

JANUARY 2014

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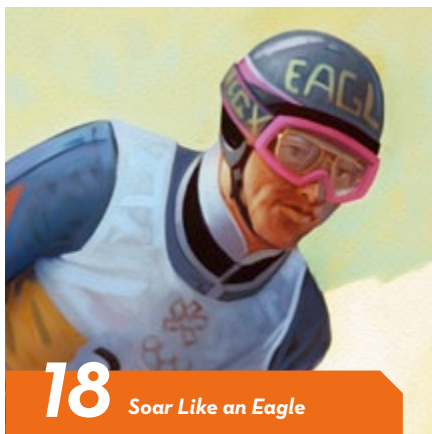
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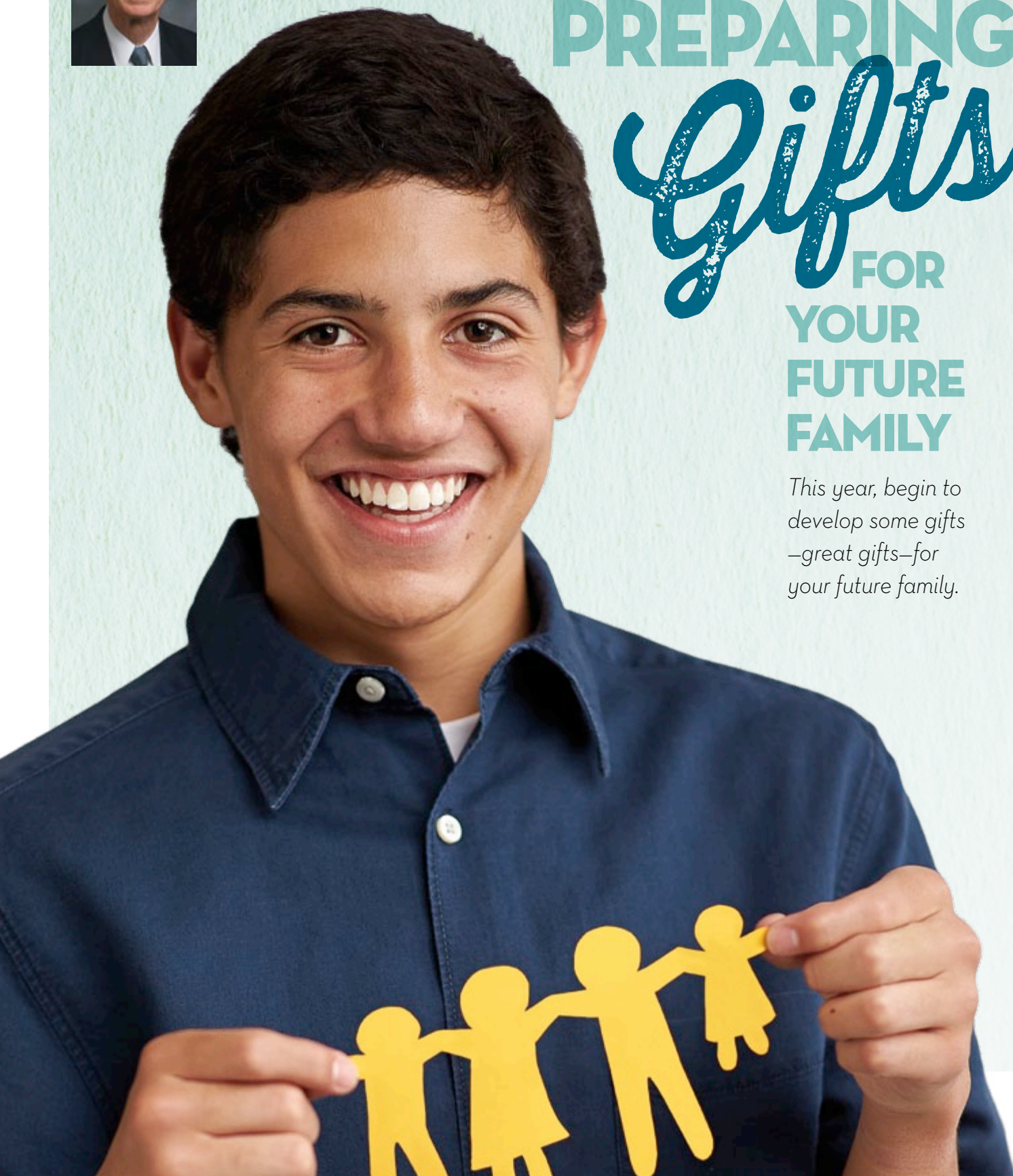




By President
Henry B. Eyring
First Counselor in
the First Presidency

PREPARING *Gifts* FOR YOUR FUTURE FAMILY

*This year, begin to
develop some gifts
—great gifts—for
your future family.*





I've always daydreamed of being a great gift giver. I picture people opening my gifts and showing with tears of joy and a smile that the giving, not just the gift, has touched their hearts. You might have that daydream too. Many of you are probably already experts in gift giving.

There is something you could do this year to start becoming a better gift giver yourself. In fact, as students, you have some special chances. You could begin to put some gifts—great gifts—on layaway for your future family. Let me tell you about them.

Writing Papers for School

You could start in your room today. Is there an unfinished school paper somewhere in the stacks? (I assume there are stacks there; I think I know your room.) Perhaps it is typed and apparently ready to turn in. Why bother more with it? I learned why during a religion class I taught once at Ricks College (now Brigham Young University–Idaho). I was teaching from section 25 of the Doctrine and Covenants. In that section Emma

Smith is told that she should give her time to “writing, and to learning much” (verse 8). About three rows back sat a blonde girl whose brow wrinkled as I urged the class to be diligent in developing writing skills. She raised her hand and said, “That doesn’t seem reasonable to me. All I’ll ever write are letters to my children.” That brought laughter all around the class. Just looking at her I could imagine a full quiver of children around her, and I could even see the letters she would write. Maybe writing powerfully wouldn’t matter to her.

Then a young man stood up near the back. He had said little during the term; I’m not sure he had ever spoken before. He was older than the other students, and he was shy. He asked if he could speak. He told in a quiet voice of having been a soldier in Vietnam. One day, in what he thought would be a lull, he had left his rifle and walked across his fortified compound to mail call. Just as he got a letter in his hand, he heard a bugle blowing and shouts and mortar and

rifle fire coming ahead of the swarming enemy. He fought his way back to his rifle, using his hands as weapons. With the men who survived, he drove the enemy out. Then he sat down among the living, and some of the dead, and he opened his letter. It was from his mother. She wrote that she’d had a spiritual experience that assured her that he would live to come home if he were righteous. In my class, the boy said quietly, “That letter was scripture to me. I kept it.” And he sat down.

You may have a child someday, perhaps a son. Can you see his face? Can you see him somewhere, sometime, in mortal danger? Can you feel the fear in his heart? Does it touch you? Would you like to give freely? What sacrifice will it take to write the letter your heart will want to send? Start the practice this afternoon. Go back to your room and write and read and rewrite that paper again and again. It won’t seem like sacrifice if you picture that boy, feel his heart, and think of the letters he’ll need someday.



Solving Math Problems

Now, some of you may not have a paper waiting for you. It may be a textbook with a math problem hidden in it. Let me tell you about a day in your future. You'll have a teenage son or daughter who'll say, "I hate school." After some careful listening, you'll find it is not school or even mathematics he or she hates—it's the feeling of failure.

You'll correctly discern those feelings, and you'll be touched; you'll want to freely give. So you'll open the text and say, "Let's look at one of the problems together." Think of the shock you will feel when you see that the same rowboat is still going downstream in two hours and back in five hours, and the questions are still how fast the current is and how far the boat traveled. You might think, "Well, I'll make my children feel better by showing them that I can't do math either." Let me give you some advice: they will see that as a poor gift.

There is a better gift, but it will take effort now. My dad, when he was a boy, must have tackled the rowboat

problem and lots of others. That was part of the equipment he needed to become a scientist who would make a difference to chemistry. But he also made a difference to me. Our family room didn't look as elegant as some. It had one kind of furniture—chairs—and one wall decoration—a green chalkboard. I came to the age your boy or girl will reach. I didn't wonder if I could work the math problems; I'd proved to my satisfaction that I couldn't. And some of my teachers were satisfied that that was true too.

But Dad wasn't satisfied. He thought I could do it. So we took turns at that chalkboard. I can't remember the gifts my dad wrapped and gave to me. But I remember the chalkboard and his quiet voice. His teaching took more than knowing what I needed and caring. It took more than being willing to give his time then, precious as it was. It took time he had spent earlier when he had the chances you have now. Because he had spent time then, he and I could have that time at the chalkboard and he could help me.

And because he gave me that, I've got a boy who let me sit down with him one year. We rowed that same boat up and down. And his teacher wrote "much improved" on his report card. But I'll tell you what improved most: the feelings of a fine boy about himself. Nothing I will put under a Christmas tree for Stuart has half the chance of becoming a family heirloom that his pride of accomplishment does.

Learning Art and Music

Perhaps there are some art (or are they music?) students smiling. They're thinking, "He surely can't convince me there's a gift hidden in *my* unfinished assignments." Let me try. Last week I went to an event honoring a young man. There was a slide show. The lights went down, and I recognized two voices. One was a famous singer in the background, and the other, the narrator, was the father of the young man.

His dad must have spent hours preparing slides, writing words that soared, and then somehow getting music and words coordinated for the right volume and timing. You'll have a boy someday who will be

honored at such an event, with all his cousins and aunts and uncles looking on. And with your whole heart, you'll want to tell him what he is and what he can be. Whether you can give that gift then depends on whether you feel his heart now and are touched and start building the creative skills you'll need. And it will mean more than you now can dream, I promise you.

Repenting Now

There is yet another gift some of you may want to give that takes starting early. I saw it started once when I was a bishop. A young man sat across my desk from me. He talked about mistakes he had made. And he talked about how much he wanted the children he might have someday to have a dad who could use his

priesthood and to whom they could be sealed forever. He said he knew that the price and pain of repentance might be great. And then he said something I will not forget: "Bishop, I am coming back. I will do whatever it takes. I am coming back." He felt sorrow. And he had faith in Christ. And still it took months of painful effort.

And so somewhere there is a family with a righteous priesthood bearer at its head. They have eternal hopes and peace on earth. He'll probably give his family all sorts of gifts wrapped brightly, but nothing will matter quite so much as the one he started a long time ago in my office and has never stopped giving. He felt then the needs of children he had only dreamed of, and he gave early and freely. He sacrificed his pride and

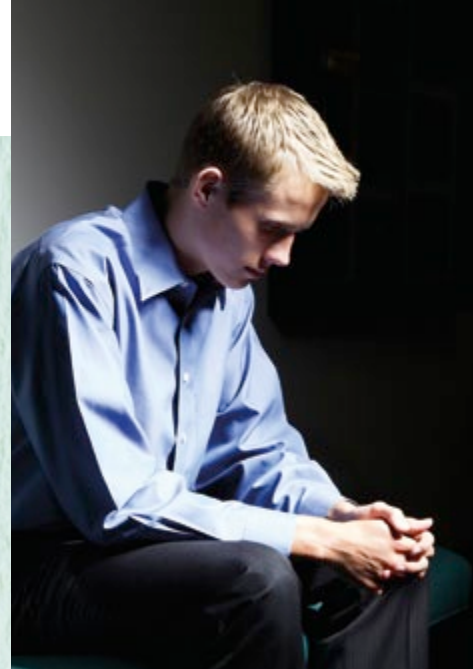
sloth and numbed feelings. I am sure it doesn't seem like sacrifice now.

He could give that gift because of another one given long ago. God the Father gave His Son, and Jesus Christ gave us the Atonement, the greatest of all gifts and all giving. The Savior somehow felt all the pain and sorrow of sin that would fall on all of us and everyone else who would ever live (see Hebrews 4:14–16).

I bear you my testimony that Jesus gave the gift freely, willingly, to us all. And I bear you testimony that as you accept that gift, given through infinite sacrifice, it brings joy to the giver (see Luke 15:7).

"Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8). I pray that we will freely give. I pray that we will be touched by the feelings of others, that we will give without feelings of compulsion or expectation of gain, and that we will know that sacrifice is made sweet to us when we treasure the joy it brings to another heart. **NE**

From a devotional address, "Gifts of Love," delivered at Brigham Young University on December 16, 1980. For the full text, go to speeches.byu.edu.



MORE THAN

When my friend questioned my
if there was something



By Kelsee Mortensen

“I want to be a veterinarian when I get older. What do you want to be, Kelsee?”

“I want to be a stay-at-home mom and an author,” I proudly said. To me, there was no better job than mom, but clearly my friend didn’t agree.

“You want to be a stay-at-home mom? You’re going to make your husband support you?” My friend wasn’t a member of the Church and didn’t understand the importance of a mother’s role.

“Well, I’m going to write as well. And even if I don’t become an author, I want to marry a man who believes what I believe, someone who wants to support our family,” I said.

“Writing doesn’t get you anywhere. You’ll be poor.”

I was getting irritated. Couldn’t she just be OK with my choice and move on?

“Why do you work so hard in school if you’re not going to do anything with your life? Are you going to go to college? You’re too smart to be a stay-at-home mom.”

This hurt me a lot, but I tried to explain: “I work hard in school because I know how important education is. In my Church, we believe that we’ll take all of our knowledge with us to the next life.¹ And I’ll get an education just in case I’m not able to get married or something happens that doesn’t allow my husband to work. Plus, I’ll be able to teach my children more. Just because someone’s a stay-at-home mom doesn’t mean she’s not smart.”

“Do you think your kids will get tired of being around you after awhile?”

“When I’m a mom, I’ll be responsible for taking good care of my children and nurturing them,”² I said. My friend still didn’t understand. “Families are important,” I said. “They’re essential to the lives of members of my Church. And they should be to everyone else too.”

The school bell rang, and my friend turned away angrily. A pained look came over my face. My teacher must have seen it, because she called me

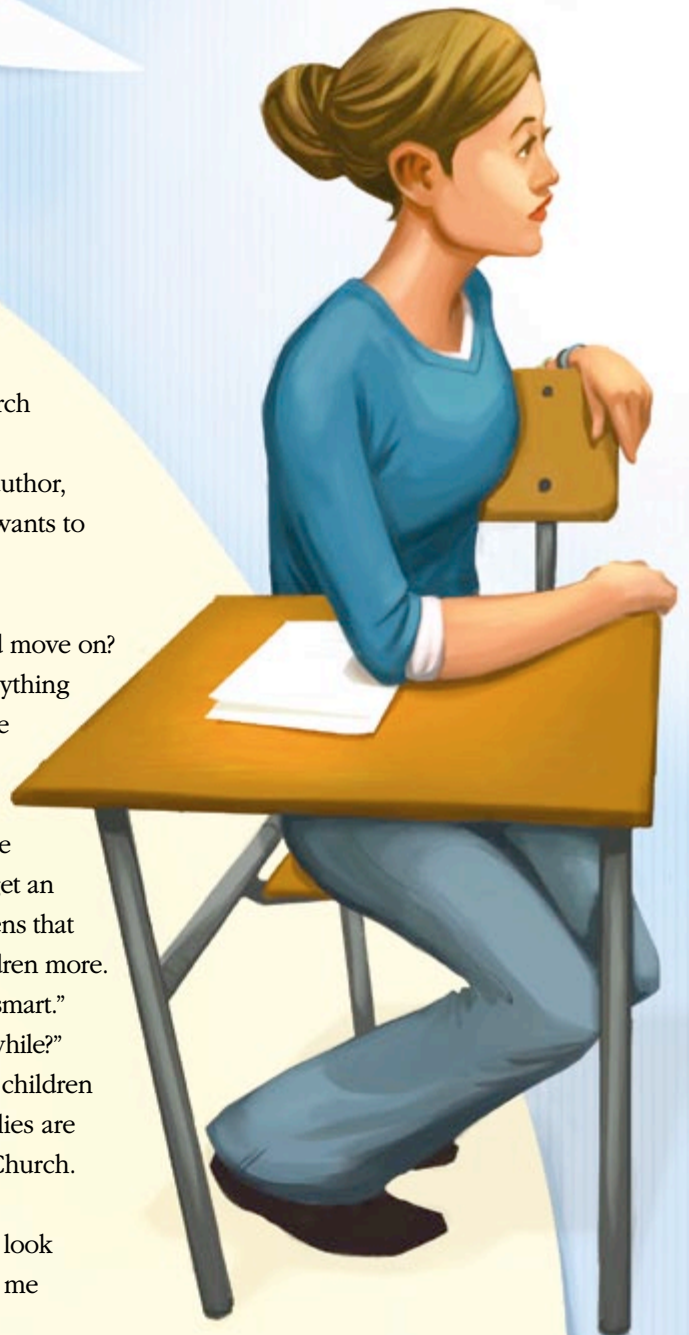
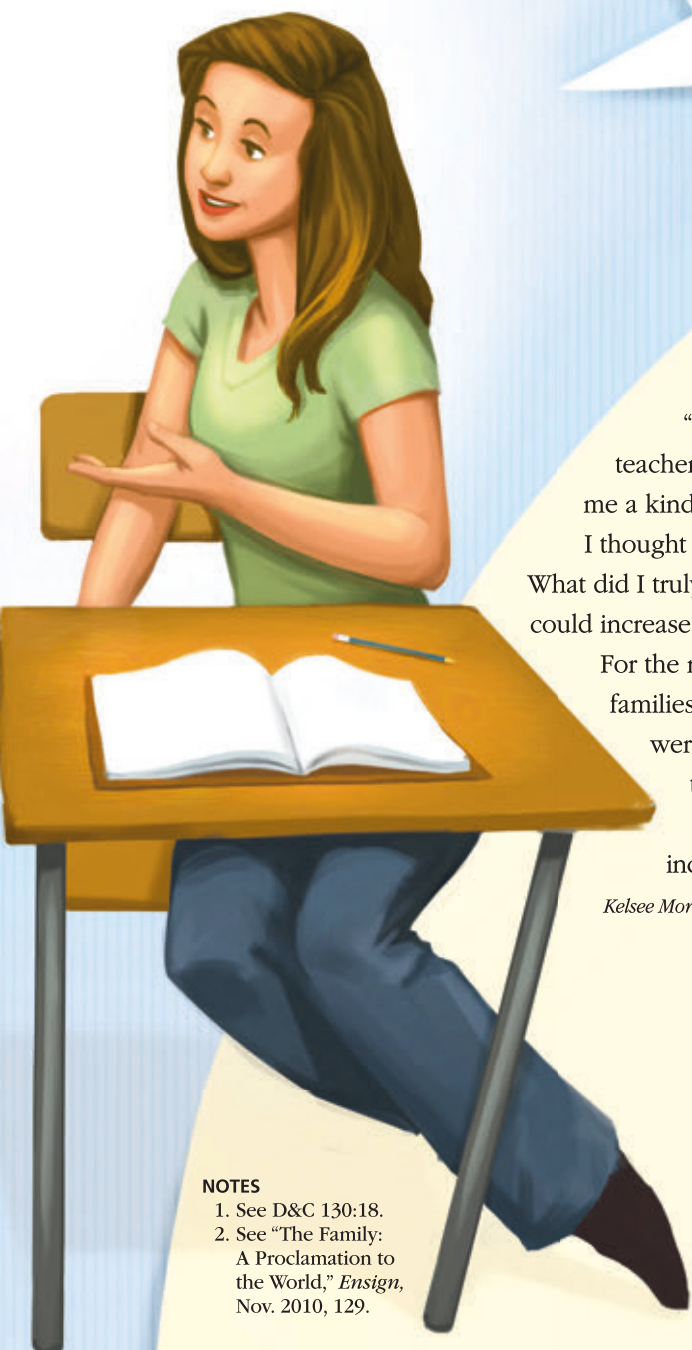


ILLUSTRATION BY ANDREW BOSLEY

"JUST A MOM"

career choice, I began to wonder
more important for me.



over to her desk.

"Is she mad at you because of your choice?" she asked. "Yes," I said. My teacher called out and motioned to my friend, who was heading out the door. My friend came back with a look of anger on her face. "Why are you so upset?" my teacher asked. "Because she could do so much more—be a doctor, something!" "If Kelsee would be happy being a mom, then she should do it," my teacher said. "And besides, the world needs good mothers." My teacher gave me a kind smile, and my friend hurried out. I was grateful for my teacher's words. I thought about this experience for a long time. It had given me a sense of doubt. What did I truly believe? Did I really think families were important? I prayed that I could increase my testimony of the importance of families.

For the next two Sundays, my Young Women leaders prepared lessons about families—without knowing what I was thinking about. I felt that these lessons were Heavenly Father's way of showing me that what I'd told my friend is true—families and motherhood really are important.

I will be eternally grateful for this experience and the lessons that increased my testimony. Families are important, and I love mine deeply. **NE**

Kelsee Mortensen lives in Wyoming, USA.

NOTES

1. See D&C 130:18.
2. See "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.



MOTHERHOOD AS A CAREER

"Some view homemaking with outright contempt, arguing it demeans women. . . . They ridicule what they call 'the mommy track' as a career. This is not fair or right. We do not diminish the value of what women or men achieve in any worthy endeavor or career . . . but we still recognize there is not a higher good than motherhood and fatherhood in marriage. There is no superior career. . . . Whatever else a woman may accomplish, her moral influence is no more optimally employed than here."

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Moral Force of Women," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 30–31.



2014 MUTUAL THEME



.....
 “COME UNTO CHRIST, AND
 BE PERFECTED IN HIM,
 AND DENY YOURSELVES OF
 ALL UNGODLINESS”
 (Moroni 10:32).



Young Men General Presidency

COME UNTO CHRIST

**By the Young Men
General Presidency**

Young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, this year our Mutual theme inspires you to think about your relationship with Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, and how you can become like Him. Our theme is “Come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness” (Moroni 10:32).

This is a sacred invitation to draw near to the Son of God. Because of His Atonement, we can gain the power to serve, to deny ourselves of ungodly things in our lives, and to feel His infinite love. As we do so, we will find true peace and happiness.

As you act on the invitation to come unto Christ, you will come to understand your sacred duty to “invite all to come unto Christ” (D&C 20:59) as well. Your hearts will be filled with a desire to lead others unto Him so they can receive the same blessings you have received and continue to receive.

One young man, Michael, fulfilled this duty by helping his friend Jose.

One day, Jose asked him, “Michael, why are you always happy?”

Michael said, “It’s because I serve.”

“Why do you serve?”

“Because I hold the priesthood and it’s my duty,” came the reply.

Jose said, “I would like to know more

about the priesthood.”

Michael invited Jose to Church activities and later to Church meetings. Eventually Jose and his family were taught by the missionaries and were baptized. Jose said, “Missionary work is the base of our Church. If we will be just and righteous in our daily dealings, then those around us will take notice and inquire of us like I did. Michael is a vessel in God’s great plan.”

“The words ‘come unto Christ’ are an invitation. It is the most important invitation you could ever offer to another person. It is the most important invitation anyone could accept.”¹

—President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency

As you draw near to the Lord, you will have a desire to serve others just as Michael did. And as you do, you will find this promise from President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, to be true: “When you give your heart to inviting people to come unto Christ, your heart will be changed. You will be doing His work for Him. You will find that He keeps His promise to be one with you in your service. You will come to know Him. And in time you will come to be like Him and ‘be perfected in him [Moroni 10:32].’”²

That is the heart of this year’s theme. **NE**

NOTES

1. Henry B. Eyring, “Come unto Christ,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2008, 49.
2. Henry B. Eyring, “Come unto Christ,” 52.

YOU ARE INVITED

By the Young Women General Presidency

Who doesn’t love to receive an invitation? When we receive an invitation to attend a birthday party or wedding reception, we feel happy to be able to celebrate with others the significant events in their lives. The Mutual theme for 2014 also contains a joyful invitation of eternal significance: “Come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness” (Moroni 10:32).

Many invitations require a response—an RSVP—to show whether or not we accept them. Have you responded to this invitation in your life? Coming unto Christ means that we are keeping the sacred covenant we made at baptism. It means that we have accepted Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Redeemer. It means that we recognize and believe what Alma taught his son Shiblon: “There is no other way or means whereby man can be saved, only in and through Christ” (Alma 38:9). Accepting this invitation means we have committed to follow Christ’s perfect example by living virtuous and consecrated lives and by loving and serving others.

This invitation is not a one-time-only event; it is a process. We are invited to follow a pathway that will lead us to the temple, where we make additional covenants with our Father in Heaven and participate



Young Women General Presidency

in ordinances essential to our exaltation. This pathway may include serving a mission. It will include temple marriage and becoming righteous men and women in the kingdom of God. It also means enduring to the end. As the invitation states, when we come unto Christ, we can be perfected in Him. Christ makes it possible to stay on this covenant pathway through faith in Him and through repentance. This process of becoming perfected can begin today; the Atonement of Christ makes it possible.

This invitation asks us to deny ourselves of all ungodliness—to be different from the fashions, standards, and practices of the world. We are invited to “lay aside the things of this world, and seek for the things of a better” (D&C 25:10). We testify that accepting the invitation to “come unto Christ and be perfected” will lead to happiness in this life and to eternal life in the world to come. You are invited to respond today! **NE**



Ideas for Mutual Activities

Want to plan a Mutual activity based on this year’s theme? Find ideas at lds.org/go/MutualNE1 (just look in the “Increasing Faith in Christ” category). You can even share details of Mutual or youth-conference activities that you plan throughout the year at lds.org/youth/activities.

Moroni 10:32

This year's Mutual theme is an invitation from Moroni to follow the Savior.



BE PERFECTED IN HIM

"We need not be dismayed if our earnest efforts toward perfection now seem so arduous and endless. Perfection is pending. It can come in full only after the Resurrection and only through the Lord. It awaits all who love him and keep his commandments."

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Perfection Pending," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 88.

LOVE GOD

How can you show Heavenly Father that you love Him? Consider these ideas and come up with more of your own.

- Keep the commandments.
- Love and serve others.
- Fulfill Church responsibilities.
- Pray sincerely.

In your journal, write about what you are going to do.

NOWISE

Nowise—"In no way" or "not at all."

COME UNTO CHRIST

The scriptures contain many invitations to come unto Christ. Look up the few examples listed below. What do these scriptures teach you about the blessings of coming unto the Savior? Can you find more scriptures with this invitation?

- Matthew 11:28–30
- John 6:35
- Omni 1:26
- Alma 5:34–35
- 3 Nephi 12:19–20

32 Yea, "come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.

GRACE

"The word *grace*, as used in the scriptures, refers primarily to the divine help and strength we receive through the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ."

True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference (2004), 77.



THEN IS HIS GRACE SUFFICIENT FOR YOU

"Some Christians accuse Latter-day Saints . . . of denying

the grace of God through claiming they can earn their own salvation. We answer this accusation . . . 'For we labor diligently . . . to persuade our children . . . to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do' (2 Ne. 25:23). And what is 'all we can do'? It surely includes repentance (see Alma 24:11) and baptism, keeping the commandments, and enduring to the end."

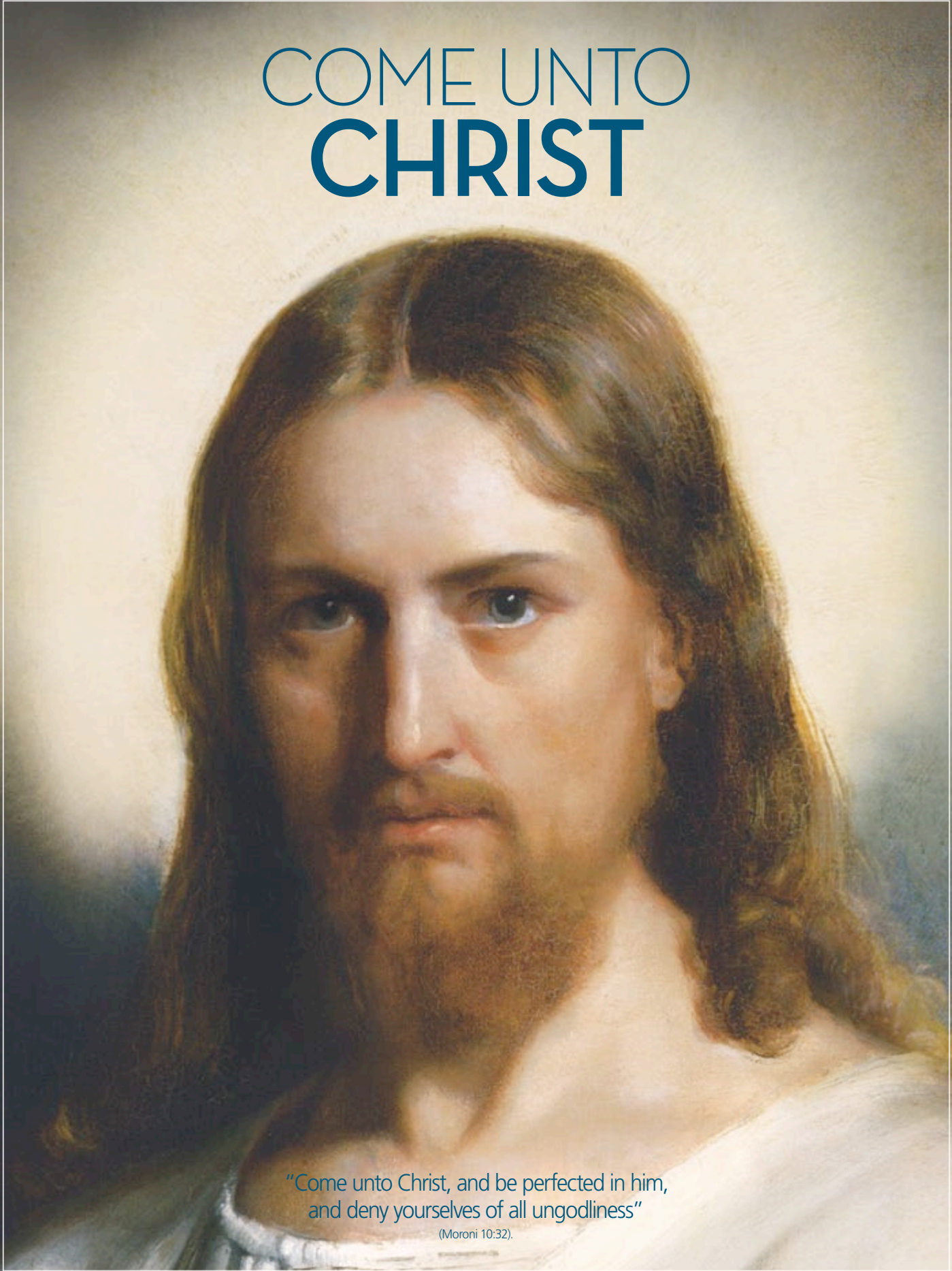
Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Have You Been Saved?" *Ensign*, May 1998, 56.

PERFECT IN CHRIST

Perfect, as used in the scriptures, means "complete, whole, and fully developed; totally righteous. Perfect can also mean without sin or evil. Only Christ was totally perfect. True followers of Christ may become perfect through his grace and atonement" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Perfect," scriptures.lds.org).

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

COME UNTO **CHRIST**



"Come unto Christ, and be perfected in him,
and deny yourselves of all ungodliness"

(Moroni 10:32).

COME UNTO CHRIST

through Duty to God

Young men, this year's Mutual theme gives you an opportunity to take a fresh look at how you are fulfilling your duty to God as you progress in your priesthood service. As Brother David L. Beck, Young Men general president, explains on page 8 of this issue, the theme gets to the heart of priesthood service through its invitation to "come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness" (Moroni 10:32).

As you serve in the Aaronic Priesthood, you will notice that everything you do to fulfill your duty to God helps you fulfill the invitation in the Mutual theme as well. For instance, consider the six areas in each section of the *Fulfilling My Duty to God* booklet, and ponder how they help you come unto Christ.

PRAY AND STUDY THE SCRIPTURES



"Jesus taught that 'men ought always to pray' (Luke 18:1). . . . We . . . pray for guidance, and we teach that we should have frequent

personal prayers and daily kneeling prayers as a family. Like Jesus, we pray to our Father in Heaven, and we do so in the sacred name of Jesus Christ."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Followers of Christ," *Ensign*, May 2013, 97.



"In the end, the central purpose of all scripture is to fill our souls with faith in God the Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ."

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Blessing of Scripture," *Ensign*, May 2010, 34.



EVERYTHING YOU DO TO FULFILL YOUR DUTY TO GOD WILL HELP YOU TO FULFILL THE INVITATION TO COME UNTO CHRIST

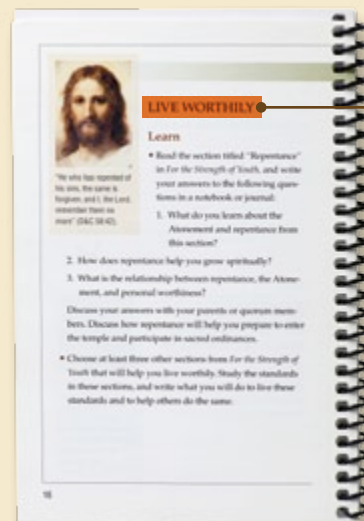
LIVE WORTHILY



"Living the standards set in *For the Strength of Youth* will make you feel good about yourself. Write those standards into your heart and mind, and

live accordingly. Compare each of those standards with where you are today. Listen to the Spirit, who will teach you what you need to do to become more like Jesus. If you recognize a need for change, make the change; don't procrastinate. Use true repentance and the gift and power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ to clear up those things that are keeping you from reaching your true potential. If this process appears tough, hang in there; it is worth it."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "See the End from the Beginning," *Ensign*, May 2006, 45.



UNDERSTAND DOCTRINE



"As you ponder and pray about doctrinal principles, the Holy Ghost will speak to your mind and your heart [see D&C 8:2]. From events portrayed in the scriptures, new insights will come and principles relevant to your situation will distill upon your heart.

"You cultivate such revelatory experiences by living according to the light already given you and by searching the scriptures with pure motives—with real intent to 'come unto Christ' [Jacob 1:7; Omni 1:26; Moroni 10:30, 32]. As you do so, your confidence will 'wax strong in the presence of God,' and the Holy Ghost will be your constant companion [D&C 121:45; see also D&C 121:46]."

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Living by Scriptural Guidance," *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 18.



ADMINISTER PRIESTHOOD ORDINANCES

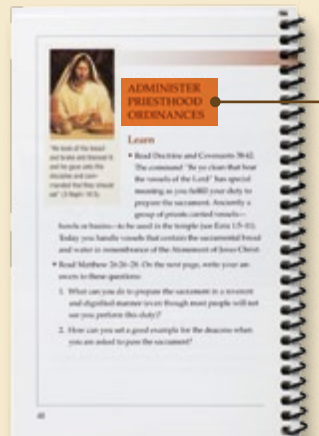


"The sacrament [is] centered in Christ, the shedding of His blood, and the atonement He made for our sins. . . . The authority to perform these ordinances belongs to

the Aaronic Priesthood.

" . . . It is no wonder that we feel so humble when we participate in the ordinances assigned to the Aaronic Priesthood."

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Aaronic Priesthood," *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 31.



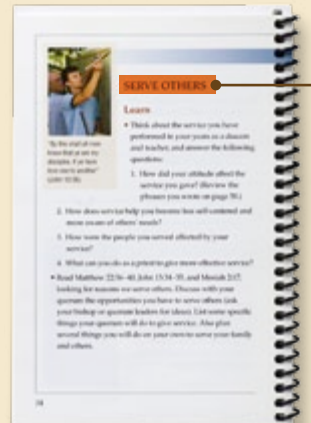
SERVE OTHERS



"Because you are called by Jesus Christ to His service, you may go forward with great confidence. . . . The Savior will let you feel the love He feels for those you serve. The

call is an invitation to become like Him (see 3 Nephi 27:27)."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "Watch Over and Strengthen," *Ensign*, May 2000, 66.



INVITE ALL TO COME UNTO CHRIST



"Deacons and teachers are also to 'warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ' (D&C 20:59; see verses 46 and 68 for priests).

"Many young men think that their missionary experience starts when they . . . enter the Missionary Training Center. We learn from the scriptures that it starts long before that. The Lord wants every Aaronic Priesthood holder to invite all to come unto Christ—beginning with his own family."

Larry M. Gibson, First Counselor in the Young Men general presidency, "Sacred Keys of the Aaronic Priesthood," *Ensign*, May 2011, 56.



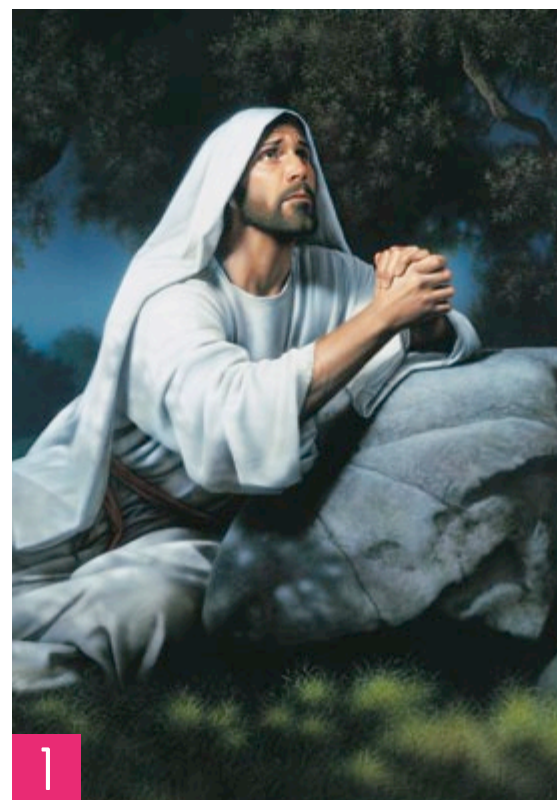
COME UNTO CHRIST THROUGH PERSONAL PROGRESS

“As you participate in Personal Progress, you join with thousands of other young women who are striving to come unto Christ.”¹—The First Presidency

By Rachel Nielsen

It's the start of a new year—a great time to reflect on what we've done and what we still want to do. This year's Mutual theme is “come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness” (Moroni 10:32), and Personal Progress is designed to help you do just that.

As you think about what lies ahead, consider planning some ways that you can apply the new Mutual theme to your life and setting some goals for completing Personal Progress. Sound overwhelming? Here's the good news: you can do both at the same time! “Personal Progress will help you strengthen your faith in and testimony of Jesus Christ as you learn His teachings and regularly apply them in your life.”² Jesus Christ is the perfect example of all eight Young Women values. As you work on Personal Progress, your efforts will help you become more like Him.




1. FAITH

“If thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42).

In Gethsemane and on the cross, Jesus Christ suffered for our sins, our pains, and our weakness. This was a more difficult task than we can imagine. But even though it was hard, Jesus Christ did it because He had faith in our Father in Heaven and in His plan. Through Personal Progress, you'll develop faith as you learn about and live gospel principles. For a personalized Faith value experience, consider exercising your faith by striving harder to live a standard from *For the Strength of Youth* where you know you have room to grow. Think about why the standard exists and how it helps you come closer to the Savior.





INVITING OTHERS TO COME UNTO CHRIST

"The Young Women logo is a torch surrounded by the Young Women motto. The torch represents the light of Christ, inviting all to 'come unto Christ' (Moroni 10:32)."

Young Women Personal Progress (2009), 2.



2. DIVINE NATURE

"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49).

After Mary and Joseph left Jerusalem to return home to Nazareth, they realized that Jesus was not with them. When they finally found Jesus in the temple conversing with learned men, He told them He was about His Father's business. Jesus knew that He was the Son of God and that Heavenly Father had a plan for Him, and He acted according to that knowledge. You are also a daughter of God and have inherited divine qualities from Heavenly Father. For Divine Nature value experience six, you can pick a divine quality that you want to develop and make it a part of your daily life as you strive to come unto Christ.

3. INDIVIDUAL WORTH

"And he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them" (3 Nephi 17:21).

When Jesus visited the American continent after His Resurrection, He invited the children to come unto Him, and He blessed them one by one. He knows that each soul "is great in the sight of God" (D&C 18:10). As you work on the Individual Worth value experiences, you'll learn your great worth and that of others. For Individual Worth value experience two, you'll study patriarchal blessings and learn how a patriarchal blessing can teach you of your infinite worth. As you talk about how it can "be a guide throughout your life,"³ think about the ways it helps you become more like the Savior.

4. KNOWLEDGE

"And Jesus increased in wisdom" (Luke 2:52).

When Jesus was 12, His parents found Him in the temple teaching learned men. These men were "astonished at his understanding" (Luke 2:47). As you complete the Knowledge requirements, you can "[increase] in wisdom." For a personalized value experience, consider learning about something that interests you, and identify how that knowledge helps you become more like Christ and serve others as He did.



Personal Progress Online

Did you know that you can track your Personal Progress, study the scriptures listed, write in your journal, and have your projects approved online? It's all at PersonalProgress.lds.org.



5



6

5. CHOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

“Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Matthew 4:10).

After Jesus fasted for 40 days, Satan tempted Jesus with food, power, and riches. But despite these temptations, Jesus chose to serve God instead of Satan. You can also choose to serve God. Choice and Accountability value experience one will help you use regular prayer and scripture study to make good choices, because “the scriptures hold the keys to spiritual protection.”⁴ Consider recording in your journal how your choice to come unto Christ helps you make correct decisions.



7



8

6. GOOD WORKS

“My little daughter lieth at the point of death: . . . lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed. . . . And he . . . said unto her, . . . arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked” (Mark 5:23, 41–42).

Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of service. Throughout His life, He “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38). He healed the sick, comforted the afflicted, and fed the hungry. You can also follow Christ’s example of service as you draw near unto Him (see Matthew 25:34–45). As you plan your Good Works value project, consider things you can do that would help your family, community, friends, or even your deceased ancestors so that you can meaningfully serve them as Christ would.

7. INTEGRITY

“As Jesus sat at meat . . . , many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him. . . . And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?” (Matthew 9:10–11).

The Pharisees didn’t understand why Jesus was eating with sinners. But even though Jesus faced this opposition, He did what He knew was right. Through the Integrity value experiences, you’ll learn to make your actions consistent with what you know is right. For value experience two, you can make a plan to improve your personal integrity. Consider how doing so can help you “deny [yourself] of all ungodliness.”

8. VIRTUE

“And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, . . . saying unto them, . . . My house is the house of prayer” (Luke 19:45–46).

When people were buying and selling goods unrighteously in the temple, Jesus cleansed it. We can follow His example by staying worthy to enter the house of the Lord. That includes living the law of chastity. As you study Virtue value experience one, think about how your commitment to be chaste helps you come unto Christ. **NE**

Rachel Nielsen lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. *Young Women Personal Progress* (2009), 1.
2. *Personal Progress*, 6.
3. *Personal Progress*, 30.
4. Boyd K. Packer, “The Key to Spiritual Protection,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 26.

YOUTH VOICES: COMING UNTO CHRIST



"My relationship with Christ is strengthened as I selflessly serve others, diligently read the Book of Mormon each night, and offer sincere prayers. By

living the standards in *For the Strength of Youth*, I enjoy the blessings of happiness and the protection and companionship of the Holy Ghost. Keeping Christ as my guide has kept me strong and immovable through high school. It has blessed me beyond measure!"

Kimmie W., 17, California, USA



"I come unto Christ through service and Personal Progress. I try to diligently work on and complete my Personal Progress goals, and over time I'm able to draw closer to my Heavenly Father. I also serve other young women by helping them with their Personal Progress. I know that Personal Progress is an inspired program that helps young women grow closer to their Father in Heaven."

Amy D., 15, Delaware, USA

Coming unto Christ isn't a one-time event. Each time we do what He would have us do, we come closer to Him. That's why doing the small and simple things, like studying the scriptures every day, saying our regular prayers each morning and evening (as well as praying always), and consistently living the standards has huge rewards (see Alma 37:6). Read what youth are doing to come unto Christ, and consider how you can draw nearer to Him.



"After I was baptized and received the Aaronic Priesthood, I started blessing the sacrament in sacrament meeting. Heavenly Father asks me to serve His children, and it's my honor to do so. I know that if we follow God's instructions and fulfill our duty, we can bless others and develop our spiritual strength in coming unto Christ."

Chris L., 17, Shaanxi, China



"I attend Church meetings every Sunday. When I'm there, I feel the Spirit and know that what I'm hearing is true. I know that Heavenly Father and Jesus

Christ are there for me and are always inviting us to come to Them through our actions (see Joshua 1:9)."

Kimberlie B., 16, Nevada, USA



"My personal prayers are what keep me close to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Reading my scriptures, attending church, and having family home evening also keep me close to Them."

Zachary L., 14, Utah, USA

"BY SMALL AND SIMPLE THINGS"

The scriptures teach that "by small and simple things are great things brought to pass" (Alma 37:6). What small and simple things are you doing now to draw closer to your Savior? What things can you start doing to become more like Him? How can you help others come unto Christ in their lives too? (See Elder Arnulfo Valenzuela, "Small and Simple Things," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 35; lds.org/go/smallNE1.)

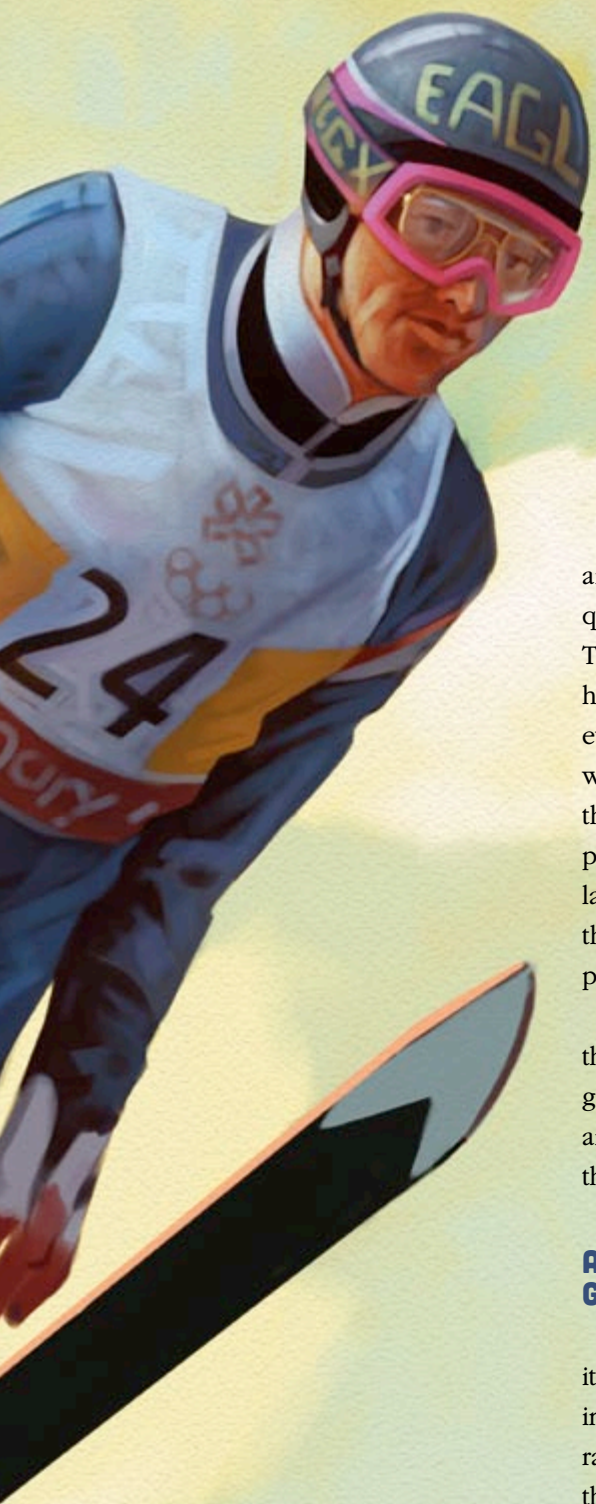
Soar LIKE AN EAGLE

In all likelihood, he was going to finish dead last. Michael Edwards was the first person in history to represent Great Britain as an Olympic ski jumper. He was taller and heavier than his competitors (a disadvantage in ski jumping). He had such bad eyesight that he needed to wear thick glasses while jumping—glasses that fogged up at high altitude. He was entirely self-funded and as a result used mostly borrowed ski gear as opposed to the top-notch equipment provided to other skiers by their sponsors.

The odds were stacked against him. And yet, during the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, Michael Edwards had a perpetual smile on his face. He was already achieving the goal he'd had for many years: to compete as an Olympic athlete.

He didn't care when people told him he'd never win. He didn't mind that other competitors would be better than him. And he never expected to take home the gold. His goal was to make it to the Olympics, and that's just what he did.





BEING *your* BEST IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN BEING *the* BEST.

He had wanted to inspire people, and inspire them he did. The crowds quickly started cheering him on. They loved rooting for a guy who did his very best and chased his goals, even though Michael's prospects of winning seemed slim to none. As the games continued and he indeed placed last in every event, his popularity only grew. Nicknamed "Eddie the Eagle," Michael Edwards had people across the globe rooting for him.

His Olympic story shows that there's a lot to be said for setting goals, doing your personal best, and not worrying so much about those around you.

AVOID COMPARISON IN GOAL-SETTING

When it comes to setting goals, it's useful to think in terms of achieving our *own* personal best efforts, rather than in terms of doing better than somebody else. For example, one good goal for a runner might be to run a mile at least 10 seconds

faster than his personal record—as opposed to 10 seconds faster than his friend's best time.

If we fall into the trap of comparing our goals and accomplishments to those of everyone around us, we will likely think we're falling short over and over.

"We spend so much time and energy comparing ourselves to others—usually comparing our weaknesses to their strengths," teaches President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency. "This drives us to create expectations for ourselves that are impossible to meet. As a result, we never celebrate our good efforts because they seem to be less than what someone else does."¹

It's worth remembering that in the parable of the talents (see Matthew 25:14–30), the two servants who put their master's money to good use were praised equally. Ultimately, it didn't matter that one ended up with 10 talents (portions of money) and another ended up with 4. They were

both welcomed “into the joy of [the] lord” (Matthew 25:21, 23). Only the third servant—the one who didn’t try at all—missed out.

Our goals don’t need to be enormous and flashy to be meaningful. Meeting a goal to raise your grades in a single subject you normally struggle with is an achievement worth celebrating. So is meeting a daily scripture-reading goal, whether it’s one verse or something more.

President Uchtdorf adds: “Successes may seem tiny to you and they may go unnoticed by others, but God notices them and they are not small to Him. If you consider success to be only the most perfect rose or dazzling orchid, you may miss some of life’s sweetest experiences.”²

SET SPECIFIC GOALS

So how do we go about setting goals that work for us individually? Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles offers the following counsel: “Set short-term goals that you can reach. Set goals that are well balanced—not too many nor too few and not too high nor too low. Write down your attainable goals

and work on them according to their importance. Pray for divine guidance in your goal setting.”³

So, let’s say that your Mutual group has a 10-mile hike coming up in six months. You’ve prayed about it and decided to set a goal of completing that hike. Now what?

Write down your goal! But that’s only the first step. As Elder Ballard teaches, we also need to have short-term goals we can reach. That might mean setting a short-term goal to hike 3 miles, then 5 miles. The 5-mile goal could take several weeks of training or longer to pull off. Once you successfully accomplish it, though, you can set another short-term goal. Maybe 8 miles this time.

Before long, the 10-mile hike won’t be such a big deal. You’ll be ready.

**“SUCCESSSES MAY SEEM TINY
TO YOU AND THEY MAY GO UNNOTICED
BY OTHERS, BUT GOD NOTICES THEM AND
THEY ARE NOT SMALL TO HIM.”**

—PRESIDENT DIETER F. UCHTDORF

FOCUS ON IMPROVEMENT

In life we are constantly exposed to the top musicians, athletes, and on and on. Fortunately, we don’t have to match or outdo their performances to improve ourselves. We simply need to set and reach goals that help us do *our* best, both temporally and spiritually.

Remember that setting goals is a lifelong process—one that’s done most effectively when we focus on increasing our own personal best one step at a time. **NE**

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Forget Me Not,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 120.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Forget Me Not,” 120.
3. M. Russell Ballard, “Keeping Your Life in Balance,” *New Era*, Sept. 2012, 2.

IN YOUR LIFE

As you think about goals you can set, don’t forget the teachings and opportunities in Personal Progress and Duty to God. Each of these booklets helps you learn how to make plans and reach goals to help you and others come unto Christ (see pages 12 and 14).





TEAM TEACHING

Our whole class ended up helping Annika learn about the Godhead.

By Jaycie Martini

My friend Annika had been hanging out with me and my other Latter-day Saint friends for a few years. Because she spent so much time with us, she learned many things about our standards and what we believe in.

One night I was texting Annika about the gospel and decided it was the perfect opportunity to share my testimony with her. I also felt like I should invite her to come to church. I was a little nervous that she would say no, but I knew that I was doing the right thing and that it would be OK no matter what. I texted her my testimony and asked her to come to church, and she said yes!

The Sunday that Annika came to church, we were studying about the Godhead. She already knew most of the other youth in the class, so we all

worked together to help her learn. If she didn't understand something, we tried to explain it to her. This led to great discussions where most everyone was commenting. Because so many people were sharing ideas, Annika felt comfortable asking questions and got to hear pieces of her friends' testimonies.

During the lesson, Annika was overwhelmed with joy and peace because she felt the Holy Ghost. She learned that Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost are three separate beings, and she learned a little bit about the plan of salvation. She also learned that Heavenly Father loves us so much that He sent His

Son to earth to die for us, and she learned how much Christ loves us, because He atoned for us.

At the end of the lesson, my Sunday School teacher invited us to go home and look up scriptures that could help us learn more about the Godhead. I completed this assignment. Later, during a discussion with Annika and the missionaries, I talked about the scriptures I found.

It was a wonderful experience to watch Annika learn about Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost. It made me realize how many people don't know about the Godhead. Just like Annika and I did, we can all grow closer to Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost when we learn more about Them. **NE**

Jaycie Martini lives in Washington, USA.



More on the Godhead

Learn more about the Godhead at lds.org/go/learnNE1.



How Can **KNOWING THE** **GODHEAD** *Change Me?*

*Five principles about the Godhead can make
a difference in the way you live.*

By Lori Fuller

Church Magazines

Joseph Smith said, “It is the first principle of the gospel to know for a certainty the character of God.”¹ What we know about the Godhead can change the way we live, not only in big things but in little, everyday things. Consider how your knowledge of the Godhead affects your life as you read about these five principles.

The Godhead love us and want the best for us.

The members of the Godhead are eternal and omnipotent, but They still care that we are happy and doing well. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) testified: “They are interested in us, and we are the substance of Their great concern. They are available to each of us. We approach the Father through the Son. He is our intercessor at the throne of God. How marvelous it is that we may so speak to the Father in the name of the Son.”²

Because the members of the Godhead love us and want the best for us, our choices matter, especially the little things we do each day that bring us closer to Them. We have limitless potential, and God cares about our success, even in the small things.

Heavenly Father gave us everything.

We know that Heavenly Father has given us everything, so we should try to recognize His hand and be grateful. When we are grateful, we act differently. President Thomas S. Monson promised that “we can lift ourselves and others as well when

we refuse to remain in the realm of negative thought and cultivate within our hearts an attitude of gratitude.”³

Because everything we have comes from God (see Mosiah 2:20–21; D&C 59:21), our gratitude can make us more willing to share with others. This includes our time and talents as well as our material blessings.

Heavenly Father is merciful.

God’s work and glory is “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). He wants our success, so He offers us forgiveness for the mistakes we make. His mercy even provides forgiveness when we make the same mistakes again. Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost will help us change.

God’s mercy teaches us to be forgiving. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said, “Because God loves us so much, we too must love and forgive each other.”⁴ This includes forgiving ourselves.

Jesus Christ suffered for us.

Through the Atonement, the Savior experienced all our pains and sorrows (see Alma 7:11–13). If we ever have a hard day and feel like no one understands, we can know that the Savior *does* understand. And when we have a wonderful day and want someone to share it with, the Savior is there for us. He wants to share our joys just as He shares our pains.

The Holy Ghost guides us.

Jesus Christ promised His Apostles that the Comforter, or Holy Ghost, could be with them always to teach and comfort them (see John 14:16–17, 26–27). We too can have the gift of the Holy Ghost to guide us. And we can trust that the answers the Holy Ghost gives will help us. With His direction, we can be in constant contact with the Godhead. And as we follow the promptings we receive, we will begin to know Them even better. **NE**

NOTES

1. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 6:305.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, “In These Three I Believe,” *Ensign*, July 2006, 8.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “The Divine Gift of Gratitude,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 88.
4. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Merciful Obtain Mercy,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 76.



SUNDAY LESSONS

This Month's Topic:
The Godhead



JOIN THE CONVERSATION



THINGS TO PONDER FOR SUNDAY

- When have you been blessed by Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, or the Holy Ghost?
- When have you felt closest to Them?
- What can you learn about yourself by learning about Them?

THINGS YOU MIGHT DO

- Write in your journal about how you’ve been changed by knowing the Godhead.
- Share your feelings at church, on social media, or with other youth at lds.org/go/changeNE1.

TRUTH, LIES, AND YOUR SELF-WORTH

DON'T LET THE WORLD TELL YOU WHEN
TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF.

A new year brings feelings of a fresh start and new hopes, but it also brings a wave of worldly messages telling you that a new year requires a new you. These messages say that you can only be happy if you lose weight, get new clothes, find more friends, and so on. You hear these messages in the media, at school, and sometimes from those closest to you. The problem with these messages is that they're not true. If you examine them closely, you'll discover that the true motive behind the messages is usually to convince you to buy into something either with your money or your time. But you don't have to!

Changing your physical appearance or material possessions may make you feel better for a little while, but it doesn't really do anything to

change your worth or your eternal happiness. That's because your worth is already established. President Thomas S. Monson has taught: "Your Heavenly Father loves you—each of you. That love never changes. It is not influenced by your appearance, by your possessions, or by the amount of money you have in your bank account. It is not changed by your talents and abilities. . . . God's love is there for you whether or not you feel you deserve love. It is simply always there" ("We Never Walk Alone," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 123–24). You are a child of God. You already have infinite worth, and that does not change. So it's important to understand how you can recognize these false messages about self-esteem and combat them with gospel truth.



WORLD'S LIES — *vs.* — GOSPEL TRUTHS

Lie

YOUR WORTH IS DETERMINED BY LOOKING AND ACTING IN THE WORLD'S WAY.

Believing this lie means that you're letting worldly influences determine when you will feel good about yourself. You then have to constantly change to conform with worldly ideals, which are inconsistent and temporary. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has warned: "When we choose to define ourselves or to present ourselves by some characteristic that is temporary or trivial in eternal terms, we de-emphasize what is most important about us and we overemphasize what is relatively unimportant. This can lead us down the wrong path and hinder our eternal progress" ("How to Define Yourself," *New Era*, June 2013, 48).

Truth

FOLLOWING THE LORD'S WAY BUILDS A SENSE OF ETERNAL WORTH.

The Lord taught that His ways are not the same as the world's ways and that "my ways [are] higher than your ways" (Isaiah 55:8–9). Following the Lord's ways allows you to receive eternal blessings and to have the Holy Ghost with you, which can help you feel good about yourself more deeply and consistently than anything the world has to offer. Instead of trying to be what the world wants you to be, try living your life by the standards the Lord has set. His ways never change, and you will never be unpopular to Him.

Lie

YOUR WORTH COMES FROM HOW YOU COMPARE TO OTHERS.

As a teenager, you're probably well aware of how you compare to your peers. You want to fit in and be your best, which often means you want to be like someone else. When someone seems better at something than you, you may feel like you're not good enough and that you need to be better in order to be accepted. One problem with this lie is that by tying your self-worth to other people, you're often comparing another person's strength to one of your weaknesses (see President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "Forget Me Not," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 120). This can also lead to envy and pride, especially if you put down other people to try and make yourself appear better.

Truth

EVERYONE HAS DIFFERENT GIFTS. YOU CAN FEEL GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF AND BE GRATEFUL NO MATTER WHAT YOUR TALENTS ARE.

The Lord wants you to be yourself, not someone else. He knows that you and everyone on this earth have strengths and weaknesses. Comparing yourself to someone else doesn't help you be better. Of course, it's important to improve yourself and to make goals, but they should be based on doing *your* best, not someone else's.

If you want to feel better about yourself, try being grateful for what you have. "Comparing blessings is almost certain to drive out joy," says Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "We cannot be grateful and envious at the same time. If we truly want to have the Spirit of the Lord and experience joy and happiness, we should rejoice in our blessings and be grateful" ("Rejoice!" *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 30).

(For more on this topic, see "Soar Like an Eagle" on page 18.)



Lie

SELF-ESTEEM COMES FROM WORLDLY SUCCESS.

This lie is related to the one about comparing yourself to others. Who determines what success is? Everyone's definition may be a little different. And when you base your self-worth on achievements, you're only telling yourself that you're as good as your latest achievement. That's simply not true.

Truth

GOD'S VIEW AND EXPECTATIONS ARE WHAT MATTER.

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf has taught, "Disciples of Jesus Christ understand that compared to eternity, our existence in this mortal sphere is only 'a small moment' in space and time (D&C 121:7). They know that a person's true value has little to do with what the world holds in high esteem. . . . The Lord uses a scale very different from the world's to weigh the worth of a soul" ("You Matter to Him," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 20, 22).

Once again, you can overcome this lie by following the Lord's way and being more concerned about His definition of success than the world's. If you can consistently feel the companionship of the Spirit in your life, then it means you're living the way the Lord wants. And if you do feel like you've failed in the Lord's eyes, remember that you can come back through repentance and the Atonement.

Lie

GOOD SELF-ESTEEM IS ALL ABOUT BUILDING ME.

When people encourage you to focus on building self-esteem (rather than recognizing eternal self-worth), you may be tempted to think you'll be happier with yourself if you focus on building you. That's the tricky thing about this lie. It seems so logical that self-esteem should be all about you, but that's how the adversary tricks you. If he can get you so obsessed with "improving" yourself (typically with the outward things the world values) that you're totally focused on *you*, then it will distract you from all the people around you whom you could be helping.

Truth

YOU'LL FIND JOY IN SERVING GOD AND OTHERS.

The Lord commanded His disciples to "esteem [your] brother as [yourself]" (D&C 38:24–25). Those who truly love themselves don't rely on others' attention and praise. They're comfortable enough with their own worth that they can have good relationships with others and are able to serve them without ulterior motives. Think about it: When you're serving others and forgetting about yourself, does it make you feel better? Of course it does, because you're doing something worthwhile. And as you serve God's children, you draw closer to Him, thus improving yourself at the same time.

YOUR TRUE SELF

In the end, loving yourself is not about tooting your own horn or conforming to the world's view of self-esteem. It's about being who you are—a unique child of God—and knowing that who you are is

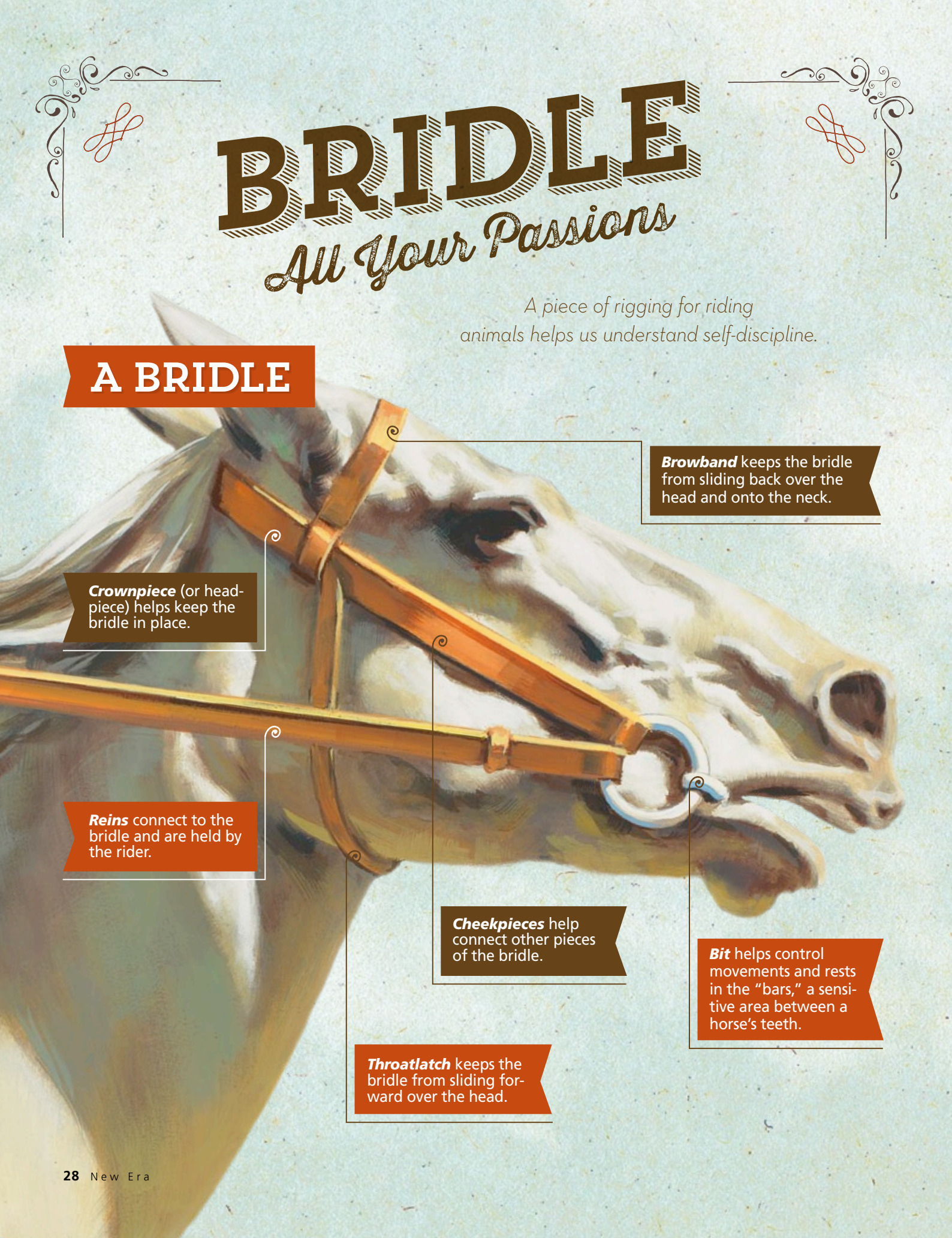
a good thing. When you understand your eternal worth and you live in a way consistent with your divine heritage, you will gain a lasting self-esteem that is better than anything the world can offer. **NE**

BRIDLE

All Your Passions

A piece of rigging for riding animals helps us understand self-discipline.

A BRIDLE



Crownpiece (or head-piece) helps keep the bridle in place.

Browband keeps the bridle from sliding back over the head and onto the neck.

Reins connect to the bridle and are held by the rider.

Cheekpieces help connect other pieces of the bridle.

Throatlatch keeps the bridle from sliding forward over the head.

Bit helps control movements and rests in the "bars," a sensitive area between a horse's teeth.

Facts about Bridles

- An animal's head has more sensitive nerves than just about any other part of the body, making it easier to train and control the animal by moving the bridle.
- Bridles and harnesses were integral to the domestication of donkeys, camels, and horses thousands of years ago.
- The development and use of bridles predates any recorded history, perhaps by thousands of years. For instance, artwork from Egypt, Assyria, and other ancient civilizations shows horses and other animals wearing sophisticated bridles, and artifacts such as metal bits dating back to these and much earlier times have been found.



RICHER, DEEPER LOVE

"Every appetite, desire, propensity, and impulse of the natural man may be overcome by and through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. We are here on the earth

to develop godlike qualities and to bridle all of the passions of the flesh. . . .

"Alma counseled his son Shiblon to 'bridle all [of his] passions, that [he] may be filled with love' (Alma 38:12). Significantly, disciplining the natural man in each of us makes possible a richer, a deeper, and a more enduring love of God and of His children. Love increases through righteous restraint and decreases through impulsive indulgence."

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "We Believe in Being Chaste," *Ensign*, May 2013, 43–44.

"SEE THAT YE BRIDLE ALL YOUR PASSIONS, THAT YE MAY BE FILLED WITH LOVE."

Alma 38:12

WHAT WE CAN LEARN

A Bridle:

Affects an area of sensitivity. Bridling our passions means controlling emotions and desires, which people can feel sensitive about, because the natural man wants them to have free rein. But if we overcome our sensitivities, we can develop self-discipline.

Is placed on animals that are of great use. We are told to "bridle all [our] passions," not to suppress or kill all our passions. Controlling our emotions and desires does not mean to stamp all of them out because they are all bad. Just as we bridle animals because they are useful and helpful, we bridle our passions so that we can control them and allow them to serve a higher purpose.

Helps to tame and train. Just as wild animals can be hostile, unpredictable, and destructive, so can our passions and emotions be if left unchecked. When we tame our emotions, we can train them and redirect them in positive ways to fulfill a greater purpose than they ever could if we simply allowed them to run wild.

Helps to direct. The reins attached to a bridle help us direct an animal in the way we would like it to go. Similarly, we can channel some strong emotions into good works or other appropriate outlets in order for us to become better people and of greater service. By bridling our passions, we can "be filled with love"—one of the highest and greatest emotions—and become more like our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

BOTH PARTS OF THE BLESSING



Temple attendance and family history are both important; when combined, they bring additional blessings.

By Brittany Beattie
Church Magazines

As you flip through the pages of the *New Era* this month, look at the wide variety of color combinations that bring a rich energy and vibrancy to each picture, painting, or design. Many of the colors were made possible because two of the primary colors—red, yellow, or blue—were combined to create a new color, one that couldn't exist if the primary colors were kept separate.

Family history and temple work share a similarity with those colors: you can receive more blessings by combining the two important works. That's because family history and temple work are actually two parts of a single work—the work of salvation. Of course you'll still receive great blessings by helping others with their family history and by attending the temple to do work for

people whose names are provided there. But you receive even greater blessings—enjoy the full palette of colors—when you combine the two parts and find *your own* family names and then perform the work for *your ancestors* in the temple.

As Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught:

“Temple and family history work is one work divided into two parts. . . .

“Father in Heaven wants each of us to receive both parts of the blessing of this vital vicarious work. He has led others to show us how to qualify. It is up to you and me to claim those blessings.

“Any work you do in the temple is time well spent, but receiving ordinances vicariously for one of your own ancestors will make the time in the temple more sacred, and even greater blessings will be received.”¹

So, what are some of the “greater blessings” that come when we receive “both parts of the blessing”? At right are several promises from modern-day Apostles.

NOTES

1. Richard G. Scott, “The Joy of Redeeming the Dead,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 93–94.
2. Boyd K. Packer, “Your Family History: Getting Started,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2003, 17.
3. Russell M. Nelson, “Generations Linked in Love,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 92.
4. David A. Bednar, “The Time Is Now,” lds.org/youth/family-history/leaders.
5. John A. Widtsoe, in Conference Report, Apr. 1943, 39.



A Refining, Spiritual Influence

“Family history work of Church members has a refining, spiritualizing, tempering influence on those who are engaged in it. They understand that they are tying their family together. . . . When we research our own lines we become interested in more than just names. . . . Our interest turns our hearts to our fathers—we seek to find them and to know them and to serve them.”²



Part of a Greater Work

“Spiritual connections . . . are formed. . . . When our hearts turn to our ancestors, something changes inside us. We feel part of something greater than ourselves.”³



A Safeguard against Temptation

“Each of us benefits from all of those who have gone before. Learning those stories helps us really understand who we are and where we came from. . . . Are you doing the research in your own family and helping other people with their research? That for a young person in the wickedness of the world in which we live today is one of the greatest safeguards against the temptations of the adversary.”⁴



Aid from the Unseen World

“Perhaps if we would do our work in behalf of those of the unseen world who hunger and pray for the work we can do for them, the unseen world would in return give us help in this day of our urgent need. There are more in that other world than there are here. There is more power and strength there than we have here upon this earth.”⁵



I FOUND A NAME

To prepare for a youth temple trip, our ward put together a Mutual activity to search for family names we could bring. I was sitting next to my friends and somewhat complaining that I could not find any names that needed ordinances done. After much searching on familysearch.org, I found a name. I was so excited!

"I quickly ran to our family history consultant and asked her what the next step was. She showed me how to save the name and print it out so I could do the temple work. She also said the woman was a real person and not just a name on a screen. I felt the Spirit and knew the person had been waiting for her work to be done and for me to find her. I was able to take her name to the temple. I am so grateful for the opportunity to serve my ancestors and help bring them the joy of the gospel."

Leah G., New York, USA



What If I Don't Have Access to the Internet?

Although your family history names need to be submitted online in order to do temple work for them, you don't need to have Internet access at home. Gather names, information, and family stories from your living relatives, and then see if there's a local family history center where you can submit the names on familysearch.org.

In areas with limited Internet access, talk to ward or stake family history consultants about the resources they have for getting the data entered electronically for you.



Does That Mean I Shouldn't Go to the Temple If I Don't Have Family Names?

Not at all! Attending the temple brings rich blessings both for you and for those you are baptized and confirmed for, whether or not they are your ancestors. You should still attend the temple even if you don't have a family name. The First Presidency has taught: "Members with limited ability to

do their own family history research are encouraged to perform vicarious ordinances with names provided by other members or by the temple" (First Presidency Letter, Oct. 8, 2012).



AN INVITATION FROM THE FIRST PRESIDENCY

"When members of the Church find the names of their ancestors and take those names to the temple for ordinance work, the temple experience can be greatly enriched. . . . We especially encourage youth . . . to use for temple work their own family names or the names of ancestors of their ward and stake members."

First Presidency Letter, Oct. 8, 2012.



YOUTH VOICES: BLESSINGS OF FAMILY HISTORY

Youth from New York, USA, were recently invited by their stake presidency to find a family name to take to the temple as part of a special youth conference. They discovered great blessings as they felt their hearts turning to their fathers (see Malachi 4:5–6).

Taking Family Names to the Temple

- “I used to think that family history was just another thing to check off, but now I realize these are *real* people who have been waiting for years. My temple experience is different when I take family names. I suppose it’s because of all the hard work, time, and prayers that went into finding *one* name. But *one* name is worth it because that is *one person* who needs to be with Father in Heaven.” —Hannah A., 13
- “After finding a person, you start to connect with that person in the spirit world. Bringing your own names is a way to strengthen this bond. It helps you to understand your eternal family.” —Spencer S., 15
- “Bringing family names to the temple helps you realize the reality of who these people were. They are not just names on

a piece of paper; they are real brothers and sisters who share your history—and are a part of it.” —Lilli N., 16

Receiving Blessings

- “I’ve noticed a difference in my life. It’s a warm and protective feeling.” —Noah R., 13
- “You can feel in your heart that you are part of a greater work. Giving your family the opportunity to receive temple blessings is a feeling like no other.” —Corinne C., 17
- “I’ve felt more comfortable and calm since I started doing family history. When I take family names to the temple, it gives me an overwhelming sense of joy.” —Tyler M., 16
- “It has increased my love for the Savior, Heavenly Father, and my ancestors. It has helped me become closer with my direct

family and increased my testimony of the gospel.” —Alexandra H., 14

- “I’ve been a lot happier.” —Ross S., 12
- “With each name, I feel an overwhelming sense of peace and excitement, like the person has been waiting just for me.” —Rhiannon B., 15
- “I know where I came from, and my confidence is building.” —Eliza L., 13
- “I’ve been less contentious in my house.” —Gehrig L., 12
- “I understand the importance of families more and more. I want to be closer with my family on earth.” —Emma L., 15
- “It’s helped me further understand God’s plan for us. I feel closer to Heavenly Father and the gospel because I better understand the ordinances that are taking place.” —Noah C., 14

What Will You Do?

What will you do to “claim those blessings” of finding family names and then taking them to the temple? Make a plan today to bring the promises of receiving both parts of the blessing in your life. **NE**

FIRST THINGS

First

Do you “seek . . . first the kingdom of God”
(Matthew 6:33)?

In the October 2013 general conference, Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that God is our first and highest priority, as stated in the first two of the Ten Commandments:

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

“Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God” (Exodus 20:3–5).

Elder Oaks then said: “The question posed by the second commandment is ‘What is our *ultimate* priority?’

Are we serving priorities or gods ahead of the God we profess to worship? Have we forgotten to follow the Savior who taught that if we love Him, we will keep His commandments? (see John 14:15). If so, our priorities have been turned upside down by the spiritual apathy and undisciplined appetites so common in our day” (“No Other Gods,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 72–73).



How can I turn it around?

If you’ve placed a high priority on something ahead of God, decide now to turn your priorities around and put God first. Here are some things that can help you do it.

- **Pray.** Your priorities have a lot to do with your motivation and desire. Ask Heavenly Father about your priorities specifically and in detail. Ask for His help in changing your thoughts, feelings, and actions so that they will reflect your love for Him and His Son.

- **Enlist the help of others.** Talk to your parents or Church leaders and ask them for support as you try to change.
- **Imagine success.** Picture yourself thinking, feeling, and doing the right things in the situations that challenge you the most. Ponder what it would take for that to happen, and then make it happen.
- **Just do it.** Determine to put God first, and then do it. Be like the Prophet Joseph Smith, who said, “I made this my rule: *When the Lord commands, do it*” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 160).

For more ideas, go to lds.org/go/prioritiesNE1.

HOW DO YOU STACK UP?

Here are a few examples of things that may compete for your devotion. They're not all necessarily bad. Sometimes it's more a matter of better vs. best. But our devotion to God should not take second place to anything. So how would you stack these things up in these situations?

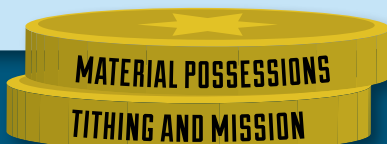
"I have to get stronger, but the only time I can lift weights is at the same time as early-morning seminary."



"I really want her as my friend, but she's always doing things to drive away the Spirit and trying to get me to do them, even though I've asked her to stop."



"I've saved some money, but I haven't paid my tithing yet, and I haven't added to my mission fund for quite a while. But I just have to get that cool new phone as soon as I can."



"Prophets have taught us not to get tattoos, but everyone in my culture gets one."



"I have really hard classes, and I just have to get straight A's so that I can be the best, so this year I don't really have time to go to all three hours of church or to Mutual."



"I realized that I don't ever play with my little sister anymore ever since I got that new video game a while back."



"Everybody makes fun of that guy to get laughs; if I stand up for him, they'll probably turn on me."



PRIORITY 1

PRIORITY 2



By Larry M. Gibson

First Counselor in the
Young Men General
Presidency

I Do Always **REMEMBER HIM**

The way we keep the Sabbath day holy is an outward manifestation of our covenant to always remember Jesus Christ.

I recall, as an 11-year-old, being reverently escorted by my bishop into the chapel of our new ward building, where he sat with me in front of the sacrament table. He said, “You know, Larry, you will soon be ordained to the office of deacon in the Aaronic Priesthood. Do you realize what a special blessing and duty that will be?” He told me that I would have the sacred responsibility to act as the Savior did in providing the holy emblems of the sacrament to those in our congregation. I was overwhelmed with the magnitude of the priesthood calling I was to receive.

My bishop asked that I memorize the two sacrament prayers and think about how they fit into my life. He said I must strive to do the things the sacrament prayers ask each of us to do if I was to act for the Savior in providing the sacrament to others. After I returned home, my father helped me locate the sacrament prayers in both the Doctrine and Covenants (20:76–79) and the Book of Mormon


(Moroni 4; 5). I read them carefully for the first time in my life. I listened closely as they were offered in church. I pondered the words as the bread was being passed, but the full impact of the sacramental covenant became apparent when I heard these words in the blessing on the water: “that they do always remember him.” I asked myself, “Do I *always* remember Him? What does *always* mean? How can I remember Him always?” Every time I hear those sacred sacramental prayers I am moved to reflect on these same questions.

The way we keep the Sabbath day holy is an outward manifestation of our covenant with Heavenly Father to always remember Jesus Christ. *The Sabbath day should become the foundation for our remembrance of Him for the other six days of the week.*

Sunday is a day to slow down, pause, and remember. We attend our Church meetings; reflect on our blessings, strengths, and shortcomings; seek forgiveness; partake of the

sacrament; and ponder the Savior’s suffering on our behalf. We try not to be distracted by anything that would prevent us from worshipping Him, for “on this day,” as the Lord has said, “thou shalt do none other thing” (D&C 59:13). Any activity we participate in during the Sabbath should be in keeping with the spirit of remembering Christ. If anything we are doing on any part of the Sabbath takes us away from remembering the Savior and ministering on the Sabbath as He would minister, then perhaps we should reconsider what we are doing. Remember, the Sabbath is a day appointed not only “to rest from your labors” but also “to pay thy devotions unto the Most High” (D&C 59:10).

We must plan our lives in such a way that there is no excuse for taking away from the sanctity of any part of the Lord’s day. It is a day to be about His business, a day on which our whole lives can be blessed and renewed by having sacred



experiences individually and with our family. It is a day for the enrichment of our spirit.

Spend some time today creating a thoughtful plan of things that you will do to really make the Sabbath day a sacred and holy day in your life. Then act on your plan.

Remember the Lord's wonderful promise to those who properly honor the Sabbath: "And inasmuch as ye do these things with thanksgiving, with cheerful hearts and countenances, . . . the fulness of the earth is yours" (D&C 59:15–16). Can we afford to forgo these blessings in our lives and in the lives of our family members?

I believe in honoring the Sabbath day. I boldly but humbly bear witness that observing the Sabbath day is a commandment of our God, who lives and loves each of us. I testify that if we will follow and live the divine mandate to keep the Sabbath day holy, the Lord, in turn, will bless us, direct us, and inspire us in solving the issues that confront us. **NE**



Adding Up to **SUCCESS**

By Daniel Kawai

When I was 14, my physics teacher saw my talent in math and entered me in the Brazilian Mathematics Olympiad. There were three phases. The first and the second would be held on a Saturday. I was classified for the third phase and saw that it would be held on two days, Saturday and Sunday.

I then told my teacher and the director of the Olympiad that I would not take a test on Sunday because it is the Lord's day. The director asked me to talk to my Church leaders so that I could be freed to take the test on Sunday, for if I did not take it, I would be disqualified. I said that I could forgo everything but not God.

I did not become sad, because I had the hope that God honors those who honor Him. I remembered Matthew 6:33: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;

and all these things shall be added unto you."

Some weeks later we contacted the secretary of the Olympiad, who stated that I could not take the test any other day and that I would be disqualified. After much conversing, he suggested that I send him an email explaining my situation. After sending the email, I prayed to Heavenly Father and said that I would do His will.

The following night, I received an email from the coordinator stating that I could take the Sunday test on Monday at the most convenient time for me, and he even offered to administer the test in my own city so that I would not miss the morning class at school.

After receiving this good news, I prayed to thank the Lord because He had helped me. My parents went to the temple to express thanks.

KEY IDEAS ABOUT SABBATH DAY OBSERVANCE

"The Lord has given the Sabbath day for your benefit and has commanded you to keep it holy.

"Honoring the Sabbath day includes attending all your Church meetings. . . .

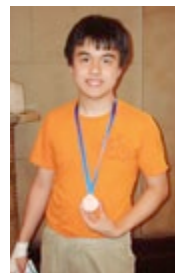
"Prepare during the week so that you can reserve Sunday for the many uplifting activities that are appropriate for the Sabbath day. . . .

"Observing the Sabbath will bring you closer to the Lord and to your family. It will give you an eternal perspective and spiritual strength."

For the Strength of Youth (2011), 30–31.

When the test results came out, I received the gold medal. The Lord honors those who honor Him. **NE**

Daniel Kawai lives in São Paulo, Brazil.



Do **young men** have **to serve** **a mission** as soon as they **turn 18**? And are **young women** more strongly encouraged to serve a mission now that they can **go at 19**?

What can I do if **I'm pressured** to **break Church standards** by other youth who are also active Church members? I don't want to appear **self-righteous** or **judgmental**.

When President Thomas S. Monson announced the change in the age of eligibility for missionary service, he said, "I am not suggesting that all young men will—or should—serve at this earlier age. Rather, based on individual circumstances as well as upon a determination by priesthood leaders, this option is now available."¹ Consider your physical and emotional health, financial preparation, and spiritual preparation. You can counsel with parents and priesthood leaders about these things when deciding about the right time to serve.

Regarding young women, President Monson said, "Young women . . . are not under the same mandate to serve as are the young men. We assure the young sisters of the Church, however, that they make a valuable contribution as missionaries, and we welcome their service."² **NE**

NOTES

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

Have the courage to stand up for Church standards, even if the pressure is coming from other Latter-day Saint youth who know the standards and who might think you're acting self-righteously. Which holds the greater risk: disobeying the Lord's commandments or looking like a

goodie-goodie to some of your peers? (Now, if they're pressuring you to do something that makes you feel *personally* uncomfortable or that violates a standard set by your *family* rather than the Church, you can still stand up for yourself by simply saying that you prefer not to do it and asking them to respect your feelings.)

Of course, you should try to handle the situation tactfully. As the prophet Alma told his missionary son Shiblon, "Use boldness, but not overbearance" (Alma 38:12). There's no need for harsh condemnation or a condescending attitude. You can just matter-of-factly let people know what standards you have chosen to live by. And if active Church members are asking you to violate clear-cut Church standards, remember what President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said: "Be a friend to all, but never compromise your standards."¹ **NE**

NOTE

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Your Wonderful Journey Home," *Ensign*, May 2013, 128.





You Never Walk Alone

When preparing for this month's Sunday lessons on the Godhead, you'll find great resources for your study in general conference. For example, President Thomas S. Monson taught about God's love in "We Never Walk Alone."

He taught that "there will be times when you will walk a path strewn with thorns and marked by struggle. There may be times when you feel detached—even isolated—from the Giver of every good gift." For these times, he reminded us that "we were not placed on this earth to walk alone. . . . He will be there for us to provide help if we but ask." President Monson shared two ways to find comfort: "As we remember prayer and take time to turn to the scriptures, our lives will be infinitely more blessed and our burdens will be made lighter."

He also shared a remarkable story of a woman who discovered how personally Heavenly Father knows her and wants to help her. Read the story and President Monson's full address at lds.org/go/walkNE1.



OUR
HEAVENLY FATHER
LOVES YOU—
EACH OF YOU.
THAT LOVE
NEVER CHANGES. . . .
IT IS SIMPLY
ALWAYS THERE.

President Thomas S. Monson,
September 2013 general Relief Society meeting

OUR SAVIOR
WANTS US TO
really love Him

TO THE POINT THAT WE WANT TO
ALIGN OUR WILL WITH HIS.

WE CAN THEN
FEEL HIS LOVE
and know His glory.

THEN HE CAN BLESS US
— AS HE WANTS TO. —

Elder Terence M. Vinson of the Seventy,
October 2013 general conference



You Can Feel Christ's Love

Just as God's love is constant and He is always near us, He wants us to strive to always draw near to Him. Elder Terence M. Vinson of the Seventy reminded us that we can come closer to Him by aligning our will to His. He said of God's love, "I can return that love in my own imperfect way by giving Him my heart."

Elder Vinson also shared the closeness of the Lord to us: "I believe that if we could have the privilege of walking physically with the Savior, that we would feel His arm draped over our shoulder. . . . His message [to] 'come and see' (John 1:39) . . . is personal, inviting, and embracing in its invitation to walk with His arm around our shoulders."

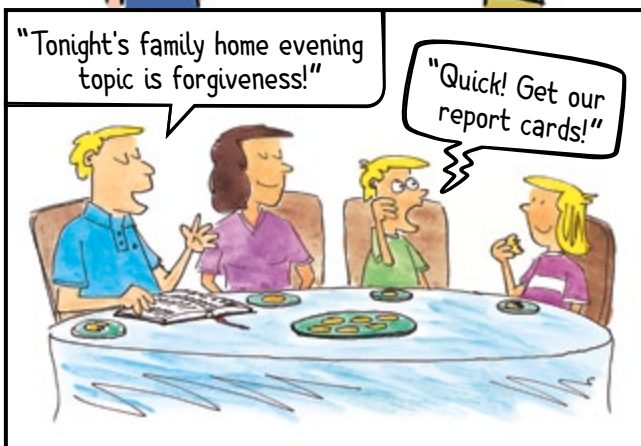
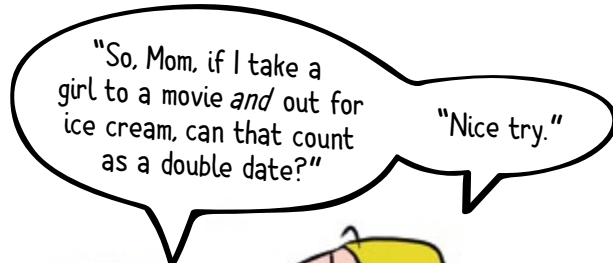
Read more from Elder Vinson's address at lds.org/go/closerNE1. Learn more about the Godhead on page 22 of this issue.



Share These Cards Online

As you talk about the Godhead, consider keeping these cards in your scriptures or using them in Sunday meetings, with your family, or on social media. Download or share them online at lds.org/go/cardsNE1.

JON CLARK



RYAN STOKER



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY



ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF

“I take **modesty** seriously, but some **sports** teams require us to wear short shorts or shirts without sleeves. Is this **OK?**”

For the *Strength of Youth* teaches that we “should choose appropriately modest apparel when participating in sports” ([2011], 7). Think about why your uniform is the way it is. Is it designed for specific safety reasons or to allow for necessary movement?

How do you feel wearing it?

Consider what options you have for modifying or requesting changes to the uniform. In politely speaking up, you may be surprised to find that others agree with you. Look for athletes—both within Church membership and those of other faiths—who have found ways to pursue their athletic ambitions while maintaining a certain standard of dress.

As you strive to be modest in all aspects of your life, the Spirit will help you know what to do, and Heavenly Father will bless you for caring for the body He has given you. **NE**

Cover Up When You Can



I do Irish dance, and the special attire we wear requires short shorts. I always try to wear longer shorts

when I’m practicing on my own at home, and I always wear spandex or something to go under my uniform shorts at practice. When I attend competitions, I put pants over my uniform when I’m not dancing.

Miranda O., 14, Wyoming, USA

Set Standards within the Sport



Modesty is very important and can send a strong message about who you are. I am involved in ballet and

dance, and when I’ve talked to my coach about my modesty standards, the costumes have been modified for me. I don’t wear costumes and other clothing where my belly would show, and this is very important to me and my dancing. Certain clothing is required for each sport, but that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t have standards.

Meghan Z., 16, California, USA

Prayerfully Decide

The gospel counsels us to “consider [our] ways” (Haggai 1:7) and ensure that our actions don’t detract from our relationship with God. The standards of the Church are meant to edify us, or build us up, as opposed to

restricting us by sets of rules. Consider how the uniform affects your sport, your relationship with the Holy Ghost, and your ability to maintain virtue, and then prayerfully decide which factors outweigh the others.

Alex B., 18, Utah, USA

Don't Make Exceptions



I think that in these circumstances it's OK as long as you wear the uniform only while playing the game and don't make exceptions for other events. Ultimately it's up to you, and praying for guidance is always a good way to go.

Liesl K., 17, Washington, USA

Talk to Your Coach

See if you can wear something underneath. If it's a school team, then talk to the coach and the principal. There should be guidelines in the school rule book. If they refuse, tell a parent or guardian that you feel uncomfortable and see if he or she can talk to them. Your body is a temple, and you shouldn't be forced to wear immodest clothing.

Molly J., 14, Illinois, USA

Consider the Purpose



As long as it's appropriate for the activity, it also depends on the uniform and the kind of message it gives. It

should not be used to bring attention to our bodies. If shorter shorts and sleeves are there simply for looks, then oftentimes it's inappropriate. But if the lack of length and sleeves are used to make the sport easier to play, then it may have a purpose that makes it appropriate.

Rhiannon A., 17, California, USA

Do Everything You Can



Talk to your coach. You never know what will happen when you "dare to stand alone," as President Monson taught ("Dare to Stand Alone," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 61). When you take action for what you believe to be right, others may follow. Our bodies are a gift from God, and we need to respect them. This includes dressing modestly. If your first course of action doesn't work, then try another route. Good things happen when you do everything you can to keep your standards.

April H., 18, Utah, USA



BE COMMITTED, BE CONFIDENT

"Members of the Church need to be involved in the world

in a positive way. How then do we balance the need to positively contribute to the world and to not succumb to the sins of the world? (See D&C 25:10; 59:9.) Two principles will make a significant difference.

"1. Let people know you are a committed Latter-day Saint. . . .

"2. Be confident about and live your beliefs."

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Lessons from the Old Testament: In the World but Not of the World," *Ensign*, Feb. 2006, 54–55.

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

UPCOMING QUESTION

"How can I
completely
know that the
Church is
100 percent **true?**"

Send your answer and photo by February 15, 2014.

Go to newera.lds.org, and click "Submit Your Work."

You can also write to us at newera@ldschurch.org or

New Era, Q&A, know

50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420

Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



CONFERENCE CONNECTION

Sometimes life isn't easy. However, trials are an essential part of mortality. Here's what several Church leaders taught about this during the October 2013 general conference.



"Our Heavenly Father . . . knows that we learn and grow and become stronger as we face and survive the trials through which we must pass."

President Thomas S. Monson, "I Will Not Fail Thee, nor Forsake Thee," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 87.



"Patiently enduring some things is part of our mortal education. . . . There is still much in life to be hopeful about and grateful for."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Like a Broken Vessel," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 41–42.



"The Lord allows us to be tried and tested, sometimes to our maximum capacity.

We have seen the lives of loved ones—and maybe our own—figuratively burned to the ground and have wondered why a loving and caring Heavenly Father would allow such things to happen. But He does not leave us in the ashes; He stands with open arms, eagerly inviting us to come to Him. He is building our lives into magnificent temples where His Spirit can dwell eternally."

Linda S. Reeves, second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, "Claim the Blessings of Your Covenants," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 119.

SCRIPTURE MASTERY WITH THE GUYS

It's not at all uncommon for a group of high school kids to throw an evening party. But a party where the sole purpose is memorizing scripture mastery verses? That's about as common as a surf shop in Arizona!

Yet when Brennon K., a 17-year-old from Colorado, USA, decided to plan a Friday night scripture mastery party at his house with his guy friends—in place of the more typical video-game-themed gatherings they usually held—he received an enthusiastic response. They wanted to "memorize as many of

the 100 seminary scripture mastery verses as we could in one school year," Brennon explains.

Five of Brennon's friends showed up for the scripture mastery get-together. They worked long into the evening, helping one another memorize scriptures while taking occasional breaks to clear their minds. One such break was playing night games outside in the rain. However, most of the evening was reserved for the goal at hand. "I memorized 14 scriptures that night," Brennon says.

Afterward, Brennon and his friends all felt energized.



Scripture Mastery Website

Ready to memorize and apply the scripture mastery verses? Check out the new website sm.lds.org for activities to help you!

"We hadn't played any video games or watched any movies," Brennon says. "We had not idled away our time" (see D&C 60:13).

As a result, they were all eager to put that energy to good use in a wood-stacking serving project the next morning.

Brennon knows the party was well worth the effort. He says, "As long as we surround ourselves with good friends and good standards and follow Christ, we are much better protected from the adversary's grasp."

WE'VE GOT MAIL

CONDUCTING MEETINGS

I really liked "How Do I Conduct a Meeting?" in the February 2013 issue. I was recently called as a deacons quorum president, and your article helped me get used to that particular part of the calling. I now feel more comfortable, and the article helped me avoid that awkward silence that can come when you don't know what you're supposed to do. Thank you.

Dallin K., 13, Delaware, USA

PLANNING A DATE

The day after I read "A Change of Plan" (May 2013), I was in almost the same situation. I was going on a group date and my date told me we were planning to go to a movie I felt uncomfortable seeing. After I read this article, I had the courage to call my date and ask if we could do something else. We ended up playing games instead and had a lot of fun while also keeping our standards high.

Julia B., 17, Utah, USA

BY THE NUMBERS 40,500



Number of shelves in the Church History Library. Placed end to end, they would stretch 28 miles. The shelves are filled with a wide variety of materials about the Church.

TRIPLE THE AWESOME

When triplet brothers Ryan S., Trent, and Nathan all received their mission calls on the same day, they could barely contain their excitement. And then things *really* got exciting.

All three brothers were called to serve in the same city—Mexico City, Mexico—albeit in three different missions there. Their friendships with one another have only deepened now that they're in the mission field.

"We continue to be a strength to each other," says Ryan.

The brothers had a chance to meet up when their missions came together for a special

meeting with Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "We're progressing together stronger than ever before," says Ryan.



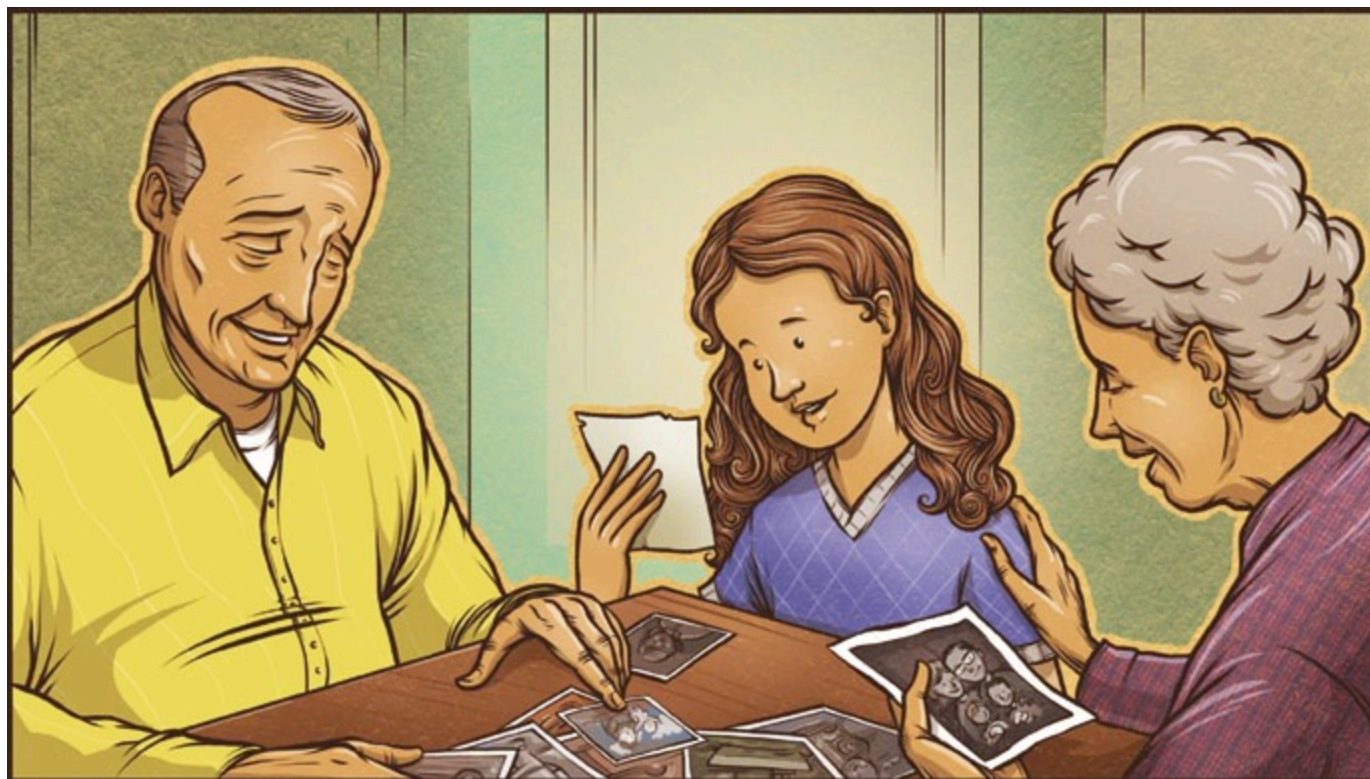
MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURE

2 Nephi 2:9 "[JESUS CHRIST] SHALL MAKE INTERCESSION FOR ALL THE CHILDREN OF MEN; AND THEY THAT BELIEVE IN HIM SHALL BE SAVED."

In this scripture, the word *intercession* has great meaning. It means "acting as a mediator to help two parties resolve a problem." In this case, the Savior is the Mediator who helps all people who have become separated from Heavenly Father because of sin.

This scripture helped me know the importance of our Savior, Jesus Christ. I am grateful for His Atonement. Only through Him can we live again with our Father in Heaven.

Hanisha A., India



FAMILY HISTORY UNITES FAMILIES

I came across a Personal Progress goal that motivated me to get started on my family tree.

Whenever I went to my grandparents' for lunch, they told me stories from their lives and from those of my other relatives. I began going to the family history center and gathering information about my family.

I remember when I found information about my great-great-grandmother. She had been just a name until I found her name in a record. While pregnant, she came to Argentina on a ship. During the voyage, she buried her son at sea.

Through my research, I became even closer to my grandparents, and I came to know my ancestors as if I had

lived with them. I found information about my ancestors, shared the glad tidings of eternal sealing, and helped bless many generations.

I continue to discover hidden treasures thanks to FamilySearch.org. I love what President Thomas S. Monson said: "I testify that when we do all we can to accomplish the work that is before us, the Lord will make available to us the sacred key needed to unlock the treasure which we so much seek" ("The Key of Faith," *Ensign*, Feb. 1994, 5). Through our efforts, we will discover the keys to our eternal treasure, and one day we will be able to meet our ancestors in person.

Yael B., Argentina

PRAYING FOR PEACE

A couple of months ago, I was going through a rough time and felt that my life was falling apart. I'd been told many times that our trials make us stronger, but remembering that didn't take away my pain. After one particularly rough day at high school and a stressful evening, I felt alone.

I was in the midst of despair, and I couldn't see a way to overcome what I was feeling. Then I had an overwhelming desire to pray. I resisted at first—that solution seemed too easy to bring the peace I was seeking—but then I changed my mind. I prayed for comfort and for the strength to rise above my trials. As I did so, my pain and grief were taken away and were replaced by an overwhelming, all-encompassing feeling of peace and joy.

I rarely cry, but that day I wept. That was the moment I really understood that I am a child of God and felt how much I matter to Him. Now, every time I feel alone or am in pain, I pray. Sometimes the relief doesn't come instantly, but it always comes. Prayer is how I withstand the teasing, temptations, and other hard things that sometimes come into my life. I'm so grateful to have the gospel in my life and to be a child of God.

Joseph G., Kentucky, USA

BECOMING THE WARD ORGANIST

When I was 10 or 11, I started learning how to play hymns on the piano. I enjoyed playing the piano, and I really wanted to learn to play the organ too. Playing the organ would be so much fun!

My mother, who teaches me, told me that I could start learning to play the organ when I learned to play 100 hymns on the piano. That seemed like a big task, but I was driven to succeed. At first, I learned a hymn once every few weeks, but eventually I got to the point where I would learn two each week. The number of hymns kept growing.

The summer that I learned my 100th hymn, my mother organized a small group of students and taught us all to play the organ. Learning the organ took a lot of practice.

At the end of the summer, the first counselor in the bishopric pulled me aside during a bishopric youth discussion. "Our ward needs a new organist," he said. "The bishopric has discussed this, and we would like to call you as ward organist." I felt the blood draining from my face, but I nodded.

My first time playing the organ during sacrament meeting was terrifying. I arrived early to play the

prelude music. I played the opening hymn, which went rather well; there were only a few jarring notes. As I played, I had to be careful to watch the chorister, press the keys with my hands, and use my feet on the bass pedals. Between the opening hymn and the sacrament hymn, I was very nervous. But when I played the soft and sweet notes of "How Great the Wisdom and the Love" (*Hymns*, no. 195), I felt the Spirit fill me with joy and peace.

Elaine N., Utah, USA





**By President
Boyd K. Packer**

President of the Quorum
of the Twelve Apostles

HOW TO MAKE THE CHOICE

When you are discouraged and feel that you cannot solve a problem on your own, you may be right, but at least you are obligated to try. Every personal resource available to you should be committed

before you take another step, and you have powerful resources. The Book of Mormon declares this once, which is often overlooked:

“For the Spirit is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. And the way is prepared from the fall of man, and salvation is free.

“And men are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil” (2 Nephi 2:4–5; emphasis added).

It is critically important that you **understand that you already know right from wrong**, that you’re innately, inherently, and intuitively good. When you say, “I can’t! I can’t solve my problems!” I want to thunder out, “Don’t you realize who you are? Haven’t you learned yet that you are a son or a daughter of Almighty God? Do you know that there are **powerful resources** inherited from Him that **you can call upon** to give you steadiness and courage and great power?”

All of you know the difference between good and evil, between right and wrong. Isn’t it time then that you

decide that you’re going to do right? In so doing you’re making a choice. Not just *a* choice, but you’re making *the* choice. Once you’ve decided that, with no fingers crossed, no counterfeiting, no reservations or hesitancy, the rest will all fall into place.

Most people who come for counsel to the stake presidents, branch presidents, bishops, and others, don’t come because they are confused and they are not able to see the difference between right and wrong. They come because they’re tempted to do something that deep down they know is wrong, and they want that decision ratified.

When you have a problem, **work it out in your own mind** first. **Ponder** on it and **analyze** it and **meditate** on it. **Pray** about it. I’ve come to learn that major decisions can’t be forced. You must **look ahead and have vision.** **NE**

From a Brigham Young University fireside address given on March 2, 1975.



Share Your Experiences

Share your experiences in applying this principle and read the experiences of other youth by going to lds.org/go/solveNE1.

HOW HAVE YOU APPLIED THIS?

“Whenever I feel incapable or like I can’t solve my problems, it helps me to remember that I am a child of God! Remembering this gives me an extra boost to choose the right and give myself to Him.”

**Kathryn S., 14,
Nevada, USA**

“I know that choosing the right will help me and bless my life. It’s important to choose for yourself. It’s also important to decide to choose the right before getting into spiritually dangerous situations because it will help you know what to do.”

Jake R., 16, Idaho, USA

— MAKE THE —
DECISION
to do what
JESUS CHRIST
has asked us
— TO DO. —

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,
October 2013 general conference

WHAT'S ONLINE



2014 MUTUAL THEME

Find videos, music, and more supporting this year's Mutual theme: "Come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness" (Moroni 10:32). They're great resources for Mutual activities, camps, conferences, devotionals, family home evening lessons, and more. Find them at lds.org/go/themeNE1.



SIMPLE WAYS TO SHARE THE GOSPEL

If you know how to be a friend, then you know how to share the gospel. Just check out "15 Real-Life Examples of Sharing the Gospel" for ideas you can try today. You'll find experiences of other teens who have followed the Lord's invitation to share the gospel. You'll even find 20 extra ideas of things you can do today to be a member missionary. Check it out at lds.org/go/examplesNE1.

YOUR POTENTIAL, YOUR PRIVILEGES

Do you remember when President Dieter F. Uchtdorf shared the story of a man who booked a cruise to the Mediterranean but didn't enjoy any of the activities on the ship, not knowing they were included in his fare? That humorous parable can now be seen in a Mormon Messages video at lds.org/go/cruiseNE1. (You can find President Uchtdorf's original address at lds.org/go/potentialNE1.)

How are you going to live up to your privileges and potential today?



THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS