



Fame, Fortune, and
**FUNNY
VIDEOS**

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF JOSEPH SIM, PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY
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His dreams were about to come true. There was just one thing . . .

It all started with a joke: “You guys should make a commercial. They make millions!”

Joseph Sim of Alberta, Canada, had been chatting with his friend about how to save money for their missions when his friend’s dad joked that they ought to try their skills behind a camera and strike it rich.

The idea stuck, if only for the adventure factor. They began working together to create a fake commercial even though they didn’t expect fame or fortune to knock on their door anytime soon. The two friends started a YouTube channel and began uploading funny videos that were all about their quest of finding a way to make a commercial.

Things kind of snowballed from there.

An unexpected offer

While they were living it up creating the short videos, Joseph realized quickly how much he loved the art. He wanted to do more. “I had found my passion for filmmaking and started an LDS film group with my friends,” he said.

Those first videos from the LDS film group were goofy and funny shorts about Mormon culture, boasting such titles as “Stuff Mormons Say.”

After the new videos began gaining an audience Joseph decided to step up his game. He launched a web series about an ambitious young filmmaker looking for his break. These new comedy videos started getting more attention than ever before—so much attention, in fact, that the web series caught the eye of a major Canadian restaurant chain who wanted to partner with Joseph.





They contacted Joseph and said they wanted to advertise their product through the storyline. Joseph couldn't believe his luck. "In my mind, this was the chance, the break," he said. "I knew film production was where I wanted to end up."

The restaurant chain liked his material so much they offered to re-shoot the existing four episodes he'd already finished. That meant better cameras and equipment, a budget, the works. Fame and fortune came a-knockin' after all.

But then came the catch.

The big question

"They wanted to change the material," Joseph said. "They wanted to taint the humor with sexual references and immoral situations."

Joseph began feeling uneasy as soon as they started telling him their vision of reshaping his web series into something other than the clean material he'd created. They had a specific bar-and-grill type audience in mind and wanted the videos to appeal to that group. "Are you with us?" they asked.

Joseph's head was spinning. "They had everything I thought I wanted," he said. "But then I was reminded of a scripture, 3 Nephi 13:24: 'No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.' I knew there was no middle path. This was a simple choice."

A simple choice, maybe, but not easy in the moment. "I felt panicked, worried, and scared I'd be left with regret," he said. "But when I did in fact decline their

offer, I felt total reassurance that I had made the right choice."

They parted ways. The deal was off.

Looking back

Fast-forward a couple years since that big decision. Joseph Sim is now Elder Sim of the England Leeds Mission. He still hopes to pursue film in the future, but he doesn't regret in the slightest having turned down the offer.

"At the time I'm pretty sure I thought the earth itself would shatter in two," he says. "But with a bit of hindsight, I'm fairly confident I simply stood in front of something all of us have faced: the crossroads of the world and the gospel. I'm also confident that this crossroads is a daily thing, not some milestone event in our lives. We're constantly making the decision between convenience and covenants."

Even though the web video deal didn't go through, Elder Sim still learned a ton from his time behind the camera. A lot of which helps him as a missionary.

"I've noticed that a major key to success in filmmaking and missionary work is creativity, anything that makes us unique," he said. "We spend so much time worrying about what other people will think and trying to be someone else that the world ends up missing out on us altogether."

No matter who you are, your life's a story in the making. Make sure you tell a good one. **NE**