIONARIES SERVED ANNUALLY:**  
**20,515**

### Buenos Aires ARGENTINA




**AREAS SERVED:**  
*Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay*

**TRAINING LANGUAGE:**  
*Spanish*

**MISSIONARIES SERVED ANNUALLY:**  
**1,180**

### Mexico City MEXICO



**AREAS SERVED:**  
*Mexico, other countries of North, Central, and South America*

**TRAINING LANGUAGE:**  
*Spanish*

**MISSIONARIES SERVED ANNUALLY:**  
**4,848**

### Preston ENGLAND



**AREAS SERVED:**  
*Europe*

**TRAINING LANGUAGES:**  
*English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Russian, Spanish*

**MISSIONARIES SERVED ANNUALLY:**  
**785**



**MEXICO MTC**



**PROVO MTC**

*The number of MTCs may be increased or reduced as Church leaders continue to seek the best use of resources worldwide according to the needs and demands of each area.*

**São Paulo  
BRAZIL**

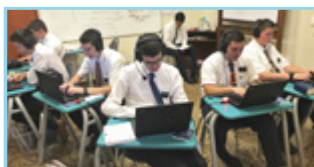


**AREAS SERVED:**  
*Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde,  
Mozambique*

**TRAINING LANGUAGES:**  
*Portuguese, Spanish*

**MISSIONARIES SERVED  
ANNUALLY:**  
**3,285**

**Bogotá  
COLOMBIA**



**AREAS SERVED:**  
*Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela*

**TRAINING LANGUAGE:**  
*Spanish*

**MISSIONARIES SERVED  
ANNUALLY:**  
**3,434**

**Lima  
PERU**



**AREAS SERVED:**  
*Bolivia, Peru*

**TRAINING LANGUAGE:**  
*Spanish*

**MISSIONARIES SERVED  
ANNUALLY:**  
**1,634**

**Guatemala City  
GUATEMALA**



**AREAS SERVED:**  
*Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala,  
Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama*

**TRAINING LANGUAGES:**  
*K'ekchi, Spanish*

**MISSIONARIES SERVED  
ANNUALLY:**  
**1,599**

**Accra  
GHANA**



**AREAS SERVED:**  
*DR Congo, Madagascar, West Africa*

**TRAINING LANGUAGES:**  
*English, French*

**MISSIONARIES SERVED  
ANNUALLY:**  
**1,740**

**Johannesburg  
SOUTH AFRICA**



**AREAS SERVED:**  
*Kenya, Madagascar, South Africa,  
Zimbabwe*

**TRAINING LANGUAGE:**  
*English*

**MISSIONARIES SERVED  
ANNUALLY:**  
**376**

**Auckland  
NEW ZEALAND**



**AREAS SERVED:**  
*Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New  
Guinea, Samoa, Tahiti, Tonga*

**TRAINING LANGUAGES:**  
*English, French, Samoan, Tongan*

**MISSIONARIES SERVED  
ANNUALLY:**  
**2,302**

**Manila  
PHILIPPINES**



**AREAS SERVED:**  
*Asia*

**TRAINING LANGUAGES:**  
*Cambodian, Cebuano, English, Indonesian,  
Mandarin, Mongolian, Tagalog, Thai,  
Urdu, Vietnamese*

**MISSIONARIES SERVED  
ANNUALLY:**  
**2,343**

MORMONAD

# FAITH

COMES ONE STEP AT A TIME

PHOTO OF MISSIONARIES IN MADAGASCAR BY CODY BELL

"Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work."  
Doctrine and Covenants 64:33.

# REACHING KEN OUT TO



By Ephraim Ong

When I was 16, I moved into a Taiwanese ward. Ken, a 13-year-old, had recently been baptized. But shortly after his baptism, Ken almost never attended church. I had a great desire to help Ken come back to church. I invited him to come to several Church activities. Ken played basketball at Mutual and joined the youth choir. He and his sister, Linda, also began to attend the free English classes taught by my family and the missionaries. Soon Linda began to attend youth activities as well. I could see God's hand helping us.

Ken's family wondered why my family tried to help Ken and Linda. We told them that the gospel had brought us great joy, and we really wanted others to find the same joy and peace from the Savior. Later, Linda and Ken

*The Lord's hand  
guided my  
ministering  
efforts.*

accepted our invitation to go to church. Linda came and had an awesome experience. However, Ken was ill, and when I prayed about what I could do to help him, I felt impressed that we should bring him the sacrament. With the bishop's permission, our family went over to his house, and my brother and I helped administer the sacrament to him. We also visited with his family. I felt peaceful.

Our family has prayed for Ken, and all of us feel love for Ken and his family. The youth and adults in the ward and stake continue to fellowship Ken and Linda. The members' combined efforts to minister are helping Ken and Linda feel the love of the Savior. This experience of trying to minister like the Savior has brought great joy to my life. Ministering is the Lord's work, and because it is His work, His hand will guide our ministering efforts. **NE**

*The author lives in Taiwan.*



# UNA FR



# AID

## TO SHARE THE TRUTH

*Armed with a testimony of the gospel and its blessings, Fabian H. hasn't let his young age stop him from becoming a powerful, fearless member missionary.*

By Michael R. Morris  
Church Magazines



The sun is setting on Las Tomas, a neighborhood built on the sandy slopes overlooking Antofagasta. Below, lights are beginning to shine as the day closes on this port city in northern Chile.

It's Saturday night, and 13-year-old Fabian H. could be hanging out with his friends. But Fabian, a new member of the Church, chooses to spend the evening with the full-time missionaries instead. It's time "to help gather Israel."<sup>1</sup>

Of all the dedicated member missionaries that Kellen VanNatter and Jordan Shelton worked with during their full-time missions in Chile, Fabian stands above the rest.

"If he was free, he was out with us doing missionary work," says Kellen.

"When summer vacation ended, he was sad not just because he had to return to school but also because he didn't have as much time to go out with us."

Jordan, who spent several months as Kellen's companion, adds, "Fabian probably went out with us four or five times a week—every week—while we served together in Antofagasta. He was the best member missionary we ever worked with."

What makes a young man so willing to do missionary work despite contempt from classmates and snubs from strangers? For Fabian, the answer lies in the blessings he and his family have received since accepting the gospel—blessings he wants to share with others.

OF ALL THE DEDICATED MEMBER MISSIONARIES THAT KELLEN VANNATTER AND JORDAN SHELTON WORKED WITH DURING THEIR FULL-TIME MISSIONS IN CHILE, FABIAN STANDS ABOVE THE REST.



“HE’S ALWAYS SHARING HIS OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCES—LIKE THE WAY HE FELT WHEN HE WENT

### “Inexplicable Joy”

Fabian began taking the missionary lessons shortly after the full-time missionaries came knocking. He still remembers his first sacrament meeting.

“I didn’t know anyone when I entered the chapel, so I was a little nervous,” he says. “But I felt something marvelous. I felt that I had been in the Church for months or years.”

During his baptism a few weeks later, “I felt an inexplicable joy upon being immersed in the water and coming out again. I felt like a new person, knowing that I was going to follow Jesus Christ and do my best to keep His commandments.”

As Fabian’s unmarried parents, Leonardo and Angela, joined their son during the missionary lessons, they learned about temple marriage and eternal families. “A week later, my father set a wedding date,” says Fabian. “My mother was very happy.”

Four months after Fabian joined the Church, Angela followed him into the waters of baptism. “That was a wonderful blessing,” he says.

Other blessings quickly followed.

Leonardo, who had been baptized when he was young, returned to activity in the Church. Gospel study became a staple in their home. Family members grew closer. Leonardo found steady work. And Fabian received the Aaronic Priesthood.



“I love holding the priesthood so that I can pass the sacrament to ward members and help them renew their covenants,” says Fabian. “I’m especially happy when I get to pass to my family and to the elders who taught me. The proud look my father gives me as he sees me pass the sacrament makes me very happy.”

### “That Would Be Great”

Fabian began doing member missionary work before he was even baptized.

“I told three of my friends I was getting baptized. Two of them came,” he says. “I like to share the gospel so that my friends understand what we believe and what we do at church and so that they can learn the gospel, get baptized, and lead happier lives. I would be very happy if one of them got baptized and became one of my quorum members. That would be great.”

Fabian keeps a Book of Mormon with him at school, and he carries missionary pamphlets to hand out to friends. He’s happy to answer questions about the Church and invite friends to Sunday meetings and youth activity night. And he’s unafraid to approach people on the street and, as the missionaries taught him, invite them to learn about the Church and prepare for baptism.

“Fabian doesn’t care if someone thinks he’s weird for sharing his testimony,” says Kellen. “He knows he is doing the right thing. He knows that spiritual things are more important than anything else.”



### “I Always Feel Better”

For Fabian, sharing the gospel brings another blessing.

“Sometimes bad things happen to me at school, but then the missionaries come knocking on my door and ask if I would be willing to help them teach,” he says. “After going out with them, I feel as if I don’t have any problems. I always feel better when I go out with them, read the scriptures with them, and help them share the gospel. Sharing the gospel and my conversion story strengthens my testimony. And teaching the gospel gives me

an opportunity to be an example to others, including my little sister.”

It’s no surprise that one of Fabian’s biggest goals is to become a full-time missionary himself after he graduates from high school.

“I want to share the truth with those who don’t know it,” he says. “I want to invite them to wash away their sins. I want to teach them how they can be an eternal family. I want to invite them to be happy now and to live in a state of never-ending happiness after this life.” **NE**

#### NOTE

1. See Russell M. Nelson, “Hope of Israel” (worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018), [HopeofIsrael.org](https://www.hopeofisrael.org).

## TO CHURCH FOR THE FIRST TIME AND HOW HE FEELS WHEN HE READS THE BOOK OF MORMON.”

When Fabian shares his testimony, Jordan says, he draws power from his conversion, his love of the gospel, and his blessings.

“He saw the blessings that came to his family, which is what inspires him to be so brave and straightforward in sharing the gospel with his friends,” Jordan says. “Once he was testifying to an investigator about what a big blessing it was for his parents to get married but how hard it was for him to wait four months after his baptism for his mother to get baptized. His emotions overcame him, and he was moved to tears. He then testified that if we keep the commandments, God will take care of us.”

Fabian’s testimony makes him a powerful member missionary, adds Kellen.

“He isn’t like, ‘Oh, I heard someone say this in church.’ Instead, he’s always sharing his own personal experiences—like the way he felt when he went to church for the first time and how he feels when he reads the Book of Mormon. It’s all very authentic and real.”



ABOVE AND BELOW: “FABIAN PREPARES FOR AN EVENING OF PROSELYTING WITH ELDERS KELLEN VANNATTER (BELOW, CENTER) AND JORDAN SHELTON (BELOW, RIGHT).”



## NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT

“My dear extraordinary youth, you were sent to earth at this precise time, the most crucial time in the history of the world, to help gather Israel. There is *nothing* happening on this earth right now that is more important than that. There is *nothing* of greater consequence.

Absolutely *nothing*.

“This gathering should mean *everything* to you.

This *is* the mission for which you were sent to earth.”

President Russell M. Nelson, “Hope of Israel” (worldwide youth devotional), June 3, 2018, [HopeofIsrael.org](https://www.hopeofisrael.org).

# MISSIONARY REFERRALS

*Stay in touch with the missionaries as they meet and teach your friends.*

Thanks to a new online feature, when you submit a referral to the missionaries, no matter where your friend lives, you can:

- **Be part of the process** by helping the missionaries understand your friend's needs, interests, questions, and preferred method of communication.
- **Participate in missionary lessons or gospel discussions** through phone or video chat.
- **Follow up with your friend** between missionary appointments to answer questions and provide support.

With this online referral system, you can participate more fully in sharing the gospel with your friends. You can even give referrals to the missionaries who work in your own ward or stake. Here's how:

**On LDS Tools:** Tap the Missionary section, then tap the plus button (+) to create a referral. Provide contact information for yourself and your friend, and write a message for the missionaries. Then tap Send.

**On LDS.org:** Click on Share the Gospel, scroll down to Refer a Friend, and follow similar steps.

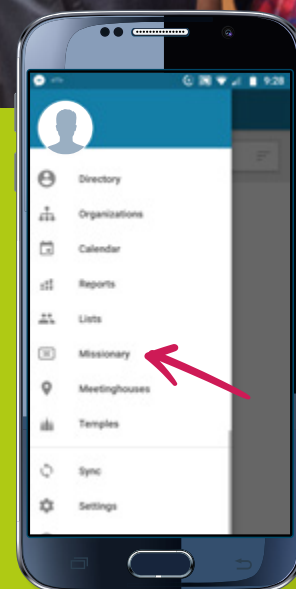
**Make sure you have your friend's permission.** Your friend shouldn't be surprised when the missionaries make contact. The app will ask you to agree that you have your friend's permission before you send the referral.

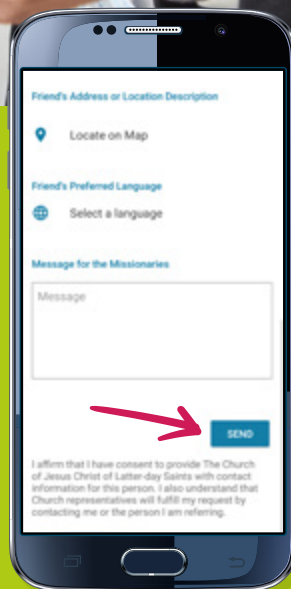
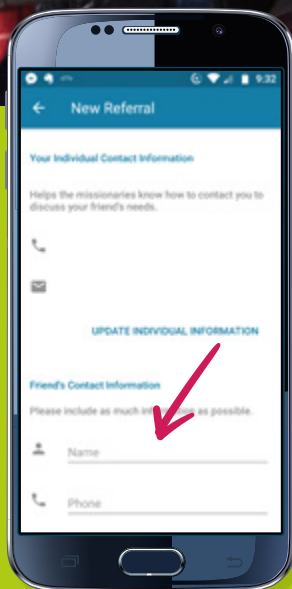
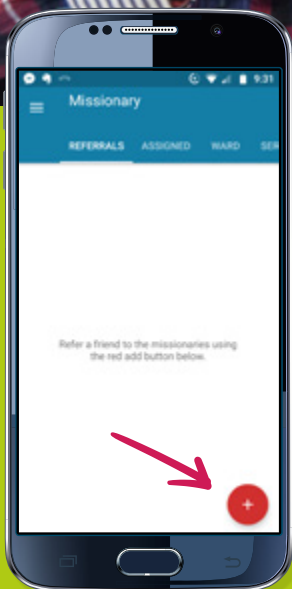
**The referral is automatically assigned to missionaries.** You will be invited to contact them to plan how to help your friend.

**The missionaries will meet with your friend as soon as possible.** They will invite you to participate by phone or video chat, if practical.

**Check on the status.** At any time, you can check to see when your friend has been contacted and to find contact information for priesthood leaders and the mission office nearest to where your friend lives—anywhere in the world. You can also find the meeting time and location of the Church unit nearest to your friend.

Of course, in addition to sending referrals using this app, you can also support the missionaries where you live by praying for them, talking with them, introducing them to your friends, or going with them when they visit and teach. Missionaries love to have members work with them, and your testimony might be just what is needed to help someone feel the Spirit.





"A most significant evidence of our conversion and of how we feel about the gospel in our own lives is our willingness to share it with others."

President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Oct. 2000 general conference.

*This refers to the Android version of the app. If you have an iPhone it will look a bit different.*



*My attempts at  
kicking a soda  
habit taught me  
some important  
spiritual lessons  
about gradual  
change.*

# WHAT I LEARNED FROM ACCIDENTALLY TURNING MYSELF ORANGE

By David Dickson  
Church Magazines

**B**it by bit, and blissfully unaware, I was poisoning myself. OK, I use the term “poisoning” a bit loosely here, but to a teenage guy in high school, the word seemed appropriate. I had turned my skin orange.

Without realizing it.

You see, I was trying to kick a soda habit and did so by rather unconventional means. I started drinking freshly-made carrot juice. My dad had bought a juicer that extracted nothing but juice—which means you cruise through plenty more carrots that way (and consume *a lot* of beta-carotene).

Fun fact: beta-carotene, at those levels, enters the bloodstream and starts painting you from the inside out. It’s harmless to your overall health but becomes oh-so-visible over time. Somehow, though, I still hadn’t noticed the effects unfolding until a friend squinted at me in the sunlight one afternoon.

“Um, Dave, is your skin . . . orange?” she asked.

“No!” I laughed. What an absurd question.

Then she held her forearm next to mine for comparison. I glanced down in shock. My skin looked like it was slathered in pumpkin puree compared to hers. From that moment on, I cut way back on the carrot juice.

## SLOW BUT SURE

It’s not always easy to tell when changes are taking place within us. Sometimes changes happen so slowly that it’s hard to notice them. Yet even small, steady changes can add up in a big way over time. Do you remember that long-anticipated day when you were *finally* tall enough to go on the best rides at the fair or amusement park?

Spiritual changes, of course, are more important than physical ones. Yet even those can be hard to detect on a day-to-day basis. President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, once taught,

“We become taller in testimony like we grow taller in physical stature; we hardly know it happens because it comes by growth.”<sup>1</sup>

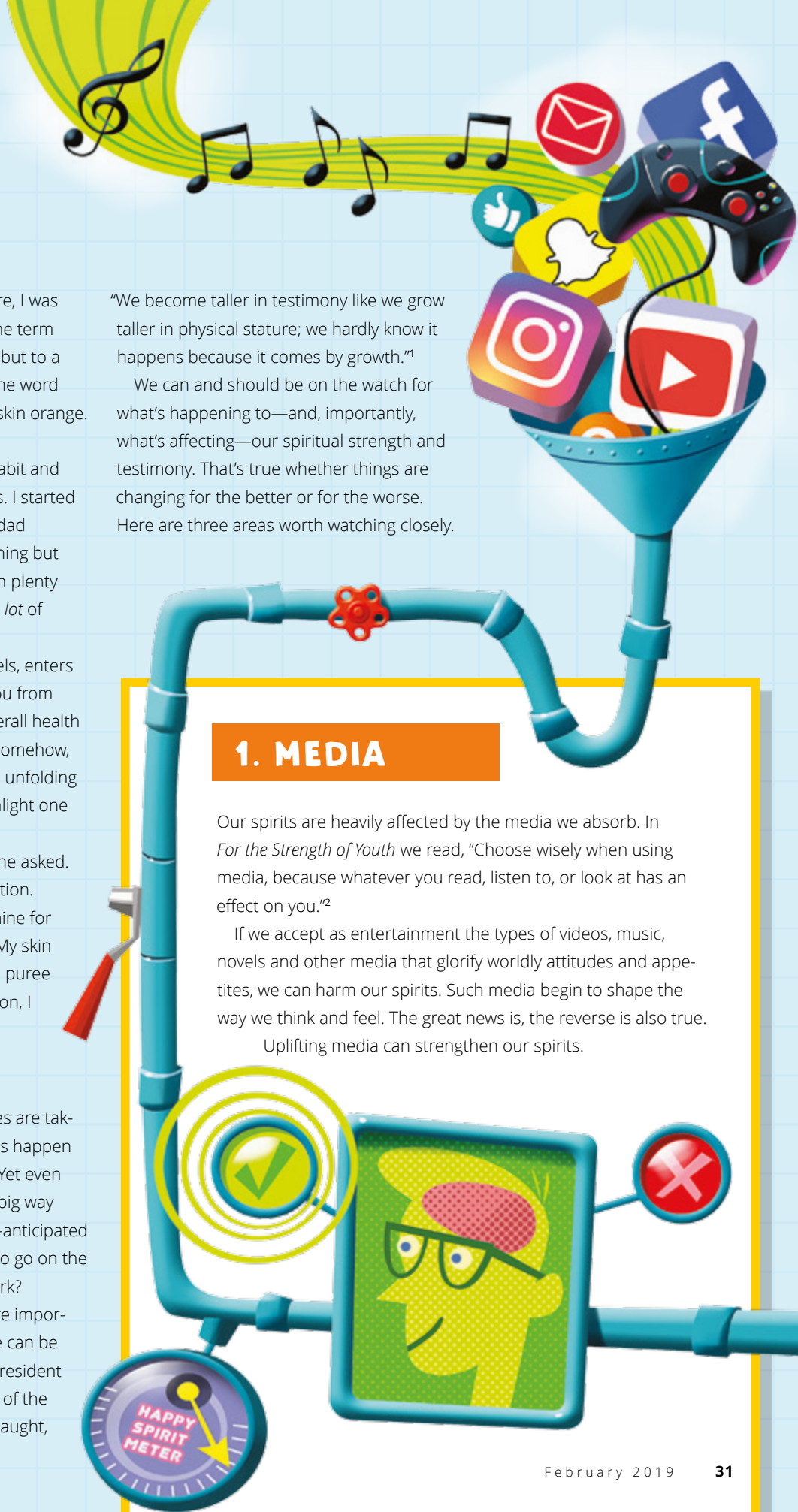
We can and should be on the watch for what’s happening to—and, importantly, what’s affecting—our spiritual strength and testimony. That’s true whether things are changing for the better or for the worse. Here are three areas worth watching closely.


### 1. MEDIA

Our spirits are heavily affected by the media we absorb. In *For the Strength of Youth* we read, “Choose wisely when using media, because whatever you read, listen to, or look at has an effect on you.”<sup>2</sup>

If we accept as entertainment the types of videos, music, novels and other media that glorify worldly attitudes and appetites, we can harm our spirits. Such media begin to shape the way we think and feel. The great news is, the reverse is also true.

Uplifting media can strengthen our spirits.





For example, President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) taught: “Inspiring music may fill the soul with heavenly thoughts, move one to righteous action, or speak peace to the soul. When Saul was troubled with an evil spirit, David played for him with his harp and Saul was refreshed and the evil spirit departed. (See 1 Samuel 16:23).”<sup>3</sup>

Do you have any troubles of your own that you’d like to “depart” out of your life? A good place to start is to embrace uplifting and spirit-strengthening media.

## 2. FRIENDS

The people we surround ourselves with each day can have a massive impact on our spiritual health. In *For the Strength of Youth*, we read, “[Friends] will influence how you think and act, and even help determine the person you will become.”<sup>4</sup>

Imagine all the little inside jokes you and your friends share. A single word that reminds you of a shared experience can be enough to start you and your friends laughing hysterically. We start to talk, think, and act like our friends.



Your friends shape you one way or another (whether you want them to or not), so be sure that they’re changing you for the better. At the same time, make sure that you’re changing *them* for the better. After all, the world needs more friends of the awesome variety. One of those awesome friends can be you, at all times and in all places.



### 3. ACTIVITIES

How many different ways could you spend a million dollars? The possible combinations are endless. Now, how many different ways can you spend 24 hours? A week? A summer vacation?

Again, the possibilities are endless. Perhaps more than any other consideration, the way we spend our time will shape not only our spirits but also our character and ultimately our eternal reward.

Do we attend our Church meetings or sleep in and then watch TV instead? Do we cram every minute of the day with to-do lists and entertainment, or do we allow time for pondering the scriptures and serving others?

In his worldwide devotional for youth, President Russell M. Nelson taught at least one way we can figure out how to spend our time. We can pray to know how to use it.

After inviting the youth to give up a portion of their time to help gather Israel, he taught, “As you pray about this sacrifice of time, you will be guided to know both what you can give up that week and what you can do instead to help gather Israel. For example, a young golfer might give up a round of golf and spend that time in the temple baptism.”<sup>5</sup>

Time management is a difficult thing. For instance, it’s great to pursue worthwhile hobbies like playing the piano or learning to carve. Yet even good and worthy pursuits like these can block out more important matters if we dedicate too much of our precious time to them.

Even something as important as serving in the Church can’t be allowed to take priority over showing up to work or spending enough time with family. Speaking to the bishops of the Church, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) taught, “It is possible to budget your time so that you neglect neither your employer, your family, nor your flock.”<sup>6</sup>

If a bishop can strike that balance, so can you! Finding an ideal mix of how to spend your time is crucial, and it’s one of the biggest factors in staying strong on the covenant path. So, make time management a matter of prayer. Take the guesswork out of it.

### LITTLE CHOICES, BIG CHANGES

Back to my beta-carotene fiasco for a moment. In the end, I swapped in some celery sticks and apple slices to replace most of the carrots in my not-quite-as-good-as-soda beverage. And, in time, my skin returned to its normal hue. Whew! Though it was a huge relief at the time, that particular snag was a small one in the grand scheme of eternal matters.


However, what if you start doing the things that nourish and strengthen your spirit and soon notice that you’re being more patient with others? Or perhaps you find that you’re much more receptive to the promptings of the Holy Ghost, such as noticing when somebody around you needs a little extra help?

Those are *not* small changes. Those are the types of changes that shape your spiritual journey in this life and the next. Ultimately, large changes start with lots of little choices.

So, pay close attention to the little choices. They’ll steer you right in a big way. **NE**

#### NOTES

1. Boyd K. Packer, “The Quest for Spiritual Knowledge,” *New Era*, Jan. 2007, 4.
2. *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), 11.
3. Ezra Taft Benson, “Do Not Despair,” Oct. 1974 general conference.
4. *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), 16.
5. Russell M. Nelson, “Hope of Israel” (worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018), 15, [HopeofIsrael.org](https://www.hopeofisrael.org).
6. Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Shepherds of Israel,” Oct. 2003 general conference.

A top-down view of a white ceramic plate resting on a red and white patterned cloth. A silver fork is held by a hand with light pink nail polish, with one green pea on its tines. A silver knife is held by another hand with light pink nail polish. There are several other green peas scattered on the plate: a small cluster of five on the left and one isolated pea on the right. The text "I STRUGGLE WITH ANOREXIA" is overlaid on the plate.

I STRUGGLE WITH  
ANOREXIA

Name Withheld

*It wasn't enough to know I needed to change. I needed to want to change, and I needed to turn to the Lord to do it.*

All my life I strove for perfection: I strove to be the angel child, the straight-A student, the exceptional friend, family member, and athlete. But things didn't work out the way I'd hoped, and I started to feel like I was losing control over my life. So I turned to something I could control: how much I ate. I began to look in the mirror and feel unhappy with what I saw—an imperfect girl. The only way to make her perfect was to be skinny. I began to weigh myself daily. I ate less and less. I turned down foods I loved. And still I was not happy.

My parents noticed my frequent gloomy attitude, and they noticed I was not eating very much. When they realized that something was not normal, they took me to my pediatrician. Sure enough, my weight was down an unhealthy amount. I was diagnosed with the eating disorder anorexia. I was put on an anxiety medication and treated by three specialty doctors. I was to the point that they almost put me in the hospital to save my life. I was walking the line of life and death. At the time I didn't realize how bad things were. I didn't even know what anorexia was: an emotional disorder characterized by an obsessive desire to lose weight by refusing to eat.

I DIDN'T WANT TO CHANGE. I DIDN'T WANT TO PUT ON WEIGHT.

I got mad. I did not see what the problem was and why everyone was so worried. Wasn't that what I was supposed to be doing—staying healthy and being skinny? My family decided to fast and pray for me. This made me frustrated. I didn't think people should fast and pray for me, because I thought I was healthy, happy, and content with how I looked.

My parents and siblings told me over and over, "You need to change. You need to seek a desire to change." I didn't want to change. I didn't want to put on weight, and I couldn't see why they wanted me to, either.

Countless times they would tell me, "Turn to the Lord. Tell Him you want to change and ask Him to help you change." I would pray for these things, but it was an empty cry. I didn't want help but went along with it to make my parents and doctors happy.

I had been receiving treatment for my eating disorder for about a year and a half when my sister, who was serving a mission at the time, said, "You need to change." I had been told that over and over again and was kind of sick of hearing it, so I just said in frustration, "How? How do you want me to change?"

From the time I was diagnosed with anorexia, I had read my scriptures every night, had not missed morning or night prayer, and had gone to church. I said to my sister, "I have asked God to change me, and I am still here. He isn't listening." I felt frustrated, but I knew

giving up my scripture study and daily prayers would do nothing to help the situation.

My kind sister thought for a moment and then said, “You need to *want* to change. Go to God, and talk to Him like you would to me, and tell Him you are ready to change.” What she said hit me like a ton of bricks. I went to my Heavenly Father, a little nervous but honest and earnest, and just said, “OK, here I am. Help me to change. Please help me to find a desire to change.”

Things did not get better immediately, but I had a slight change of heart. Ever so slightly, I began to want to be healthier, to eat, and to be free from this illness. Little by little, things improved.

I still fight daily to eat, but it is so much better because I turned to the Lord for help. I did not do this by myself and could not have done it by myself.

## I BEGAN TO WANT TO BE HEALTHIER, TO EAT, AND BE FREE FROM THIS ILLNESS.

Heavenly Father and His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, did not leave me comfortless. The Savior is aware of every little pain and agony I feel and have felt. Not only is He aware of them, but He has also felt them (see Alma 7:11–13). He knows how we are suffering. He knows we want to give up, and He gives us the extra boost to keep us going.

There were countless times when I would wonder, “When will it go away? Why me?” I wanted to give up. Later I realized that Heavenly Father has a plan, and I need to trust in His plan. His plan is perfect, although I do not always see it in that way. I also know that the Lord blessed me with amazing parents, doctors, family, and friends throughout this process.

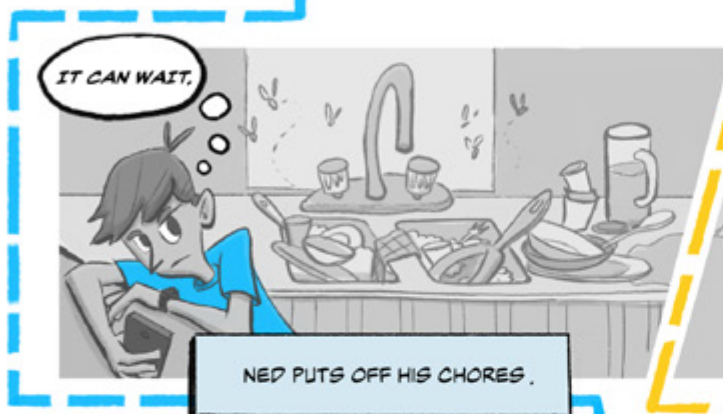
Truly, God knew I would need all the help and support I could get, and each person was inspired of God to help me. God does not leave us to fend for ourselves no matter the situation. He is there, and He wants us to turn to Him, to be saved through His Son’s amazing Atonement. I know that God loves His children and that He has prepared a way for us to return to Him no matter the gravity of our trial or sin. **NE**



# NED & JAKE'S

## GUIDE TO WORK

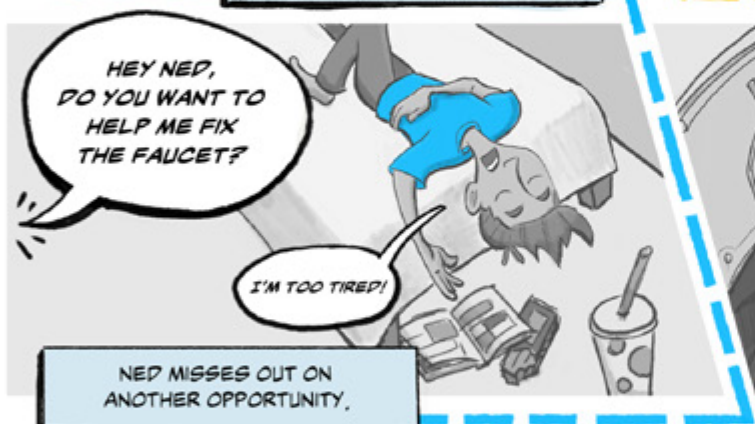
WRITTEN BY ERIC B. MURDOCK  
ILLUSTRATED BY SPENCER HALE



NED PUTS OFF HIS CHORES.



JAKE GETS RIGHT TO WORK.



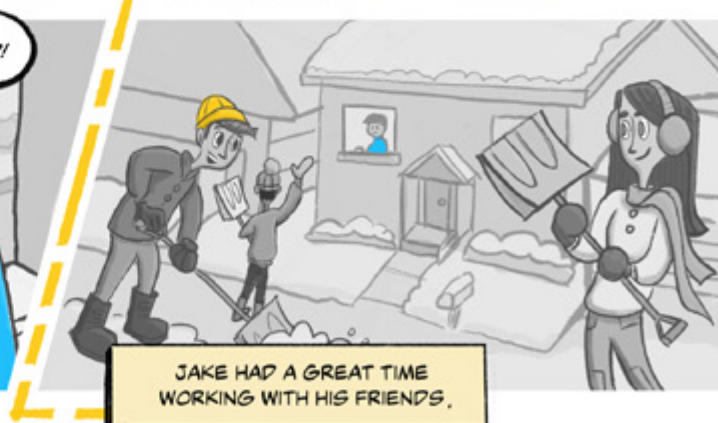
NED MISSES OUT ON  
ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY.



JAKE LEARNED SOMETHING  
COOL ABOUT CARS WITH HIS DAD.



NED MAKES EXCUSES  
AND FEELS LONELY.



JAKE HAD A GREAT TIME  
WORKING WITH HIS FRIENDS.

"WORK IS HONORABLE. DEVELOPING THE CAPACITY TO WORK WILL HELP YOU CONTRIBUTE TO THE WORLD IN WHICH YOU LIVE. IT WILL BRING YOU AN INCREASED SENSE OF SELF-WORTH. IT WILL BLESS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY, BOTH NOW AND IN THE FUTURE."

FOR THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH (2011), 40.

## I Really Like Living in Maine,

especially in the fall. I like drawing, writing, and reading. You can't punish me by sending me to my room, because I'm there all the time!

In December of 2017 I was diagnosed with depression. I'm seeing a therapist, and I take medication for it. At first I didn't want anyone to know I was depressed. I thought that I was just sad and that I would get over it on my own. Since my mom found out I wasn't OK, I have been getting the help and support I need.

Music has also really helped me. When I'm feeling down, I listen to music. One of the bands I like has a lead singer who deals with depression. Their songs are written to help their fans get through depression and other hard things. The hymn "I Stand All Amazed" has also helped me. It reminds me that there is someone out there that loves me, that I'm not alone, and that Jesus died for me. Music has a different and deeper meaning than words on their own.

If you are feeling depressed, talk to an adult you trust. You are not alone—you really aren't.

**Angelina O.,** 14, Maine, USA



**Sariah B.,** 13, Minnesota, USA

I like to dance, make crafts, and play with my little sister Lilly. When I was two, I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. Every year on the anniversary of my diagnosis, I do service. Last year, my family and I donated stuffed animals and gave a letter of encouragement to the children at the hospital where I was diagnosed. I felt so happy to do something nice for someone experiencing a sad time. I am thankful for the example of Jesus Christ to love and serve others.



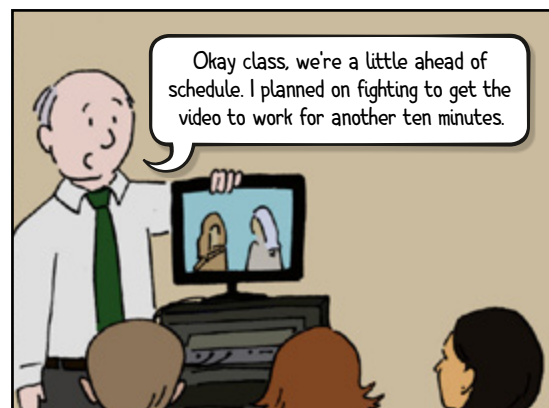
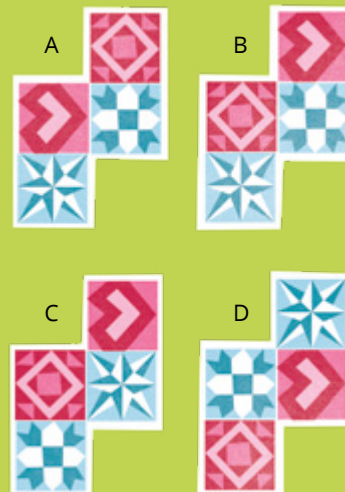
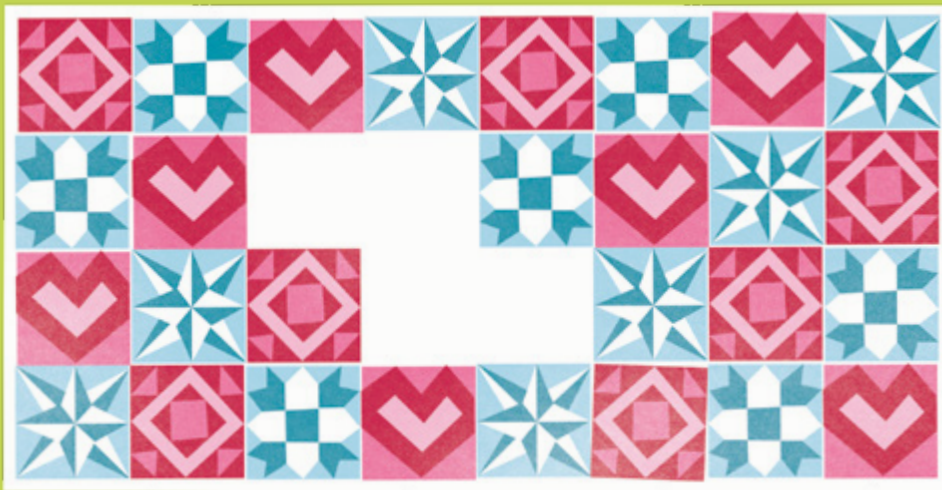
**Noah R.,** 17, Florida, USA

I am almost always at the piano—music is one of my favorite things. I love to go outside to run, hike, swim, anything. I also run a Latter-day-Saint-oriented Instagram account. I've learned to respect social media and use it for what it should be—uplifting one another! It can be hard to make friends. However, I've gained a lot of confidence from the example of Jesus Christ. I know that as I've tried to be like Him, I've gained many true friends.

# FUN STOP

## Puzzling Patchwork

Can you find the correct layout of patches to complete this birthday present patchwork quilt? (And be careful! Grandma won't love it if you get this wrong.)



## Sunday School Stumper

Your Sunday School teacher can't resist using all 12 pencils from a new box to create a class puzzle. **Can you move three pencils to form the central word of the two great commandments** (see Matthew 22:35-40)? Try using pencils, paper clips, or matchsticks to work out the solution.

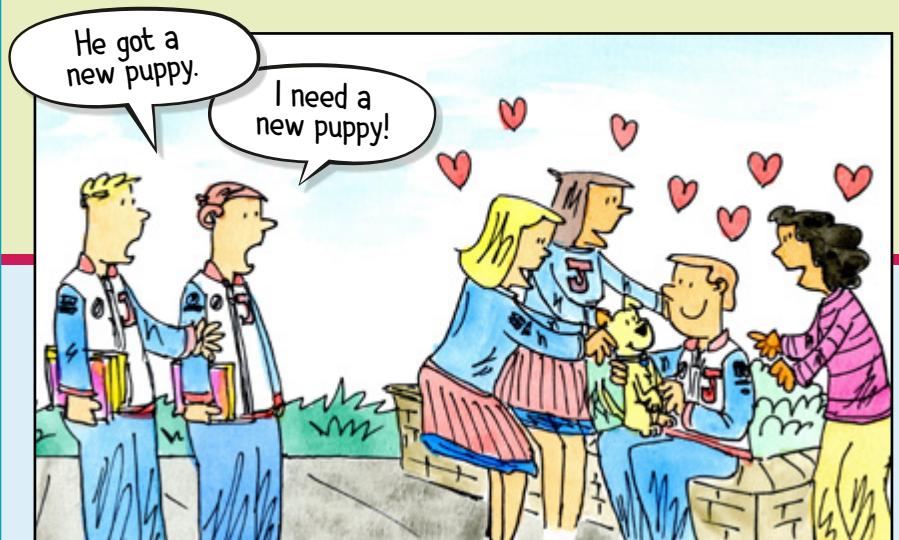


Write your answer here!

## Scripture Couples

Can you name these couples in the scriptures?

- **2-across (husband) and 13-across (wife):**  
These two were described as “goodly parents” by everyone’s favorite sword-of-Laban-wielding prophet. (See 1 Nephi 1:1 and 1 Nephi 2:1–5.)
- **5-across (woman) and 10-down (man):**  
Not the best girlfriend by any measure, this woman tricked the man who loved her into revealing the secret behind his great strength: namely, that he was a Nazirite from his mother’s womb and should never cut his hair. She blabbed the secret to his enemies and thereby caused his downfall. (See Judges 16:4–21.)
- **14-across (wife) and 8-down (husband):**  
When her husband died, this woman followed her mother-in-law’s advice on how she might remarry. The plan was successful, and this new couple became parents of Obed, the father of Jesse, who was the father of David. (See the eighth book of the Old Testament, chapter 3, verses 1–11.)
- **9-across (husband) and 1-down (wife):**  
These parents had to hide their son from Pharaoh, who wanted to kill all newborn Hebrew sons. The mother placed him in a basket in the river, and their son became called Moses once Pharaoh’s daughter pulled him from the river. (See Exodus 6:20.)
- **11-across (husband) and 3-down (wife):**  
Because of the advanced age of his wife, this soon-to-be father didn’t believe the angel Gabriel who told him they would have a son. As a result, the man was struck dumb until the child was born. This couple became parents to John the Baptist. (See Luke 1:11–20.)
- **6-across (wife) and 4-down (husband):**  
After many years of not being able to have children, this woman promised God in the temple that if He would bless her with a son, she would give him to the Lord to serve in the temple. Her prayer was granted, and she and her husband became parents to the prophet Samuel. (See 1 Samuel 1:1–11.)
- **7-across (husband) and 12-down (wife):**  
This man was so in love with this woman that he worked 14 years for her father in order to marry her, even though he’d only promised to work seven. (See Genesis 29:15–28.)



Answers on page 43.

# "I keep giving in to the same temptations. How can I move past those sins?"

*"Even if we've been a conscious, deliberate sinner or have repeatedly faced failure and disappointment, the moment we decide to try again, the Atonement of Christ can help us. . . .*

*" . . . As we try, persevere, and help others to do the same, we are true Latter-day Saints. As we change, we will find that God indeed cares a lot more about who we are and about who we are becoming than about who we once were."*

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2015 general conference.



## Get Away from the Source of the Temptations

If it's your phone that you're addicted to, try to

get rid of that or get your parents to put restrictions on it. Or if your friends are the ones who are tempting you, find good friends and try to be surrounded by good people who help you feel the Spirit always. If you have the Spirit with you and you're surrounded by good friends, then it's easier to be able to resist the temptations. Temptations come to everyone, but as long as we resist them, then we'll be good.

**Kolten B., 17, Alberta, Canada**



## Pray Often

I'm a convert, and the temptations were strong for me because I had different customs from those of the

Church. Little by little, I began to understand that the communication I had with my Heavenly Father strengthened me and made it easier for me to overcome everything.

**Pamela S., 19, Llanquihue Province, Chile**

## Control Your Thoughts

Our thoughts are a gateway to our actions. Temptations, just like the melody of a song you remember, can penetrate our minds. When they come to your mind, try moving away from these thoughts by teaching yourself how to act and think. You have the power to do it!

**Taynara S., 19, São Paulo, Brazil**



## Get Support from Others

Always stay with someone you love, like your family and close friends, who have

the same standards as you. This might help you in staying away from the temptation. Involve yourself in family and Church activities, especially missionary and family history work. Don't be frustrated; the Lord's hand is always extended to those who have a desire to repent.

**Elder Tuca, 20, Ghana Cape Coast Mission**

## Find Comfort through Prayer

Something I would recommend doing is praying about it. I know that answers don't come immediately, but comfort always can. You can also find comfort by taking your mind off the thing that's bothering you and thinking of something that makes you happy. Whatever way you find comfort, I know you can find it through Jesus Christ.

**Anna P., 12, Utah, USA**

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



## I still remember sins I've repented of, and I feel guilty. Why can't I forget my sins?

**Jesus Christ's** Atonement makes forgiveness possible if we repent. True repentance includes humility, confession, forsaking of sins, and a commitment to keep the commandments.

The Lord has said, "He who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more" (Doctrine and Covenants 58:42). But what if *our* memory of our sins still haunts us? Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught: "God did not promise that *we* would not remember our sins. Remembering will help us avoid making the same mistakes again. But if we stay true and faithful, the memory of our sins will be softened over time. This will be part of the needed healing and sanctification process" ("Point of Safe Return," Apr. 2007 general conference).

As we truly repent and focus on following the Savior, the Holy Ghost will be our companion and we will be moved to love and serve others. The sting of shame will be replaced by gratitude and hope. And we will glorify God for His kindness, love, and mercy.

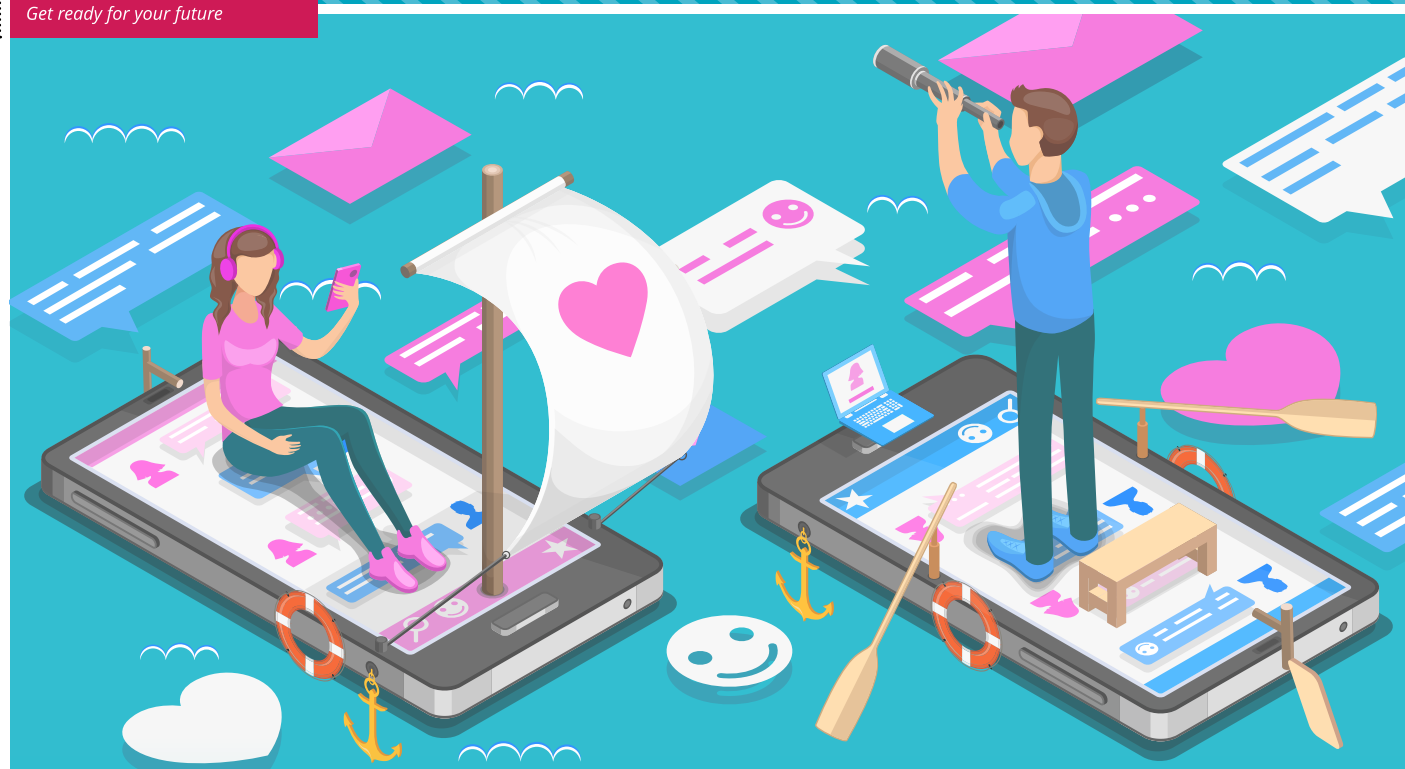
## Tell Us What You Think?

"How can I enjoy church when I'm having issues with people there?"

**Send your answer and photo by March 15, 2019.**

Go to [newera.lds.org](http://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.*



# DATING

## NAVIGATING

*What should I know before I go on my first date?*

**D**oes the idea of going on your first date cause you to sweat bullets? Maybe you're worried that you'll run out of things to talk about. Maybe you're worried your date won't like you. Maybe you're worried that you'll say or do something weird. It's normal to be nervous about dating, but knowing what to expect can help you feel more confident.

### WHY SHOULD I DATE?

*For the Strength of Youth* says that youth can start dating at age 16. You don't have to date as a teenager, but it can help you learn social skills and develop friendships with people who have similar standards to yours.

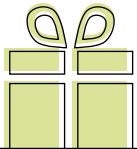
You might still be nervous, but remember that dating is supposed to be fun! At your age, it's not about forming serious relationships. Focus on getting to know your date, and above all, show respect. Treat your date like a son or daughter of God, and both of you are more likely to have a great experience.

### TRY IT OUT!

Here are some tips to keep in mind when you first begin to date:

- Plan a real date, not just a hangout. A date is not a just sitting on a couch watching TV with friends. A date is a planned activity where people in a group are paired up for the activity.
- Make your date feel comfortable. Be kind, make eye contact, and smile when you talk to them. Who knows? They might be nervous too!
- Pay attention to your date. When you are on a group date, it can be easy to talk to the people you already know in the group rather than talking to your date. Show that you are interested in your date, and ask them about things they like to do.
- Say thank you. Let your date know that you appreciate their efforts and that you enjoyed getting to know them.

# Repentance and Forgiveness



## He who has repented

All people have sinned (see Romans 3:23). Repentance is a gift made possible through Jesus Christ's Atonement and is part of Heavenly Father's plan for all of His children who are accountable for their choices.

## Is forgiven

"As often as my people repent will I forgive them their trespasses against me" (Mosiah 26:30). True repentance brings God's forgiveness. Some of the blessings of forgiveness are:

- Peace.
- Joy.
- Freedom.
- Relief.
- Healing.
- The Holy Ghost's companionship.

(See Romans 6:16–18; Mosiah 4:3; Alma 36:17–21; Doctrine and Covenants 1:33.)

To be forgiven, we must have:

- Sincerity.
- Humility.
- A firm resolve to obey the commandments.

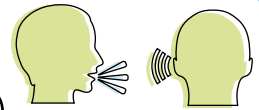
(See Mosiah 4:10; Doctrine and Covenants 84:21.)

*'Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more.'*

*'By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them.'*

Doctrine and Covenants 58:42–43.

## Confess



"For the most serious sins we need to confess to our bishop and seek his loving help. For other sins

it may be sufficient for us to confess to the Lord and to whomever we have wronged."

President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, Oct. 2004 general conference.

## And forsake



To forsake sin means to turn from it and never go back to it. Completely forsaking sins can take time and patience. Just because you're still tempted and sin again doesn't mean you should give up. The Lord will help you if you sincerely repent.

## I, the Lord, remember them no more

Our sins can be forgiven, and God will remember them no more (see Jeremiah 31:34). This means we can move forward in obedience.



"Satan will try to make us believe that our sins are not forgiven because we can remember them. . . . God did not promise that we would not remember our sins. Remembering will help us avoid making the same mistakes again. But if we stay true and faithful, the memory of our sins will be softened over time. This will be part of the needed healing and sanctification process."

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2007 general conference.



## TREK IN THE SUN

**LAST FEBRUARY** my stake went on a winter trek. It was very cold at the beginning of the day, so none of us worried about putting on sunscreen. But by the end of the day, I had very, very severe burns on my face. My dad, who is a doctor, told me that I had gotten third-degree burns on my face and that I wouldn't be able to continue on the trek the second day. I was devastated. I had been looking forward to this trek for months now. I knew I was going to miss out on spiritual experiences. I couldn't just stay in my tent, but I didn't know what else to do.

*"I revere the priesthood. I have witnessed its power time and time again. I have seen its strength. I have marveled at the miracles it has wrought."*

President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018), "The Priesthood—a Sacred Gift," Apr. 2015 general conference.

So the next morning my dad gave me a priesthood blessing, asking that my face would heal and that it wouldn't get burned again. I wrapped a piece of nylon around my face and borrowed one of my brother's hats. I went out that day looking very strange, but I was able to go out and have spiritual experiences that I wouldn't have been able to have if I hadn't gone.

After the trek, my family and I were all worried about my face healing and how badly it was going to scar. But as the next couple of weeks came, the burns healed like a normal sunburn. I healed completely and have no scars on my face. I know that because of the Lord's power through the priesthood, I was able to be healed. I'm so grateful for the priesthood, and I know Heavenly Father was watching over me.

**Darity T., Arizona, USA**



### How can we make priesthood blessings more meaningful?

1. Exercise faith. Believe that miracles can happen (see Mormon 9:21).
2. Be clean. Keep the commandments and repent (see Doctrine and Covenants 133:5).
3. Trust God. Be open to Heavenly Father's will for you (see Luke 22:42).
4. Pay attention. Listen to the words being said and write down your feelings and impressions.

# AFFIRMATIONS OF LOVE

**I WORK AT** a summer camp. Kids come for five days, and we do lots of educational activities with them. We cut and decorate wood cuts from real logs, play in the stream and learn about aquatic life, find and collect wildflowers, go on hikes, learn about the mining history of the town, and lots of other super fun stuff.

At the end of the week, we do an activity called “affirmations.” The kids sit in a circle and close their eyes. They take turns getting up and tapping other kids on the shoulder as the counselors say different things like “This person helped me feel welcome,” or “This person helped me cut wood.” At the end of the activity, we say, “This person has potential,” or “This person has a bright future.” Then the counselors tap every single kid.

One week, as I was tapping the kids and saying awesome things about them, I felt the Spirit witness to me that they were all children of God. I didn’t even know all of them that well, but I felt such love for them. It was a really neat experience that witnessed to me that everyone we interact with really is a child of God. He really does care about each of us.

Stephen J., Utah, USA



## A SILENT PROMPTING TO UNSILENCE

**I WAS RECOVERING** from wrist surgery and had been attending long, painful sessions of physical therapy twice a week. I always came home exhausted, and this time was no exception. I collapsed into bed and folded myself into my sheets.

As I prepared to drift off to sleep, I had a feeling that I should take my phone off silent. “That’s weird,” I thought. My phone is almost always on silent, especially at night. I didn’t want to be woken up by an occasional text or notification. I was exhausted and needed my sleep. After all, I was still recovering from surgery. But I decided to listen anyway and turned the volume on my phone up. Immediately after, I dropped into a deep sleep that only a recent operation can bring.

Hours later I suddenly woke up to my phone ringing on my bedside table. I answered groggily but was instantly alert after hearing our neighbor’s daughter was having a medical emergency. Because I had listened to the prompting to take my phone off silent, my mom was able to arrange a priesthood blessing for my neighbor’s daughter, and I was able to comfort our neighbor. I am grateful that I listened to the Spirit that night, that I could hear my neighbor’s phone call, and that I could help.

Taylor R., Michigan, USA



# A Latter-day Saint Keeps on Trying

By Elder Dale G. Renlund

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

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*From an April 2015 general conference address.*

In His mercy, God promises forgiveness when we repent and turn from wickedness—so much so that our sins will not even be mentioned to us. For us, because of the Atonement of Christ and our repentance, we can look at our past deeds and say, “That’s who I was. But that past wicked self is no longer who I am.”

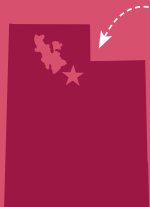
President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) has taught, “One of God’s greatest gifts to us is the joy of trying again, for no failure ever need be final.”<sup>1</sup> Even if we’ve been a conscious, deliberate sinner or have repeatedly faced failure and disappointment, the moment we decide to try again, the Atonement of Christ can help us. And we need to remember that it is not the Holy Ghost that tells us we’re so far gone that we might as well give up.

God’s desire that Latter-day Saints keep on trying also extends beyond overcoming sin. Whether we suffer because of troubled relationships, economic challenges, or illnesses or as a consequence of someone else’s sins, the Savior’s infinite Atonement can heal even—and perhaps especially—those who have innocently suffered. He understands perfectly what it is like to suffer innocently as a consequence of another’s transgression. As prophesied, the Savior will “bind up the brokenhearted, . . . give . . . beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, [and] the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness” (Isaiah 61:1–3; see also Luke 4:16–21). No matter what, with His help, God expects Latter-day Saints to keep on trying.

My invitation to all of us is to evaluate our lives, repent, and keep on trying. If we don’t try, we’re just latter-day sinners; if we don’t persevere, we’re latter-day quitters; and if we don’t allow others to try, we’re just latter-day hypocrites. As we try, persevere, and help others to do the same, we are true Latter-day Saints. As we change, we will find that God indeed cares a lot more about who we are and about who we are becoming than about who we once were. **NE**

#### NOTE

1. Thomas S. Monson, “The Will Within,” Apr. 1987 general conference.



Born on  
November 13, 1952,  
in **Salt Lake  
City, Utah.**



Married  
**Ruth Lybbert**  
in the Salt Lake  
Temple in 1977.



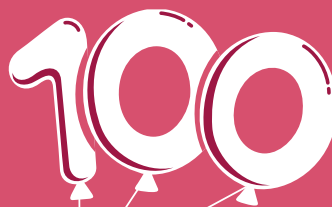
Spent his career as a  
**cardiologist**  
specializing in heart  
failure and heart  
transplantation.

# Elder **DALE G. RENLUND**



About his call to be an  
Apostle, he said,  
"I think President  
Monson sensed that  
**my bones had  
dissolved.**"

Sustained to the  
**Quorum  
of the  
Twelve  
Apostles**  
on October 3,  
2015.



Became the  
**100th person**  
called to the Quorum  
of the Twelve Apostles in  
the latter days.



Has one  
**daughter,**  
Ashley.



Received  
**BA and MD  
degrees**  
from the  
University of  
Utah.



Was a  
**professor  
of medicine**  
at the University  
of Utah.



Was called to  
**serve as  
bishop**  
in his third year of  
medical residency  
at Johns Hopkins  
Hospital in  
Maryland, USA.



At age 12,  
while attending  
church in a remodeled  
home, he and a friend  
**lit a firecracker**  
in the chapel's adjacent  
overflow area.

His first  
language  
was  
**Swedish.**

Served a  
full-time mission  
in **Sweden.**



Reading the Christmas story in Luke 2 was  
a family **Christmas tradition.**



As a doctor, he learned  
from his patients that  
**heartache can  
become joy**  
through the gospel.



Received a  
**witness of the  
truthfulness**  
of the Book of Mormon  
when he was 11.

# HAVE YOU SEEN THESE?

These illustrated stories are now a regular feature in our magazine!



44 New Era



December 2018 45



July 2018 27



## YOU CAN BE A CONTRIBUTOR TOO!

Write your own script for a story about a standard in *For the Strength of Youth* and send it to [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org). We'll select from the best and put it in an upcoming issue!

THE CHURCH OF  
JESUS CHRIST  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

