

THE New Era

The DO'S AND DON'TS OF DATING

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THE RESTORATION,
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THE BLESSING OF THE RESTORATION FOR YOU



By Elder
Dale G. Renlund
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

Because of the restored gospel, you can know who you really are and what God expects you to do.

In the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*, the lead character, Tevye, described one benefit of the traditions of his community, saying, “And because of our traditions, every one of us knows who he is, and what God expects him to do.”¹ You do not need to rely on tradition for this knowledge. Because of the Restoration, you can know who you are and what God expects you to do. If you are not sure yet, you have a right and an obligation to claim that knowledge.

It has been 200 years since 14-year-old Joseph Smith received the first heavenly vision that began the Restoration. Joseph entered those woods near his home in upstate New York, USA, because he was concerned about the welfare of his soul and wanted to know which church to join. He wanted to know who he was and what God expected of him. He received the answers he sought, but he learned so much more on that day and in the 24 years that followed. Because of restored truth, you can not only know why God created you, but you can also learn of your ultimate destiny. Like Joseph Smith, you can know for yourself.

WHO ARE YOU?

You are a beloved child of God, known to Him and loved by Him. Joseph learned this when God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to him in 1820. Joseph recorded, “One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!” (Joseph Smith—History 1:17).

God knew Joseph. The same is true for you. God knows you. He has known you for a long time and He has loved you for as long as He has known you. He knows your divine potential to progress and be exalted with Him. This means that you have the potential to become like Him.²



"The Family: A Proclamation to the World" declares this profound, restored truth: "All human beings . . . are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny."³ This truth might seem obvious to long-term members of the Church. Not so for many prominent Christian theologians who declare that your main purpose is to worship, adore, and venerate God and that God's only motive to create you was so that you could praise, adore, and serve Him.

Through Joseph Smith, God revealed that His work and His glory is to glorify you, to bring to pass your immortality and eternal life.⁴ While glorifying you glorifies Him, God's goal and purpose is to create the environment that allows you to progress. The ultimate end of your progression can be enduring joy. King Benjamin taught his people: "Consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven, that thereby they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness" (Mosiah 2:41).

God has your best interest in mind. He is kind and loving. He knows that for



you to progress, you needed to come to earth, receive a body, and learn right from wrong by your own experience. He does not want you to remain a child or adolescent forever, nor does He want to transform you into a blindly obediently trained pet. No, He wants you to choose to follow Him and mature through your experiences to grow up and become an heir to all He has.⁵ This is your divine destiny.


These truths are foundational to the restored doctrine that began with that simple prayer uttered by Joseph Smith.

WHAT DOES GOD EXPECT OF YOU?

God has two key expectations for you. First, He expects you to learn of and follow His plan. Second, He expects you to help others to learn and follow His plan.

You were taught God's plan of salvation in premortal realms and accepted it. This may not have been an easy decision. One-third part of Heavenly Father's children rejected the plan. But you desired to come to earth, receive a body, and use your agency to choose to follow the plan. God knew, and you knew too, that when on this earth you would make mistakes and commit sin. These sins would permanently prevent you from living in God's presence unless you could be redeemed from your sins. God's plan provided for Jesus Christ to be your Redeemer. Jesus Christ atoned for your sins and mistakes to allow God's plan of salvation to work for you.⁶ He paid the ultimate price so that He could "claim of the Father his rights of mercy" for you (Moroni 7:27).

God's plan also provided for you to have the gift of agency so that you can know "good from evil" (2 Nephi 2:5). You are an "agent" unto yourself (see Doctrine and Covenants 58:28), capable of making decisions for yourself. But when you make poor decisions or mistakes, God expects you to use your agency to repent. Repentance is made possible through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and is needed so you can be clean before God.⁷



**BECAUSE OF RESTORED TRUTH,
YOU CAN NOT ONLY KNOW WHY GOD
CREATED YOU, BUT YOU CAN ALSO
LEARN OF YOUR ULTIMATE DESTINY.**

You repent as you turn to God and exercise faith in Jesus Christ. Conditioned on repentance, Jesus Christ's Atonement enables you to be pardoned from the punishment you would otherwise receive. You show you have repented by being obedient to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. And, as you repent, you become pure, clean, and holy.

As God declared to Adam, "This is the plan of salvation unto all men, through the blood of mine Only Begotten" (Moses 6:62). Because of our faith in Christ and in Heavenly Father's plan, we can "enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory" (Moses 6:59).

The second key thing God expects of you is to help others learn His plan and help them follow it. Once you understand that God and His Son, Jesus Christ, love you, you naturally desire to share this truth with others. Sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ is also referred to as the "gathering of Israel." President Russell M. Nelson affirmed:

"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."⁸

Fulfilling this covenant obligation will bring you joy⁹ and contribute to your personal salvation.¹⁰

Because the gospel of Jesus Christ was restored to the earth, you may know who you are and what God expects of you. We celebrate the Restoration that began in the woods near the Smith farm in upstate New York 200 years ago because of the scope and significance it holds for you. Joseph's earnest prayer opened a flood of revelation that continues to this day through His Apostles and prophets. Jesus Christ directs His Church and His work on the earth so that you can reach your divine potential to live again with your Heavenly Father. **NE**

NOTES

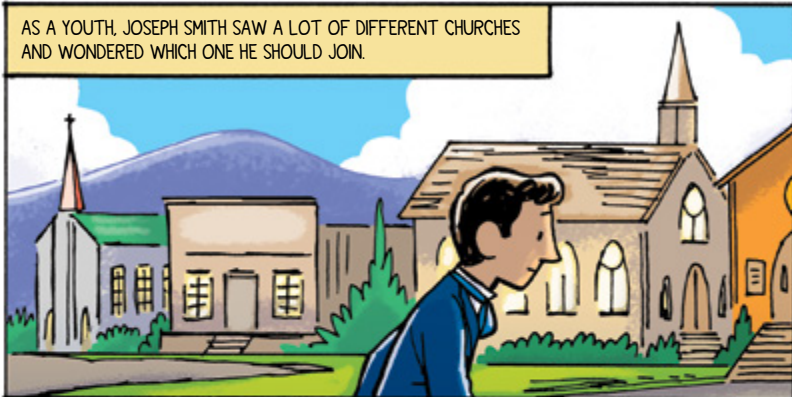
1. Joseph Stein, Jerry Bock, Sheldon Harnick, *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), 3.
2. "God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself . . . that they may be exalted with himself" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 210).
3. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 145.
4. See Moses 1:39.
5. See Dale G. Renlund, "Choose You This Day," Oct. 2018 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 104).
6. See Isaiah 53:3–12. Isaiah mentions 10 times Christ's vicarious suffering for sin.
7. God said, "[You] must repent, or [you] can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God, for no unclean thing can dwell there." So, you "must be born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of [God's] Only Begotten; that [you] might be sanctified from all sin" (Moses 6:56, 59).
8. Russell M. Nelson, "Hope of Israel" (worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018), 12, [HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
9. See Doctrine and Covenants 18:15–16.
10. See Doctrine and Covenants 4:2, 4; 31:5; 36:1; 60:7; 62:3; and 84:61.

Joseph's

Written by
Eric Murdock
& Illustrated by
Adam Koford

SEARCH FOR TRUTH

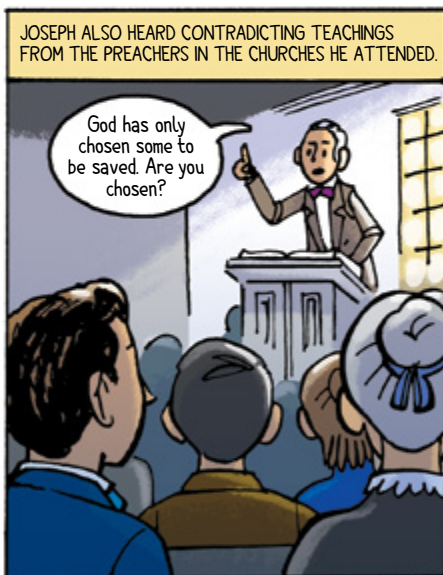
AS A YOUTH, JOSEPH SMITH SAW A LOT OF DIFFERENT CHURCHES AND WONDERED WHICH ONE HE SHOULD JOIN.



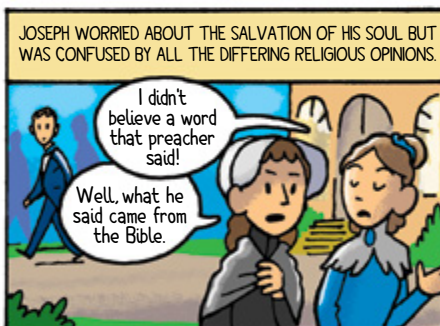
JOSEPH HEARD MANY PEOPLE ARGUE OVER RELIGION.

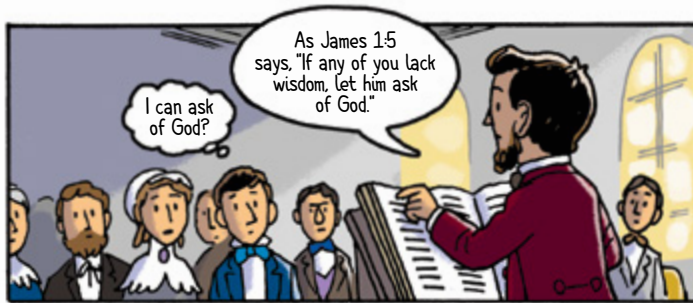


JOSEPH ALSO HEARD CONTRADICTING TEACHINGS FROM THE PREACHERS IN THE CHURCHES HE ATTENDED.



JOSEPH WORRIED ABOUT THE SALVATION OF HIS SOUL BUT WAS CONFUSED BY ALL THE DIFFERING RELIGIOUS OPINIONS.

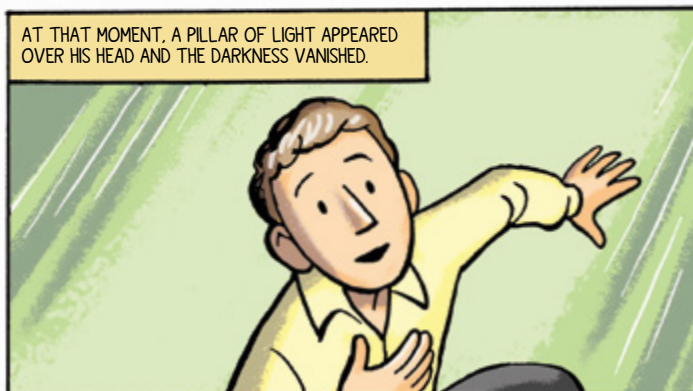




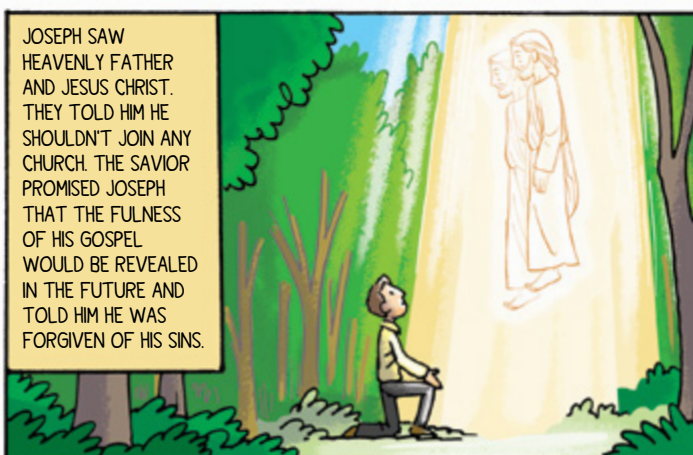
EARLY ONE MORNING IN THE SPRING OF 1820, JOSEPH SET OUT FOR THE WOODS NEAR HIS HOME TO PRAY.



SUDDENLY, JOSEPH WAS SURROUNDED BY DARKNESS. HE WAS AFRAID HE WOULD BE DESTROYED, BUT HE CALLED OUT TO GOD.



IN THE LIGHT, JOSEPH SAW TWO BEINGS BRIGHTER AND MORE GLORIOUS THAN ANYTHING HE HAD EVER SEEN. ONE SPOKE TO HIM.




"If Joseph Smith's transcendent experience in the Sacred Grove teaches us anything, it is that the heavens are open and that God speaks to His children."

President Russell M. Nelson, "Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives," Apr. 2018 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 95).

COME
FOLLOW
ME

REJOICE





*Because of the Savior, we can
repent and make choices that
bring us happiness.*

By Amanda Dunn
Church Magazines

On the day of my baptism, I felt clean, pure, and truly perfect. I loved the feeling so much that I made a goal to stay perfect forever. “I will never sin again,” I told myself.

Fast-forward one day.

I wanted to play with my big sister’s new Barbie doll, but she wouldn’t let me, no matter how hard I tried to convince her. So, in a rage that made me forget my goal to remain sin-free, I grabbed a pair of scissors while she wasn’t looking and cut off all her doll’s hair.

Admittedly, I was somehow under the impression that the doll’s hair would grow back. But as I sat looking at all the synthetic hairs piled in my lap, I felt the sting of having ruined my newly perfected life.

When my sister found out, she was furious. My parents explained to me that the doll’s hair would not grow back. Guilt and regret overwhelmed me as I watched my sister cry at the sight of her forever-bald doll.

With a little time and a lot of apologizing on my part, my sister forgave me. But I still never forgot how disappointed I felt for having given up my perfect life all too quickly.

***Cheer Up—
You Are Free***

*“Cheer up your hearts,
and remember that ye are free
to act for yourselves—
to choose the way of
everlasting death or the
way of eternal life.”*

2 Nephi 10:23.

in the **CHOICE**

Rejoice in the Plan

"We should (and we do) rejoice in the God-ordained plan that permits us to make choices to act for ourselves and experience the consequences, or as the scriptures express it, to 'taste the bitter, that [we] may know to prize the good.'"

D. Todd Christofferson, "Free Forever, to Act for Themselves," Oct. 2014 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 17).

HEAVENLY FATHER KNEW WE WOULD MAKE MISTAKES

Just like I felt when I cut off the doll's hair, sometimes we get frustrated when we make bad choices. Because we have the freedom to choose, we commit sins that can make perfection seem far from reach. We may even feel like having agency makes life harder because of all the mistakes we are bound to make.

But the truth is, Heavenly Father knew we would make mistakes. That's why, along with the gift of agency, He's given us the gift of repentance. Sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to atone for our sins was not a backup plan—it is the plan.

Without agency, we wouldn't be able to make any choices at all, good or bad, and we wouldn't feel any joy or pain (see 2 Nephi 2:11). We would never make mistakes, but we would also never improve. There would be no need for a Savior to suffer for our sins.

That's one reason Satan's rebellion against God—which sought to destroy our agency—was so offensive to Heavenly Father (see Moses 4:3). God knew the only way we would improve and become like Him is if we could make our own choices and be healed from our mistakes through Jesus Christ and His Atonement.

REMEMBER YOUR GOOD CHOICES

It's true that having agency means we may mess up and experience regret. But agency also gives us the ability to make good choices.

The prophet Jacob said, "Cheer up your hearts, and remember that ye are free to act

for yourselves" (2 Nephi 10:23). We can rejoice because even though we aren't perfect, we are always free to repent and make decisions that bring us happiness, such as going to church each week, studying our scriptures, and forgiving one another.

In fact, not only does the Lord promise that when we repent of our sins, He will "remember them no more" (Doctrine and Covenants 58:42), but we also know that our good works "are had in remembrance in the sight of God" (Acts 10:31). In other words, if we repent, the Lord is willing to forget all our bad choices, and He remembers all our good ones. That's a pretty good reason to rejoice in our agency!

AGENCY KEEPS US ON THE COVENANT PATH

As painful as it was as an eight-year-old to realize I made a mistake the day after my baptism, Heavenly Father provided a way for me to repent. Through the Savior's perfect example and sacrifice, we can overcome our sins and make good choices that bring us blessings.

I am grateful I chose to be baptized so I can repent and recommit myself to the Savior each week as I partake of the sacrament. Choices like these help me feel a great sense of happiness and self-worth.

So the next time you feel bogged down by your mistakes, remember to rejoice in the choice—the choice you have to repent, turn to Heavenly Father and the Savior, and live righteously. In the end, one of the greatest joys we can feel is knowing that—as imperfect as we are—we, by our own free will, choose to follow Jesus Christ. **NE**

Come, Follow Me: 2 Nephi 6–10

Satan tries to convince us that sin and sadness are irreparable. But Jesus Christ taught that there's no need to get swallowed up in the discouragement of our sins (see John 16:33).

This Come, Follow Me lesson reminds us that "among [God's] promises, none is greater than the promise of an 'infinite atonement' to overcome death and hell (2 Nephi 9:7)" (Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families: Book of Mormon 2020 [2020], 26). Jesus Christ fulfilled that promise.

As you study this week's lesson, ponder the blessings you have because of your agency and the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Nephi and Isaiah

THE PLAIN TRUTH

NEPHI LOVED PLAINNESS. AND NEPHI LOVED ISAIAH. HERE'S WHY THAT MAKES TOTAL SENSE.

NEPHI'S SOUL DELIGHT

In 2 Nephi 25, Nephi tells us:

- "My soul delighteth in *plainness*."
- "My soul delighteth in *the words of Isaiah*."
- "My soul delighteth to *prophecy concerning [Jesus Christ]*" (2 Nephi 25:4, 5, 13; emphasis added).

Here's how Nephi's "soul delights" line up with one another:

- Nephi knew that "the words of Isaiah are not plain unto" everyone (2 Nephi 25:4), especially those unfamiliar with their context (like culture and geography).
- But Nephi also knew that Isaiah's words "are plain unto all those that are filled with the spirit of prophecy" (2 Nephi 25:4).
- "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10).

So here's one key to understanding Isaiah's words: If you have a testimony of Heavenly Father's plan and the Savior's role as Redeemer and promised Messiah, you can understand them better than you otherwise would. You may never feel that the language and symbolism are exactly *easy*, but you'll have a key and be better able to understand the spirit of the message.

THE GREAT, PLAIN WORDS OF ISAIAH

Like Nephi, the Savior Himself also quoted Isaiah. He commanded the Nephites to study his words, "*for great are the words of Isaiah*" (3 Nephi 23:1; emphasis added).

The Savior also explained why Isaiah's words are great. He said they tell us about "all things concerning [the Lord's] people which are of the house of Israel" as well as "the Gentiles" (3 Nephi 23:2). In other words, Isaiah tells us about the scattering of Israel and about their gathering and redemption through Jesus Christ and the Restoration of His gospel. This is also what Nephi delighted in, and it's going on today. The Book of Mormon is a big part of it too. And so are you.

President Russell M. Nelson has told youth that the gathering of Israel "is the most important thing taking place on earth today. . . . And if you choose to, if you want to, you can be a big part of it" ("Hope of Israel" [worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018], 8, HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

So, in a way, Isaiah was also talking about you. And that's just plain awesome. **NE**



The DO'S and DON'TS of DATING

By David Dickson and David A. Edwards
Church Magazines

WHETHER YOU'RE A DATING ALL-STAR or still sitting on the bench, there are a lot of things you can learn about having a fun time or avoiding fundamental errors. Don't be ashamed if you're not naturally gifted when it comes to dating. You can always turn it around. Here are a few of the *do's* and *don'ts* of dating.

Will your dating decisions get a smiley face or a face-palm?

BEFORE THE DATE

- **DON'T:** Decide that even though you're not 16 yet, you're totally mature for your age and can totally handle dating.
DO: Follow the guidelines from prophets and apostles in *For the Strength of Youth*.
- **DON'T:** Assume nobody wants to date you, or wait idly for dates to come along, and complain when they don't.
DO: Always try to develop friendships and meet people. Even if it doesn't lead to dates, it teaches good lessons and adds richness to life.
- **DON'T:** Look only to popular social media influencers, blogs, or vlogs for tips on how to behave during dates.
DO: Get advice from righteous parents, worthy older siblings, or trusted Church leaders about dating. They care about you, their experience is more relevant, and their advice is better.
- **DON'T:** Always ask someone out in a complicated, elaborate way.
DO: Just ask. The direct approach is usually best.

PLANNING

- **DON'T:** Pick up your date and say, "So . . . what do you want to do?"
DO: Have a plan—and a backup plan.¹
- **DON'T:** Decide to do something outdoorsy or athletic, but don't tell your date, who opts to dress nicely.
DO: Communicate ahead of time. Don't keep your date guessing, and don't be shy about asking. And parents need to know what's going on too.
- **DON'T:** Plan activities that may require you to take out a loan to finance them.
DO: Be creative and find ways to interact that aren't expensive.²
- **DON'T:** Plan a date that lasts most of a day.
DO: Plan a date that's relatively limited in scope and time. Fun dates don't need to be epic in terms of either length or effort.



ATTITUDE

- **DON'T:** Assume that the date means something hugely significant or implies a great commitment.
DO: Relax. Your only commitment is to spend time with someone for an activity in which you'll get to know one another and the others in the group. Avoid the word *date* if you think it carries too much baggage in the culture where you live.
- **DON'T:** Always think, "Could this be the one?"
DO: Just have fun. Remember, there is no serious relationship. This is teenage dating, not courtship before marriage. You're learning the ropes, not tying the knot.



HYGIENE AND GROOMING

- **DON'T:** Go straight from your work-out or grubby job to your date.
DO: Put in some effort to look (and smell) good and be clean.
- **DON'T:** Drench yourself with body spray, cologne, or perfume beforehand.
DO: Be clean and well-groomed. Add a hint of fancy stuff if you want. Subtle is better. Some people are sensitive to strong smells or could even be allergic.

ETIQUETTE AND COURTESY

- **DON'T:** Stay glued to your phone throughout the date.
DO: Silence the phone and pay attention to the people you're with, particularly your date.
- **DON'T:** Flirt with other people while on your date.
DO: Save it for another day. For now, you already have a date.
- **DON'T:** Put on a loud performance for all of the people on your group date.
DO: Have fun with everyone, but don't try to be the center of everyone's attention.
- **DON'T:** Throughout the date, check the time, sigh, yawn, and generally act bored.
DO: Practice courtesy, and do what you can to make things fun.
- **DON'T:** Text from the driveway or honk the horn when picking up your date.
DO: Go to the door. And make an appearance before the parents.
- **DON'T:** Blow off curfew—your own or your date's.
DO: Take your date home and return home yourself at the time you agreed to.
- **DON'T:** Once the group date starts, just hang out with your friends (guys with guys, girls with girls).
DO: Pay attention to your date. One of you was brave enough to ask, and the other said yes, so spend time together.

NOTES

1. Consider having a backup backpack. See "Save the Date," *New Era*, Nov. 2015, 27.
2. See, for instance, "Fun Dates That Don't Break the Bank," *New Era*, Feb. 2014, 26–28.

CONVERSATION

- **DON'T:** Talk about yourself the whole time.
DO: Ask interesting questions, and listen closely to the responses. Share some interesting things about yourself, but mostly make it about the other person.
- **DON'T:** Say only negative things whenever you open your mouth.
DO: Be pleasant to be around.
- **DON'T:** Have absolutely nothing to talk about.
DO: You might need to practice conversation a little. Get interested and informed.
- **DON'T:** Use sarcastic, biting, or vulgar humor.
DO: Be genuinely funny, or at least cheesy—maybe some "Dad jokes" to get the groans rolling. Real laughter will usually ensue.
- **DON'T:** Ask awkward questions like "On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate me as a date?"
DO: Let go of insecurity and try not to put people on the spot. **NE**



I HAD BEHELD A VISION

In the spring of 1820, 14-year-old Joseph Smith wondered which church he should join. He turned to the scriptures for answers. In James 1:5 he read that if we lack wisdom, we may ask of God.



By the Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44)

First President of the Church

At length I came to the conclusion that I must either remain in darkness and confusion, or else I must do as James directs, that is, ask of God. . . .

So, in accordance with this . . . I retired to the woods to make the attempt. It was on the morning of a beautiful, clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. . . .

After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me, and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, . . . Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction.

But, exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at

the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction . . . I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

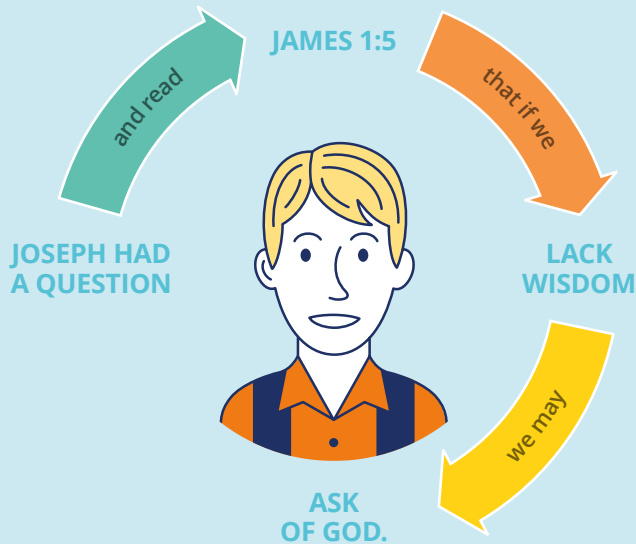
. . . When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!* . . .

. . . I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two Personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; . . . I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it. **NE**

From Joseph Smith—History 1:13–17, 25.

A PATTERN FOR SEEKING TRUTH

How can we know what's true?
The Prophet Joseph Smith set a
pattern for us to follow.



Joseph's seeking led to the Restoration
of the gospel of Jesus Christ. What will
your seeking lead to?



When you have questions,
where do you go for answers?

President Russell M. Nelson
has shared how we can follow the
example of the Prophet Joseph:



"Find a quiet place. Humble
yourself before God."



"Pray in the name of
Jesus Christ about your
concerns, your fears, your
weaknesses—yes, the very
longings of your heart."



"And then listen!"



"Write the thoughts that
come to your mind."



"Follow through with actions that
you are prompted to take."

**"DOES GOD REALLY WANT TO
SPEAK TO YOU? YES!"**

(From "Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,"
April 2018 general conference [*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 95].)

A BETTER TIME

WITH PRAYER AND THE SCRIPTURES



By Klarie Brown

Over spring break, I got to talk with my sister who is serving her mission in the Idaho Falls Mission. I told her that track was about to start and how excited I was. I told her how badly I wanted to beat the school record for the 1600-meter and 800-meter races.

"I probably won't be able to. The record time is pretty fast," I told my sister. The school record did seem impossible. I started thinking about the one girl I had never been able to beat. Maybe trying to keep up with her or even beating her would be a better goal.

My sister did not answer right away, but she seemed to be smiling through the phone. "I know I'm a missionary," she said. "So you might expect me to give you some kind of a challenge, but I really want you to try something. I want you to try to read your scriptures and pray every day. And if you do, God will bless you to do your best."

"I'll try," I said. I had not really been reading my scriptures every night, and I wasn't quite sure if, or how, reading would help me run.

The next few nights I read, prayed, and went to bed without really thinking about it. One night as I was brushing my teeth, I thought, "I'm not really getting anything out of reading the scriptures." Then I remembered President Russell M. Nelson's invitation to read the whole Book of Mormon and mark all references to Jesus Christ (see "Sisters' Participation in the Gathering of Israel," Oct. 2018 general conference [*Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 69–70]). So I started to mark the references to Christ as I read. I began to get more out of reading and to truly ponder the scriptures.

After 15 consecutive days of reading and praying every night, I had my first track meet. And I was super nervous. My first race was the 4x800-meter run. I was the anchor runner. When I started running the last leg, my team was in 7th place out of 10 teams. We finished in 3rd place. Had I gotten faster?

While I was waiting for the mile, I watched all the other races and prayed that I would do well. When we walked to the starting line, my heart was beating so fast I thought it would jump out of my chest. I prayed again and felt peace. We were all lined up, and I had a flashback from all the mile races I had run in the year before. I would be in first place the whole race, unsure if my pace was fast enough to beat the record. Then on the final stretch, I would get discouraged when a certain girl from another school would sprint ahead of me and take first place. So I decided to try to do that myself this time.

As the gun went off, I went straight behind the girl from the year before. We were in first and second place. My coach was at the 200-meter mark, and she told me my time and encouraged me. I wanted to run up ahead, but I knew that she would pass me on the last stretch if I did. She kept looking back at me like she was afraid of me.

On the last lap, I could hear the girl who was in third place trying to pass both of us. So I bolted. I ran as fast as I could. There were so many people cheering—my parents, teammates, and friends' parents.

When I passed the finish line, the first thing that came to my mind was, "Did I do it?" Then I turned and saw everyone else finish. I looked toward the girl I hadn't been able to beat before. Her eyes were big when she said, "Man, you got so much faster." I had won!

I was so happy. I couldn't believe I had actually done it! Then I realized that I hadn't done it alone. I said a quick prayer to thank Heavenly Father. Taking my sister's challenge helped me to be better at studying the scriptures. And I had a better relationship with Heavenly Father. I had also been able to get faster and smarter about my running. Heavenly Father listens to our prayers. And if we do our part and have faith, He will answer them. **NE**

The author lives in Missouri, USA.

But I Was Inspired to Call Her

I had felt so strongly about calling Jessica. Why hadn't our conversation gone differently?

By Tiffany M. Leary

I smiled and waved goodbye as the group of youth left the Independence Visitors' Center in Missouri, USA. Henry, the young man who had given me a referral card, smiled back as he went through the revolving doors with his friends. The referral card said: "Jessica, my older sister, hasn't been coming to church." I imagined that Jessica was my age since Henry reminded me of one of my teenage brothers.

Whoa. I felt connected to them and wanted to help. Referrals are always important to missionaries, but this felt especially important to me.

Reaching Out

The next couple of days, I prayed for Jessica and Henry while my companion and I went out, taught investigators, and gave lessons at the visitors' center. When Henry got home from youth conference, I was finally able to call him. Henry was sad that Jessica had not been going to church and had made wrong decisions. Henry had given me the referral card because he wanted his sister to feel the Spirit like he had at the visitors' center.

Henry handed the phone to his mom. Her voice sparkled as she talked about Jessica's hobbies, her new job, her close relationship with Henry, and her respect for others. But her mom's voice dropped as she told me that Jessica's questions and frustrations about the Church led her to quit listening to gospel discussions.

Love for Jessica

Once I hung up the phone, I felt overwhelmed by emotion. I was deeply touched by how much Henry and his mom loved Jessica. I felt sympathy for Jessica as I imagined her struggling with difficult questions. As I thought of the good things Jessica's family had told me about her, I felt love for her.

If her family and I felt this much love for Jessica, then how does Jesus Christ feel about her? I teared up as I contemplated Jesus Christ's everlasting love for each of us. He loves each of us more than we can comprehend. He loves us with a full understanding of our weaknesses, our strengths, our struggles, and our desires. More than anything else, He wants us to follow Him so we will be happy.

The Call

I dialed the number. The phone rang, and I was nervous. I had contacted referrals before, but I wanted this one to go especially well.

"Hello?"

My heart jumped into my throat. "Hi Jessica. This is Sister Moulton from the Independence Visitors' Center."

Jessica was polite but quick to end the conversation. "I'm sorry. The Church just isn't my thing. I love my family, but I am not ready to do anything with the Church."

And then she hung up.

I set the phone down and sat unmoving. I was stunned. I had imagined asking her questions about herself and sharing my testimony. I wanted her to feel the Spirit and accept an invitation to do something, anything, to feel the love Christ has for her. Now I didn't know what to do.

I had felt so strongly about calling her. Why hadn't the phone call gone differently? Had I failed? Why hadn't anything changed?




Giving Love Regardless of Reaction

I called Henry and his mom and told them what happened. I felt bad that I didn't have much to report, but they were grateful I had tried. Henry was even hopeful that Jessica would eventually come back.

Over the next few days, I thought about the phone call and my questions. Then it came to me. I hadn't failed. I had tried. And something had changed! I understood better the love that Jesus Christ has for each of us. He loves us so much that He performed the Atonement for everyone, whether we accept it or not. And that love is always there.

I thought about the love I felt instead of my disappointment, and then I didn't feel discouraged. I felt a new desire that others learn the gospel so that they could feel the love that Christ has for them. I can't make others accept Christ's love or the gospel, but I can give them an opportunity. I can reach out even though the results may not be like I expect. **NE**

The author lives in Utah, USA.

A tall, dense structure made of sticks and vines, possibly a traditional ladder or a natural formation, reaching towards a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The structure is composed of many thin, dark sticks and thick, brown, gnarled vines that are tightly packed together. The overall impression is one of height and complexity.

*If big changes and big
decisions scare you,
here's what you can do.*

OVERCOME YOUR FEAR OF THE FUTURE

By Charlotte Larcabal
Church Magazines

Imagine you are a young man on Vanuatu, an island nation in the South Pacific. You stand atop a 100-foot-tall wooden tower. Two vines are tied tightly around your ankles. You're about to dive headfirst off the tower with just those vines to keep you from hitting the ground. This is the land dive—an ancient coming-of-age ritual to prove your bravery and adulthood. You take a deep breath, try to swallow your terror, cross your arms over your chest, and leap.

YOUR OWN RITES OF PASSAGE

You probably don't have a land dive coming up. And if you do, cancel it. Seriously, don't try this at home. But even though no one is asking you to literally plummet into adulthood, you will face different kinds of coming-of-age rituals. You're coming up on some big, life-changing milestones—things like going on your first date, graduating from high school, continuing your education, getting a job, or serving a mission.

You might be excited for these changes and the big decisions you'll soon be making, or you might be white-in-the-face, shaking-in-your-seat terrified.

If thinking about the future sends you into an anxious spiral, you're not alone. Getting major anxiety about major milestones is super common. And that's OK. Because just like a land dive, a true rite-of-passage is supposed to test your bravery.

FACING YOUR REAL FEARS

Oftentimes we aren't actually scared of dating, or college, or missions, or whatever. We are scared of the failure, the unknown, and the rejection that might come with these things. If you find you're nervous about the future, take a minute and ask yourself: What are you really afraid of? Here are some common fears that tend to surround big changes and some tips for coping with them.

FEAR OF

FAILURE

Have you ever not tried something because you were so worried you might be bad at it? The fear of failure can hold us back in a big, terrible way. But try to accept that you're sometimes going to fail—and that's OK. Messing up, being bad at things, and failing are all part of life. Take comfort in the words of Elder Lynn G. Robbins of the Seventy: "Mistakes are a fact of life. . . . Hopefully, each mistake we make becomes a lesson in wisdom, turning stumbling blocks into stepping-stones."¹ In addition, if you stay close to the Spirit, you won't blindly walk into any major mistakes or sins. And thanks to the Savior, you can repent. So keep trying! Keep moving forward.



FEAR OF

REJECTION

Rejection is the worst. Or is it? Usually, it's not the rejection that stings as much as the lie we tell ourselves: that getting rejected means we aren't good enough. But the reality is, when a person or organization rejects us, it usually means we weren't exactly what they were looking for, not that something is necessarily wrong with us. And the sooner you realize that no rejection can change your divine worth, the sooner you'll stop fearing it so much! (See Doctrine and Covenants 18:10.)

Another quick way to stop fearing rejection (especially when meeting new people) is to stop thinking so much about yourself and whether or not they will like you. Instead, focus on them. Think about helping them feel comfortable.



FEAR OF BEING ON YOUR OWN

Doing anything on your own is daunting at first. But with time, you get the hang of it. And soon, it's no big deal, right? Remember how you don't have to plummet headfirst into adulthood? Becoming an independent adult is a process. And you already started that process a long time ago. Yes, there are a lot of things you need to take care of when you're on your own, but you've already developed many skills to help you! And you'll learn more and more as you go.

It's important to remember that you are never truly "on your own." Strengthen your relationship with your Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. They are always right there with you. "Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest" (Joshua 1:9).

FEAR OF

THE UNKNOWN

Many people are terrified of the unknown. But the future is always uncertain. You had no idea how this past year would go. Or the year before that. And look at you now!

Your mind will naturally imagine future scenarios to try and guess how you might think, act, and feel. If you're dreading the future, there's a good chance that all the scenarios you're imagining are pretty bad—or downright terrifying. Why not imagine a good scenario? Let yourself imagine the best happening to you. This will help you create positive emotions to carry you through whatever is coming up.

Just because the future is unknown to you doesn't mean Heavenly Father doesn't know what will happen (see 2 Nephi 9:20). Turn to Him continually and He will guide you. His guiding light may often illuminate only a few steps ahead of you, but if you take those few steps, you will receive more and more light as you continue pressing forward.²

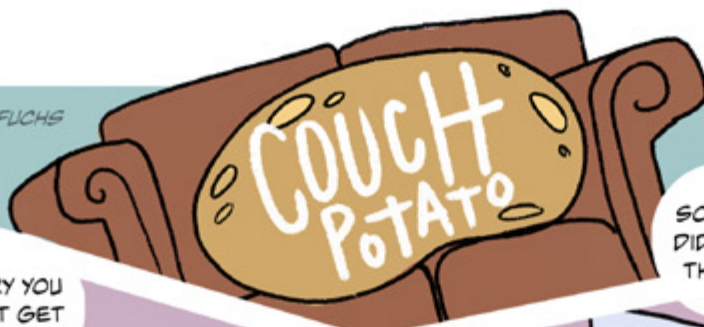
TAKE COURAGE!

"Fear is the beginning of defeat," said Elder Derek A. Cuthbert (1926–1991) of the Seventy. "On the other hand, courage is the beginning of success. We gain courage by the realization that we have a lot going for us. We derive strength from the knowledge that the Lord is with us."³

Does that mean if you're scared of change or intimidated by growing up, you've already lost? Not at all. Fear will only be the beginning of defeat if you give in to it. Instead, choose to act in spite of your fears. That's what courage is. No matter what lies ahead, you have so much going for you! Most importantly: you have a loving Heavenly Father and Savior, who will help you all along the way. Never forget that. **NE**

NOTES

1. Lynn G. Robbins, Apr. 2018 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 21); see also Boyd K. Packer, Oct. 2011 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 17–18).
2. David A. Bednar, "Patterns of Light: Spirit of Revelation" (video), ChurchofJesusChrist.org/media-library/video/2012-01-012-patterns-of-light-spirit-of-revelation.
3. Derek A. Cuthbert, "The Futility of Fear," *New Era*, Nov. 1985, 46.



1:30 PM



"IN ALL ASPECTS OF YOUR LIFE, SEEK HEALTHY SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS. DO ALL YOU CAN TO SAFEGUARD YOUR PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH SO THAT YOU CAN FULFILL YOUR DIVINE POTENTIAL AS A SON OR DAUGHTER OF GOD."

FOR THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH (2011), 27.

Simply SIBLINGS

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By Richard M. Romney
Church Magazines

When Rebecca B. was 15, she was happy for her sister Elizabeth, 19, who was leaving on a mission. But Rebecca was feeling pretty sorry for herself. The family had just dropped Elizabeth off at the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah, USA. Rebecca felt like she was losing not only her sister but also her best friend.



We're talking about sisters so close that even though their parents' home had a separate room for each of them, they still shared a room—because they preferred it that way. Rebecca and Elizabeth knew that by sticking together, they could weather the storms of life. Most of the time they were like flowers and sunshine, bright and happy. They were always talking, always together. And now Elizabeth would be far away.

Rebecca remembers thinking as the family drove away from the MTC, "Who will be my best friend now?"

A New Best Friend

"Not long after Elizabeth left," Rebecca says, "we had a family home evening where Mom asked: 'How can you create a relationship with your siblings that will last throughout eternity?' That night, I decided that while Elizabeth was gone, Matthew [13 at the time] was going to be my new best friend."

.....

*Can brothers and sisters be best friends?
For Matt and Rebecca, the answer is—
absolutely and eternally—yes.*

.....





.....

"She reached out to me," Matthew recalls. "We just started doing more and more things together."

"Part of it was just talking—on the way to school, during school, after school," Rebecca says. "We talked about what kind of day we were having, about whatever was going on."

They created what they call a safe relationship: "We're not mean and we don't hurt each other," Matthew says.

"That means we can talk about the good, the bad, the pretty, and the ugly," Rebecca adds. "We have the same kind of relationship with our parents—we talk to them about everything. We're open and candid, and that builds trust."

"I've grown up with two sisters who pretty much always got along, so it was easy for me to follow their example," Matthew says. Their friendship continued into high school. They rode to

school together, said hi in the hallways, went to each other's activities, introduced each other to friends, and talked about little things that don't matter much. But sometimes they talked long and deep about things that really do, like how to recognize answers to prayer.

Support and Fun

But it was more than just talking that helped Rebecca and Matthew become closer as siblings. A big part of their friendship is about supporting each other and having fun together. For example:

- *Rebecca likes to jog. Matthew rides a unicycle.* So they work out together anyway. Rebecca runs as Matthew pedals beside her.
- *Matthew loves Ultimate, a non-contact sport played with a flying plastic disc.* So Rebecca helps Matthew practice at home. "If you can catch my throws, you can catch anything!" she says.
- *Rebecca loves music and ballroom dancing.* Actually, Matthew loves music, too, and they often sing and play piano together. But ballroom dancing? More on that later.
- *Matthew loves hiking.* "So he goes hiking with Dad," Rebecca says. "You don't have to do everything together all the time. I go along sometimes, but they hike much faster than I do."

When You're Annoyed

Of course, they don't always agree. Occasionally they argue or feelings get hurt, but they've learned ways to work through it.

"Sometimes you need to talk to each other and work it out, and sometimes you need to go to your parents," Rebecca says. "But when I'm with my friends, I don't talk negatively about my parents or my siblings. When friends tell me, 'I admire how close you guys are,' I know it's not because we're perfect; it's because we're loyal to each other."

"When siblings annoy you," says Matthew, "don't sweat the small stuff, and don't sweat the big stuff, either. Talk to each other with kindness, and get the feeling of love back into your family as quickly as you can. It's more fun to be happy."

"Remember," Rebecca says, "friends come and go. But your relationships with your family are eternal, so those are relationships you should be motivated to keep working on."



"When friends tell me, 'I admire how close you guys are,' I know it's not because we're perfect; it's because we're loyal to each other." —Rebecca



No Need to Be Identical

"You don't have to have the same likes and dislikes," Rebecca says, "But when I go to Matthew's Ultimate games, I know enough to say, 'Wow, that was really cool how you caught that.' And when I'm sewing quilts, he knows enough to say, 'Wow, that's a really hard block that you made.' You support them in what they're interested in."

Remember the ballroom dancing mentioned above? That's where Matthew may have set the gold standard for sibling support. Not only did he practice ballroom dancing at home with Rebecca, he also learned a routine so that he could perform with another girl on a song Rebecca choreographed. When the ballroom dance club needed an extra member, Matthew joined. Now Rebecca relies on him when she tests routines: "I ask him if it will work or not, and together we figure it out."

Not long ago, members of the club staged a workshop for the youth in Rebecca's and Matthew's ward. Rebecca took charge and got everyone involved. "And Matthew got to dance with all the girls!" Rebecca teases. Matthew just grins.

Good Things or Push-Ups

As you talk to Rebecca and Matthew, it becomes apparent that they are *always* cheering each other on. Rebecca explains: "If I ever say anything negative about myself, Matthew will say, 'Three good things about yourself or 10 push-ups!' And he'll wait until I say good things. It means a lot that he helps me see the positive in myself."

And Rebecca reciprocates. "Everybody loves Matthew," she says. "My job is to ward off all his fans!"



Together or Apart

About a year and a half ago, Elizabeth returned from her mission. She was soon back in college, living away from home again. But now she's getting a new roommate, a freshman who just graduated from high school—Rebecca. They'll be sharing a room again, just like they did at home.

And who will be Matthew's best friend now?

"He's going to have two best friends," Rebecca says. "Mom and Dad." **NE**

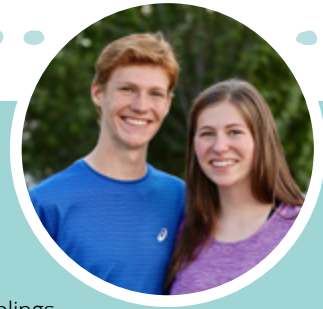


"Strengthen your relationships with your brothers and sisters. They can become your closest friends. Support them in their interests, and help them with challenges they may be facing."

For the Strength of Youth (2011), 15.

7 TIPS FOR SIBLING SUCCESS

Want to create your own sibling support system? When you begin to try and make changes in your family, know that it takes time and patience to create a stronger relationship with siblings and parents. Don't give up, just keep trying. Here are some suggestions from Rebecca and Matthew:



1. **Create a safe environment.** "Listen. When you listen to each other with love, you feel more able to talk to each other honestly and openly."
2. **Talk to each other, and to your parents, too.** "We have discussions a lot—while we're making dinner, cleaning the house, or just sitting down. Having discussions with each other has made our family close."
3. **Be each other's allies.** "Don't speak evil of yourself or your siblings. Speak all the good you can."
4. **Learn to laugh.** "Laugh with each other and at yourself, but don't say or do things to hurt each other."
5. **Rely on additional support.** "If you're having trouble getting along, reach out to adults who can help, like parents, Church leaders, or school administrators."
6. **Attend each other's events.** "Be there to cheer them on. And do things together at home too. We discovered we love to do crossword puzzles as a family."
7. **Strengthen your spiritual side.** "Read scriptures, sing hymns, pray, and go to church together. Feed each other spiritually."

SIBLING MATCHUP



Three pairs of siblings volunteered to be in this photo. Guess which ones are siblings and match their letters.

A _____
 B _____
 C _____
 D _____
 E _____
 F _____

Answers on page 45.

Read more from and about siblings at newera.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
 Tell us about you and your siblings at newera@ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

*Nephi's experience helped me
see how to deal with challenges
in my own life.*

COME
FOLLOW
ME

I HAD A SHIP TO BUILD





By Elder
Juan Pablo Villar
Of the Seventy

When I told my parents I wanted to serve a mission, they were not happy. My older brother, Ivan, and I were the only members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in our family. I had joined when I was 18, and now, one year later, I had decided to serve full-time. Although my parents ultimately agreed to let me go, my dad warned that when I returned, he could not guarantee he would keep paying my college tuition.

However, I knew that if I served, the Lord would help me.

Throughout my mission, I rejoiced as I saw people embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ and progress toward salvation. When I returned home, I started my studies again. But soon my father said, as he had warned, “I cannot pay anymore.”

“How is this possible?” I thought. “I served a mission. I did what the Lord wanted me to do. Why is this happening to me?”

STUDY AND WORK

Then I remembered reading in the Book of Mormon. Nephi, who had kept all the commandments, was commanded to build a ship, something he had never done before (see 1 Nephi 17:8, 49–51). I felt like I had a “ship” to build. It was a huge problem that I didn’t know how to solve, so I prayed for inspiration.

Soon Ivan talked to me. “Juan Pablo, I heard our father is not going to pay your tuition,” he said.

“That’s true,” I replied. “I think everything is finished for me!”

Ivan's response was simple, but it inspired me. "Do you know that you can both study and work?" he said. "That way, you'll be able to pay for your tuition." It was the first time I realized I could do both! Soon I found a part-time job that enabled me to continue my studies.

I thought again about Nephi and the boat: "Now I, Nephi, did not . . . build the ship after the manner of men; but I did build it after the manner which the Lord had shown unto me" (1 Nephi 18:2).

If I had listened to myself, I would have given up on my education. But the Lord inspired me, through the words of my brother, to continue. Sometimes when we have challenges in our lives, we think the Lord is not blessing us. But I can now clearly see how He blessed me with an opportunity to develop and grow.

DON'T QUIT!

As a student, I also got married. Then, when I had nearly completed my degree, I realized I didn't really like what I was studying. I wanted to give up. But my wife said, "You cannot quit. You don't know what the Lord has prepared for you, so you have to finish."

I thought of Nephi once again. Despite being mistreated by his older brothers, he didn't quit. Instead, Nephi looked to God and praised Him. "I did not murmur

against the Lord because of mine afflictions," he said. Eventually he was freed, and "it came to pass that I, Nephi, did guide the ship, that we sailed again towards the promised land.

"And it came to pass that after we had sailed for the space of many days, we did arrive at the promised land" (1 Nephi 18:16, 22–23).

Listening to my wife's counsel, I finished my degree. But I began work in a different career field.

A couple of years later, I had the strong impression that I needed to improve my education, and I felt I should go to graduate school. When I started the application process, one of the first things I was asked was whether I had a bachelor's degree. In that moment, my wife's words came quickly to me: "You don't know what the Lord has prepared for you, so you have to finish." If I had not completed my bachelor's degree, it would not have been possible for me to obtain my master's degree.

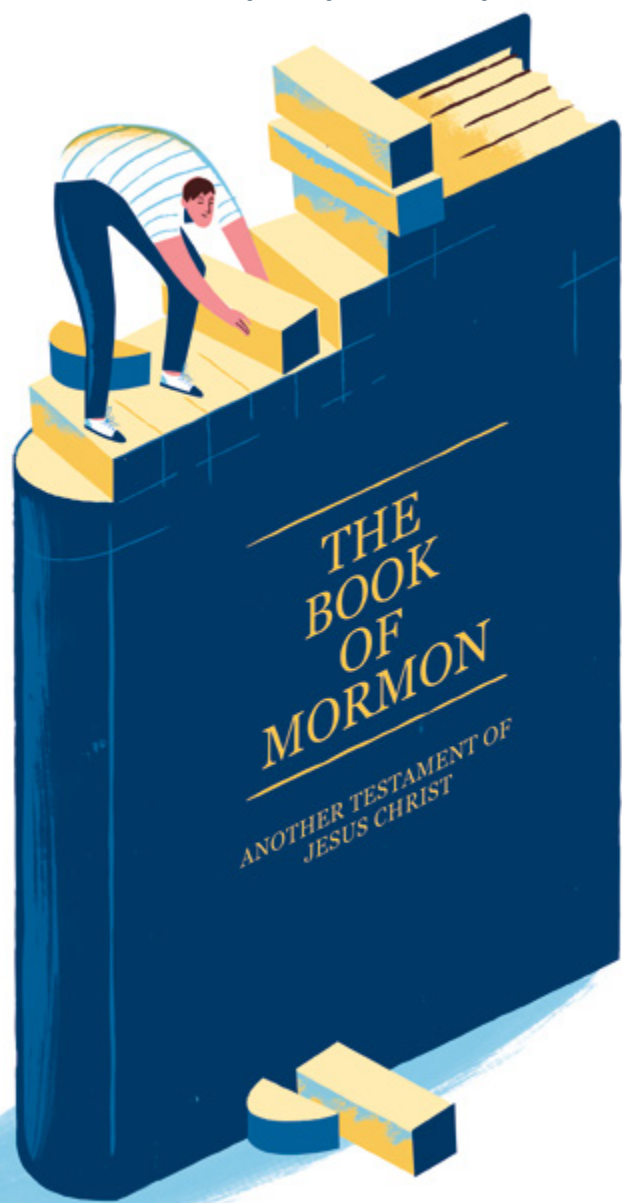
PROPHETS GUIDE US

Every time I read the Book of Mormon, I ask myself, What does this prophet from thousands of years ago want me to know and apply in my life and in the life of my family? Nephi, for example, has taught me that we need to be prepared when the Lord calls us, to trust Him, and to serve Him faithfully.

I know without any doubt that when the Lord calls you, He will prepare the way, just as He did for Nephi (see 1 Nephi 3:7). **NE**



BUILDING *My* TESTIMONY *Day by Day*



I realized that a testimony doesn't come because you set a yearly goal.

By Bryce Eggers

One year I set a New Year's resolution to read and study the entire Book of Mormon. I wanted to gain a rock-solid testimony of the book and the gospel. However, sticking to a schedule was harder than I thought, and I soon became overwhelmed and discouraged. I lost sight of my original goal to gain a testimony, and I stopped reading altogether.

The next year I was setting goals again. With only two years of high school left, I wanted to focus on preparing for a mission. I knew that in order to be a successful missionary, I had to study and gain a testimony of the Book of Mormon, but I remembered my earlier attempt and was overwhelmed by that task. I thought, "I tried that last year, and it failed miserably." Reading the Book of Mormon began to feel impossible, so I said a prayer.

A calm feeling washed over me, and I realized then that gaining a testimony isn't a "yearly" thing—you can't set a huge goal to "gain a testimony" and then just expect it to come by the end of the year. Conversion happens day by day and week by week, not year by year.

So I set a smaller, more manageable goal. Every Sunday, I would reflect on my week, setting short-term goals to help read the Book of Mormon and improve my testimony, and realigning myself with my end goal, which was serving a mission.

Most of my goals were really small, like reading earlier in the day to be more attentive or changing the way I marked my scriptures. But I saw an impact in my life. I am still not perfect at reading my scriptures—far from it—but I am blessed with the motivation to keep trying. I can see the blessings of the gospel in my life, and I have the assurance that I can become who Heavenly Father wants me to be. **NE**

The author is currently serving in the Hungary/România Mission.

Meet the FOUR JOSEPHS ^{OF} 2 Nephi 3

Did you know that a prophet named Joseph spoke about Joseph Smith almost 4,000 years ago?

See if you can keep track of all the Josephs mentioned in 2 Nephi 3: Lehi tells his son Joseph about some of the prophecies that Joseph of Egypt made about Joseph Smith, who was named after his father, Joseph.

Take a look at the time line below to better understand who those Josephs were and when they lived.

What Did Joseph of Egypt Say about Joseph Smith?

The Lord inspired Joseph of Egypt to see many centuries into the future. He shared the following truths about Joseph Smith:

- **"A seer** shall the Lord my God raise up, who shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of my loins [descendants]" (verse 6).
- **"He shall** be great like unto Moses,



About 1700 BC

Joseph, son of Jacob (who was renamed Israel), lived in Egypt. He had two sons, named Ephraim and Manasseh.

About 600 BC

Lehi, a descendant of Manasseh, left Jerusalem and traveled in the wilderness for several years. There, he and his wife, Sariah, had a son named Joseph.



whom I have said I would raise up unto you, to deliver my people" (verse 9).

- **"Unto him** will I give power to bring forth my word unto the seed of thy loins—and not to the bringing forth my word only, saith the Lord, but to the convincing them of my word, which shall have already gone forth among them [such as the Bible]" (verse 11).
- **"Out of** weakness he shall be made strong, in that day when my work shall commence among all my people, unto the restoring thee, O house of Israel, saith the Lord" (verse 13).
- **"That seer** will the Lord bless; and they that seek to destroy him shall be confounded" (verse 14).
- **"His name** shall be called after me; and it shall be after the name of his father" (verse 15).

How Was Joseph Smith Like Joseph of Egypt?

Joseph of Egypt was appointed by the pharaoh to oversee the stockpiling of food to prepare for a famine. When the famine came, people in Egypt and elsewhere came to Joseph to buy food. Even his brothers came to Egypt from the Holy Land for food. The pharaoh allowed Joseph's brothers and father to have food and to live in Egypt. This saved them from starvation.

In Joseph Smith's day, people were facing a "famine" of the word of God; they were starving for the true gospel of Jesus Christ. Joseph Smith was the prophet the Lord called to save us from that famine—by restoring His gospel and priesthood so we could receive the ordinances necessary for our spiritual salvation. **NE**

HOW DID LEHI KNOW ABOUT JOSEPH OF EGYPT?

After Lehi and his family had left Jerusalem, the Lord commanded them to return and get the brass plates that Laban had. These plates contained the writings of Old Testament prophets, including Joseph of Egypt.

AD 1805

Joseph Smith Jr. was born on December 23, 1805, in Vermont. In the First Vision in 1820, he saw Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. He translated and published the Book of Mormon several years later, just as Joseph of Egypt said he would (see 2 Nephi 3:11).

AD 1771

Joseph Smith Sr. was born in Massachusetts.





*Like Joseph Smith,
you can learn that
the Lord will help
and strengthen you
as you rely on Him.*

YOU DON'T



HAVE TO BE PERFECT TO DO GOD'S WORK

By **Bentlee Rice**

Church Magazines

Have you ever said something to a sibling or friend that you regret? Or laughed at a joke that wasn't kind or clean? Or maybe kept watching a movie a little longer than you knew you should have?

Later, the situation pops into your head. You feel guilty about it, so you kneel to talk to God about the mistakes you've made, asking for forgiveness and then feeling God's love.

If this seems familiar, consider what we can learn about overcoming weakness from an experience the Prophet Joseph Smith had when he was 17.



About three years after the First Vision, Joseph found that he “frequently fell into many foolish errors, and displayed the weakness of youth” and “was guilty of levity” (Joseph Smith—History 1:28). He recognized that he had sinned against God, and as someone who had been called by God, he knew he needed to be better. Joseph “felt condemned for [his] weakness and imperfections” (Joseph Smith—History 1:29), so one night he knelt down to pray and plead for forgiveness.

While Joseph was praying, Moroni appeared in Joseph's room and told him about the gold plates. The visits from Moroni prepared Joseph to get the plates and translate the Book of Mormon.

Even though Joseph was not perfect, he was still worthy to be called by God to help restore the gospel. Joseph maintained that worthiness to do God's work by repenting whenever he made mistakes.

All of us have given in to temptation at times; none of us is perfect. We have weaknesses and make mistakes. But we can follow Joseph's example of turning to the Lord. You don't need to be perfect to do God's work, but you do need to repent so you can be worthy.

GOD WANTS YOU TO REPENT

Heavenly Father wants all of us to grow spiritually so that we can become more like Him. Even after being called as a prophet, Joseph continued to learn and grow spiritually.

For example, when Martin Harris asked Joseph to ask the Lord if Martin could take 116 pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript to show his family, Joseph was told no. But Martin kept asking, and Joseph kept asking, and they were eventually allowed to go ahead, under strict commandments. Martin did not keep these commandments and as a result lost those 116 pages. Joseph and Martin were devastated. They had to face the consequences of not obeying God.

The Lord took the plates from Joseph and told him he needed to repent if he was to translate again (see Doctrine and Covenants 3). Joseph humbled himself and sought the Lord's forgiveness.

After some time, the Lord told Joseph that he could continue translating the Book of Mormon as long as he was faithful.



Joseph Smith's parents comfort him after he lost the 116 manuscript pages.

ALL IS LOST, BY KWAN I POVI WINDER



This experience helped Joseph learn to fear God more than man (see Doctrine and Covenants 3:7), to trust the revelation he was receiving, and to repent quickly when he made mistakes.

Joseph's example shows that repentance enables us to find peace and allows us to progress. While Joseph was distraught over losing the manuscript pages, he found hope in repenting and turning to the Lord. As a result, he was able to gain forgiveness and continue serving in God's work. We too make mistakes, sin, and must suffer the consequences of our actions. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we too can become clean from our sins and continue to serve in the Lord's work.



GOD WILL STRENGTHEN YOUR WEAKNESSES

In addition to relying on the Atonement of Jesus Christ and seeking forgiveness of sins, Joseph turned to the Lord for strength to overcome weaknesses that made it difficult to do the Lord's work. For instance, he was not educated, which was a constant reminder that he needed to rely on the Lord as he translated the Book of Mormon.

God did not intend for Joseph to translate the Book of Mormon on his own, so He provided Joseph with the Urim and Thummim (see Joseph Smith—History 1:35), and the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God (see Doctrine and Covenants 135:3). He also had people to help him, like his wife Emma, Martin Harris, and Oliver Cowdery, who would write as Joseph translated. With the Lord's help, Joseph was able to translate the entire Book of Mormon more quickly than an educated and experienced translator would have been able to. Even today, with experienced translators and

technology, the translation process takes a lot longer than it took Joseph Smith.

Imperfect people with weaknesses do the Lord's work every day, but they don't have to work alone. We all have weaknesses and make mistakes, but the Lord will help you as you rely on Him like Joseph did. Maybe you're struggling to understand the scriptures, be honest in all you do, or find kind words for a sibling. The Lord will help you through challenges you face.

The Lord has a plan for you, and He will not leave you alone. Just as He helped Joseph, He will help you by sending people to support you along your journey. He has given you tools to succeed—from scriptures, where you can learn of God's love, to parents, good friends, local Church leaders, apostles, and prophets.

We also have the example of Joseph Smith, who can teach us how to follow Jesus Christ, repent, and gain confidence and strength to do God's work. **NE**

CONNECT

SOPHIA D.,

14, Colombia

At first I thought seminary would be hard.

I had to change schools, and seminary was early in the morning. I didn't think it would work because I had a lot of homework and other things going on.

But when I started going to seminary, time just opened up for me. Now, I always have enough time for my homework. And I'm always excited the next day to get up and go back to seminary again. My friends and I support each other and learn a lot while we're there.

The happiness I feel in seminary is a lot like the happiness I feel when I'm in the temple. Before I turned 11, my siblings and friends had all been to the temple and I hadn't. When they would go inside, I always waited outside. I kept hoping for the day I would be old enough to go inside myself.

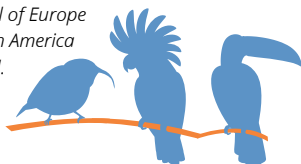
When I was finally old enough to go inside and do baptisms for the dead, I felt a great peace. Even though my family and friends had described to me the feeling of being in the temple, I was so excited that I was able to feel that for myself.

COLOMBIA



BIRDS

There are more species of birds than in all of Europe and North America combined.



TWO TEMPLES

Bogotá 1999 and Barranquilla 2018.



ONLY COUNTRY IN SOUTH AMERICA

that has coasts touching both the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea.





CELESTE H.,

18, Chile

I am the only member of the Church in my school. One thing I love to do is participate in seminary because it helps me remember who I am and what I believe. Because I live the gospel, I have a vision for my future. I know I am a child of God. I like to invite my friends to church and help them see that they are children of God too. I know that through the gospel of Jesus Christ, they can have a brighter future too.



MASON M.,

13, Ohio, USA

I love playing basketball. I also like setting goals for myself and having fun as I try to achieve them. Making goals helps me be a better person and become more like the Savior. One goal I have is to read the scriptures more, even when I come home late from basketball practice. With the new Children and Youth program, I feel more unified in my quorum as we help each other make goals and plan activities that can help us accomplish them.

FIRST CHURCH MISSIONARIES

arrived
in 1966.



EMERALD TRADE

Largest producer of
emeralds in the world.

COLOMBIA NATIONAL ANTHEM

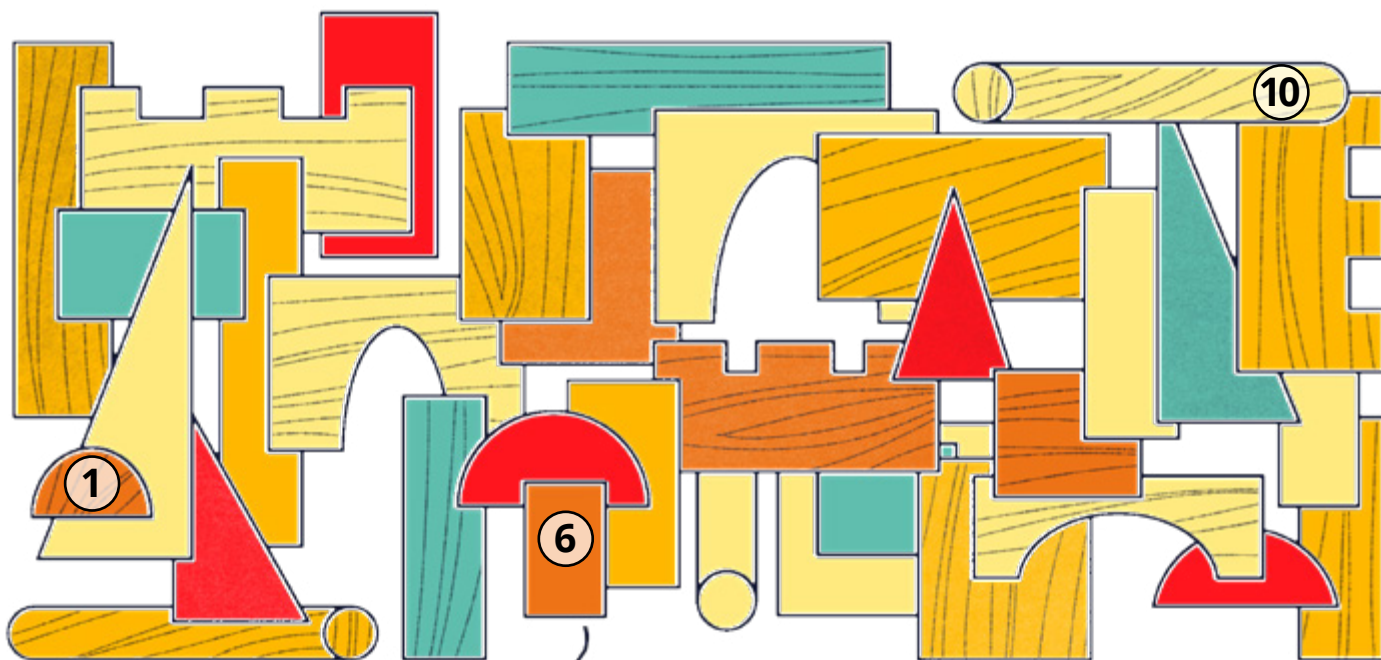
is played on TV and
the radio every day
at 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.



FUN STOP

A Challenge from Your Little Brother

Your little brother has decided the only way to decide who gets to eat his leftover Valentine's candy is to see who can successfully complete his challenge on the first try. (It's between you and your parents.) He's carefully arranged a group of building blocks in a particular order. **Can you figure out ahead of time the order you must pick them up if you have to take the top one each time?** Three have been done for you.



Fantastic Fishing

Six young women can catch six fish in six minutes at the local fishing pond. **Assuming their luck and pace holds, how many young women would it take to catch 60 fish in 60 minutes?** (Hint: it's not 60.)

A Quiz in Couplets

Fill in the empty spaces with the names of these people from the Book of Mormon. Then unscramble the letters in circles to find a word Joseph Smith once used to describe the Book of Mormon.

1. As I preached upon the wall,
arrows hit me not at all. (See Helaman 16:2.)

□ □ □ □ ○ □



2. People fainted throughout the scene.
I'm the servant who woke the queen.
(See Alma 19:16, 28–29.)

□ □ □ ○ □

3. Tied up tight by my brothers' hands,
I prayed for strength, then broke those bands.
(See 1 Nephi 7:17–18.)

○ □ □ □ □

4. The other servants stared in shock,
while I defended my new king's flock. (See Alma 17:33–39.)

□ □ □ ○ □



5. I share names with my prophet dad,
I'm now righteous, but once was bad.
(See Mosiah 27.)

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □
○ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

6. I taught people their sins to seek,
Demanded a sign, then couldn't speak.
(See Alma 30:48–50.)

○ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

7. When Lehi's family crossed the waters,
With him went my sons and daughters.
(See 1 Nephi 7:4–5.)

□ □ □ □ □ ○ □

8. Curious by nature, I sailed from sandy shore,
Seeking out the north, I was never
heard of more. (See Alma 63:5–8.)

□ □ □ □ ○ □



Unscramble for Solution:

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

I think I can explain the feeling of
pins and needles in your back.



JON CLARK

Looks like it's going to
be another lonely Valentine's Day.
Cupid must've taken archery lessons
from the Nephites who shot at
Samuel the Lamanite!



ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF

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

"All of us are imperfect; we may offend and be offended. We often test one another with our personal idiosyncrasies. In the body of Christ, we have to go beyond concepts and exalted words and have a real 'hands-on' experience as we learn to 'live together in love' [Doctrine and Covenants 42:45]."

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Why the Church," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 109.



You Can Control Only Yourself

I can't control those around me, even other members, but I can

control myself and how I react to the situations. I realized that going to church was between me and God, not between me and anybody else. I reminded myself that it wasn't fair to God or to myself to stop living the gospel.

Erica Y., 18, Hawaii, USA

Respect Everyone

We all have different backgrounds and different upbringings. You never know what people are going through.

Logan B., 15, Oregon, USA

Talk to Your Leaders

You shouldn't be going to church because of a person. You should be going because of your belief in Christ. I would also recommend talking to your bishop.

Asher D., 15, Washington, USA

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



Love as Jesus Did

Jesus Christ said, "Love one another; as I have loved you. . . . By this shall all men know that

ye are my disciples" (John 13:34–35). This helped me understand that I have to love others no matter who they are, just as the Savior loves me, even with all my imperfections and mistakes.

Ema F., 15, Chaco, Argentina

Enjoy Your Ward Family

Even though I have struggled with feelings of hurt or resentment associated with Church members, I've realised more and more how much people there care about me. It has helped me to enjoy church because of the joy my ward family brings me. There will always be people there who love you.

Sophia D., 16, Bristol, England

What Do You Think?

"I don't understand a lot of the scriptures. How can I get more out of scripture reading?"

Send your answer and photo by February 15, 2020.

Go to newera.ChurchofJesusChrist.org, click "Submit Your Work." Sign in with your Church 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. **OR** email your response to newera@ChurchofJesusChrist.org.



COME
FOLLOW
ME

How can I explain to my friends why we need the Book of Mormon?

We believe that the Book of Mormon was prepared by the Lord for our day and is necessary for us. Here are a few reasons why (as explained by President Russell M. Nelson):

- It contains the answers to life's most compelling questions.
- It teaches the doctrine of Christ.
- It expands and clarifies many of the "plain and precious" truths from the Bible that were lost (see 1 Nephi 13:29–33).
- It provides the fullest and most authoritative understanding of the Atonement of Jesus Christ to be found anywhere.
- It teaches us about the gathering of scattered Israel.
- It exposes the tactics of the adversary (see 2 Nephi 26–33).
- It dispels false religious traditions.
- It abolishes forever the false concepts that revelation ended with the Bible and that the heavens are sealed today.

(From Russell M. Nelson, "The Book of Mormon: What Would Your Life Be Like without It?" Oct. 2017 general conference [*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 62]).

FUN STOP ANSWERS (from pages 42–43): A Challenge from Your Little Brother: There are many solutions. Have fun. **Fantastic Fishing:** not 60, nor even 10. Our original group of six young women is all that's needed. **A Quiz in Couples:** 1. Samuel 2. Abish 3. Nephi 4. Armon 5. Alma the Younger 6. Korihor 7. Ishmael 8. Hagoth **Sibling Matchup (from page 29):** A goes with F (sisters Darcy and Sidney T. from Arizona, USA); B goes with D (fraternal twins Emma and Elijah W. from Utah, USA); C goes with E (fraternal twins Ellie and Dallin N. from Texas, USA)



A SABBATH DAY BLESSING FOR “LEFTIES”

WHEN I TOLD my basketball team I wouldn't play on Sundays, they weren't happy. At one weekend tournament, the last game would be on a Sunday. Because I play left-handed, my coach said they needed me to guard the other team's "lefty." I felt a lot of pressure. I wanted to keep the Sabbath day holy, but I didn't want to let my friends down.

The day before the game, I read the *For the Strength of Youth* standards for Sabbath day observance with my dad. It talked about how Sunday should be treated as a sacred day, where

you refrain from things like athletic events. There was also a promise that when you keep the Sabbath day holy, you gain spiritual strength. I prayed for help to keep the Sabbath day holy.

Even though it was hard, I chose to go to church with my family. That Sunday, we were visiting another ward in our stake for sacrament meeting. As I sat in the chapel, I was anxious because I wasn't at the game helping my team.

Then the deacon passing the sacrament handed me the tray with his left hand. I looked up and realized he was the "lefty" I was supposed to guard at the game. Just like me, he had chosen to go to church instead of playing basketball. I felt a calm assurance from the Spirit.

I wasn't worried about the game anymore. I realized that Heavenly Father knows us. He'll help us with difficult decisions when we keep His commandments.

Noah J., North Dakota, USA

"Truly keeping the Sabbath day holy is a refuge from the storms of this life."

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Oct. 2015 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 42).



How Can I Keep the Sabbath Day Holy?

- Attend church meetings and worthily partake of the sacrament.
- Work on family history.
- Study the scriptures.
- Spend time with family.
- Keep your thoughts focused on Christ.

(From *For the Strength of Youth* [2011], 30.)

I'M GLAD I TURNED AROUND

IT HAD BEEN a long night of practice, and I was ready to go home. As I pulled out of the school parking lot, I noticed a friend waiting in the dark for a ride. I nodded and waved to him as I drove past.

But I was only a couple blocks down the road when I felt a strong impression that I needed to turn around. So I drove back and asked my friend if he needed a ride. He said he did.

As we started driving home, the topic of religion came up. I was surprised when he asked me hesitantly, "So . . . what do you typically do on Sundays?"

I told him that Sunday is a day where I take time to worship Heavenly Father and be with family. He was intrigued and continued to ask questions. Before dropping him off, I invited him to come to church. He accepted, and the next Sunday, he joined my family and me at church and even participated in our at-home *Come, Follow Me* discussion afterwards.

My friend eventually started coming to church every Sunday and even got baptized. Now we go to the temple together with our friends.

Seeing his experience helped me realize how much God loves all of His children. If I hadn't heeded that prompting to turn around, I'm not sure I would've been a part of my friend's amazing journey. I know the Lord can work through us when we heed the Spirit's promptings.

Morgan G., Arizona, USA



STILL ENLISTED IN THE GREATEST ARMY

ABOUT FIVE MONTHS into serving my mission in Scottsdale, Arizona, USA, I began to experience panic attacks and anxiety that controlled my every thought. After many conversations with my mission president, my parents, and a counselor, I made the hard decision to return home.

I was devastated.

I had been so excited to serve on the front lines of the greatest army. Why was this happening to me? I couldn't understand what the Lord was trying to teach me.

It wasn't until a sacrament meeting months later that I really started to understand. For the closing hymn, we sang "I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go" (*Hymns*, no. 270). The second line reads, "It may not be at the battle's front my Lord will have need of me." I imagined my missionary self on the battlefield and realized that Heavenly Father did not need me in Arizona. He needed me here.

I know that the Lord has a plan for me. That knowledge brings me enough peace and strength to endure. I'm not sure I will ever fully know why I needed to come home early, but I am now able to carry on with these words ingrained in my heart: "I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord . . . ; I'll be what you want me to be."

Kate B., Utah, USA



Jesus Christ: Our Source of Joy

By President Russell M. Nelson

From an October 2016 general conference address (Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2016, 81–84).

The prophet Lehi declared boldly and without reservation a principle as revealed by the Lord: “Men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25). Imagine! Of all the words he could have used to describe the nature and purpose of our lives here in mortality, he chose the word joy!

Life is filled with detours and dead ends, trials and challenges of every kind. Each of us has likely had times when distress, anguish, and despair almost consumed us. Yet we are here to have joy?

Yes! The answer is a resounding yes! But how is that possible? And what must we do to claim the joy that Heavenly Father has in store for us? The joy we feel has little to do with the circumstances of our lives and everything to do with the focus of our lives.

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. We feel it at Christmastime when we sing, “Joy to the world, the Lord is come” (*Hymns*, no. 201). And we can feel it all year round. For Latter-day Saints, Jesus Christ is joy!

How, then, can we claim that joy? We can start by “looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2) “in every thought” (Doctrine and Covenants 6:36). We can give thanks for Him in our prayers and by keeping covenants we’ve made with Him and our Heavenly Father. As our Savior becomes more and more real to us and as we plead for His joy to be given to us, our joy will increase.

Heed these words of the Psalmist: “I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. . . . In [His] presence is fulness of joy” (Psalm 16:8,11). As this principle is embedded in our hearts, each and every day can be a day of joy and gladness (see Isaiah 35:10; 2 Nephi 8:3). **NE**

Nephi

I will go and do
the things which the Lord
hath commanded
(1 Nephi 3:7).



Retrieved the
brass plates
from Jerusalem.



Nephi saw
great visions,
including . . .

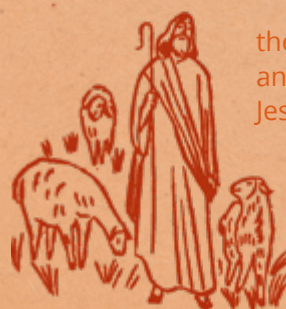


the future of
his people.



the tree of life.

the birth, life,
and death of
Jesus Christ.



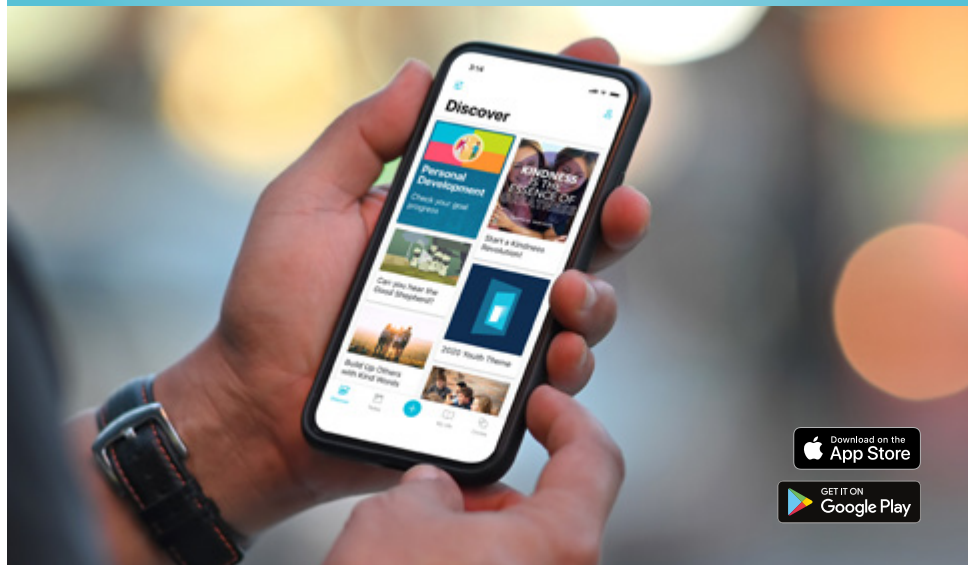
With **help from the Lord**,
he made a bow, tools made
of ore, and a boat to
help his family.



The Nephites wanted him
to be king. He didn't
want to but did what was
in his power.



APPLY THE GOSPEL



Download on the
App Store

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Google Play

GOSPEL LIVING APP.
Coming Soon.

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

