

God Wants

Imagine the deepest, darkest forest you can think of. We're talking centuries-old, gnarled trees covered in thick moss. All but the thinnest rays of sunlight would be blocked by the dense canopy of branches above. The forest floor would remain so hidden in such tangled undergrowth that there's no chance of seeing a trail.

Can you picture it?

Now pretend this foreboding forest stretches for miles on end and you need to find your way through—alone—without compass, guide, map, or trail.

Does *life* ever feel like that? In particular, does your spiritual journey back to God ever feel like that?

You Matter

The adversary wants you to believe that you're utterly unimportant. Invisible. Not worth anyone's time or attention, and certainly not worth anything to God. You're just another piece of brush hidden in a huge, dense, dark forest.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has taught, "While we may look at the vast expanse of the universe and say, 'What is man in comparison to the glory of creation?' God Himself said we are the reason He created the universe! . . . This is a paradox of man: compared to God, man is nothing; yet we are everything to God."¹

Everything! Can you imagine?

Life's journey might feel at times like a walk through the darkness and tangles of dense woods,

You Back

but you're never alone and you're certainly never without access to help. God is your Father. He loves you. He wants you back.

He Gave Us Everything We Need

Just ponder for a moment on all that God has given us. When you were baptized, you received the gift of the Holy Ghost. Each week in sacrament we hear the phrase, "that they may *always* have his Spirit to be with them" (D&C 20:77, emphasis added).

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has taught, "To always have the Spirit with us is to have the guidance and direction of the Holy Ghost in our daily lives."²

When you leave the house each day, remember that promise!

God has also given us prophets, apostles, and other leaders whose words blast through the false teachings of the world and inspire us with truth and hope.

Think of the specific people God has placed in your life. Remember the countless times when somebody showed up exactly when you needed a helping hand or a kind word, comforting you when you were down or making you laugh when laughter seemed impossible. Those tender mercies aren't coincidences. They're evidence of your Father helping you along the path back.³

He has created a plan to bring you home and is willing to "*lead thee by the hand*" (D&C 112:10). Our job is to take His hand and press forward.

What Is Our Part?

Sometimes you may hear motivational speakers, athletic trainers, and advertisers try to pump you up by

conjuring images of strapping on shoes, leaping out of bed before dawn, and tackling the world with nothing but our grit and determination. And certainly there will be times when digging down deep will be necessary to press forward through the challenges of life.

However, notice that the 2016 Mutual theme doesn't just say "press forward." Rather, we need to "press forward with a steadfastness in Christ" (2 Nephi 31:20).

On our own we simply can't make it. It's only as we follow Christ, rely on Christ, and commit to Christ that we can find strength and success in our journey.

One Step at a Time

When we recognize all that God does to help us, when we understand how much He wants us to return to live with Him, and as we press forward and center our lives in Christ, we have all we need. We can successfully pass through the roughest stretches this life has to offer.

"Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life" (2 Nephi 31:20).

If your journey ever feels like one wrong turn after another through dark and twisted trees, know now that the way through is always available to you.

Simply turn to God, let Him lead you, and press

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "You Matter to Him," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 20.
2. Henry B. Eyring, "The Holy Ghost as Your Companion," *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 104.
3. See David A. Bednar, "The Tender Mercies of the Lord," *Ensign*, May 2005, 99–101.



How Do You Press Forward?

Facing challenges? Find ideas for strength at pressforward.lds.org. Share ideas at lds.org/go/pressforwardNE116.