

# THE New Era

JANUARY 2018

## PEACE IN CHRIST

2018 MUTUAL THEME | pp. 21-27



6 UNUSUAL RESOLUTIONS p. 6

@LDSYOUTH: CALIFORNIA, CAVITA, CUBA p. 32

FROM REFUGEE TO MISSIONARY p. 15

## WHAT'S NEW FOR 2018

For 2018, the *New Era* has made some cool changes to our regular magazine features and added some new ones too.



**FOR THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH**—now in graphic novel style

**WHO KNEW?**—cool facts and info

**ABOUT AN APOSTLE**—interesting facts you may not know

**LIFE PREP**—tips to get ready for what's next



**FIRM FOUNDATIONS**—stories by youth for youth

**Q&A**—answers to real questions you've asked

**FUN STOP**—now two pages, with comics

Check these out and tell us what you think—send comments to [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org).

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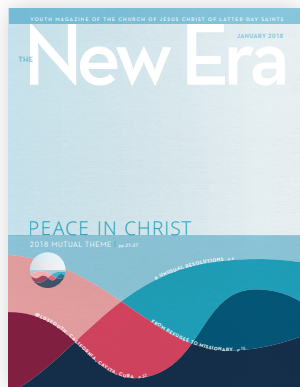
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THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

January 2018 • Volume 48 • Number 1

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President Russell M. Nelson



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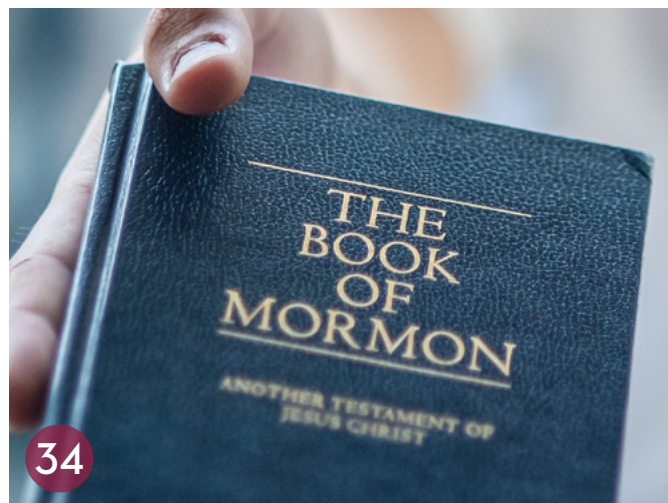
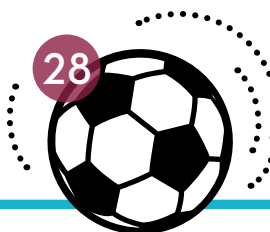
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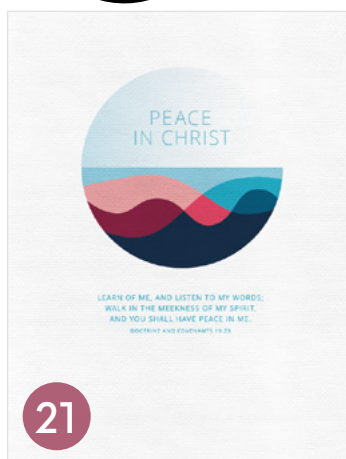


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# STUDY THE SAVIOR'S

**DURING THE JANUARY** 2017 worldwide devotional for young adults, I challenged those watching to increase their testimony of the Savior by taking time each week to:

- Study everything Jesus said and did as recorded in the Old Testament.
- Study His laws as recorded in the New Testament.
- Study His doctrine as recorded in the Book of Mormon.
- Study His words as recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants.

I promised those listening that if they would proceed to learn all they can about Jesus Christ, their love for Him and for God's laws would grow beyond what they could currently imagine.

What I didn't mention during this address was that I knew this promise was true because I was in the midst of completing this very same assignment myself for the first time.

On December 1, 2016, I obtained a new set of scriptures and proceeded to begin the same assignment that I would later extend to young adults in January. When I finished the assignment six weeks later, I had looked up and marked more than 2,200 citations from the four books of scripture.<sup>1</sup>





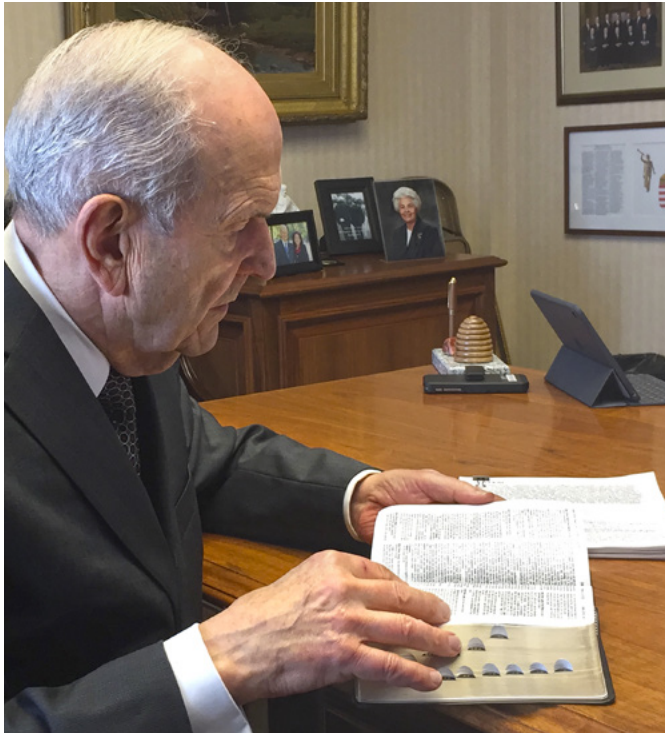
*Not only do I now have a greater testimony of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, but I also have a reaffirmation of my absolute conviction that the system Joseph Smith had for translating the Book of Mormon was a gift from God.*



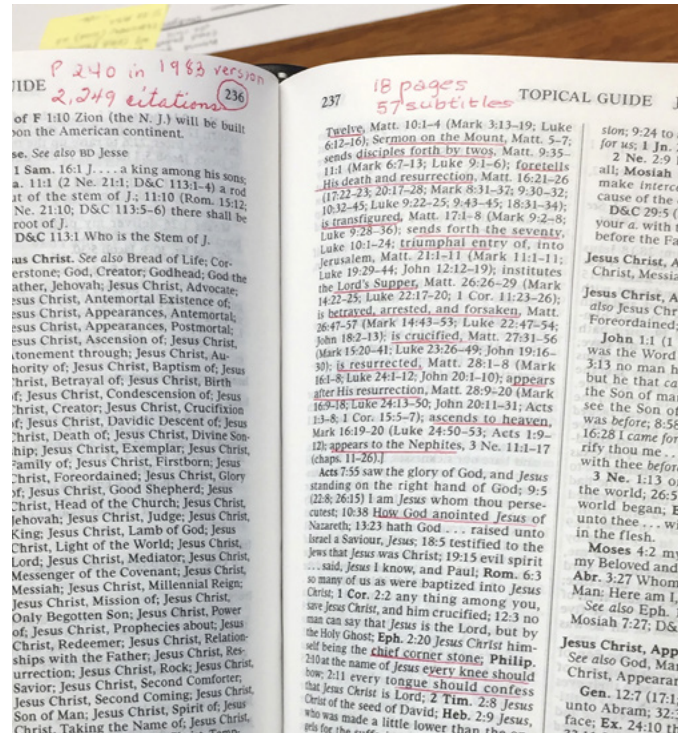
**By President  
Russell M. Nelson**  
President of the Quorum  
of the Twelve Apostles

# WORDS





After six weeks of study, President Nelson completed his assignment.



President Nelson studied over 2,200 scriptures about Jesus Christ and His teachings.

**“TO THOSE OF YOU WHO FEEL  
YOU DON'T HAVE TIME, IF YOU  
WILL MAKE A SACRIFICE, YOU  
WILL BE WELL REWARDED.”**



For me, to be able to accomplish this assignment was just thrilling!

Something I found to be most insightful was that the Savior was telling us about Himself through these various periods of time—Old Testament, New Testament, the Restoration period, and our day. In all books of scripture, the story is the same and the Storyteller is the same.

I have devoted much of my 93 years to learning about the Savior, but rare are the occasions when I have been able to learn as much as I did over this six-week study period. In fact, I learned so much about Him from this study that I am planning to share much of it in other upcoming addresses that I am currently preparing.<sup>2</sup>

Upon beginning this assignment, I didn't expect that this study would help me to receive a new testimony of the divinity of the work of Joseph Smith—but it did! The revelations recorded by Joseph Smith and the insights found in the Bible are amazingly consistent. It was so enlightening for me to see this in my study.

Joseph Smith wouldn't have possibly had time to correlate and cross-reference with the Bible at the rapid rate at which he was translating the Book of Mormon—but it's all here!

So not only do I now have a greater testimony of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, but I also have a reaffirmation of my absolute conviction that the system Joseph Smith had for translating the Book of Mormon was a gift from God.

Now, I realize some of you are probably thinking to yourselves that you couldn't possibly have time to complete an assignment like this.

I know how you feel. I thought the same thing of myself—that there's no way I can have time to do all of this. I needed to remind myself that a comment like this is not a faith-promoted comment. A faith-promoted comment would be "I know I don't have time for this, but I'm going to make time for it. And I'll fulfill it with what time I have."

Each of us who takes this challenge will finish in our own time frames. For me, much of the joy of this came from getting it all done in just six weeks. This intense study over a relatively short period of time allowed me to appreciate the complementary nature of the learnings to be found in the Old Testament, the Book of Mormon, the New Testament, and the Doctrine and Covenants.

To those of you who feel you don't have time, if you will make a sacrifice, you will be well rewarded and very, very grateful for the change of perspective, increased knowledge, and improved depth of your conversion. I know this is true because I have seen the same rewards in my own life.

As I mentioned at the devotional, in a coming day, you will present yourself before the Savior. You will be overwhelmed to the point of tears to be in His holy presence. You will struggle to find words to thank Him for paying for your sins, for forgiving you of any unkindness toward others, for healing you from the injuries and injustices of this life.

You will thank Him for strengthening you to do the impossible, for turning your weaknesses into strengths, and for making it possible for you to live with Him and your family forever. His identity, His Atonement, and His attributes will become personal and real to you.

But you don't have to wait until then. Choose to be one of His true disciples now. Be one who truly loves Him, who truly wants to serve and lead as He did. I promise you that if you will study His words, your ability to be more like Him will increase. I know this is true. **NE**

*From an article on [lds.org/blog](https://www.lds.org/blog).*

#### NOTES

1. As President Nelson suggested in his devotional, you can refer to the Guide to the Scriptures for references under the topic "Jesus Christ."
2. See President Nelson's April 2017 general conference address, "Drawing the Power of Jesus Christ into Our Lives."

You can watch or read President Nelson's January 2017 devotional by clicking on "worldwide devotional" at [lds.org/broadcasts](https://www.lds.org/broadcasts).





# NEW YEAR'S *Resolutions*

YOU PROBABLY NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT

2018  
~~MY 2017~~ NEW YEAR'S  
RESOLUTIONS

1. EAT BETTER.
2. GET BETTER GRADES.
3. EXERCISE MORE.

*Tired of making the same old New Year's resolutions? Here are six new ideas to make 2018 amazing!*

By Charlotte Larcabal  
Church Magazines

**H**ave any of these goals made your list? Don't be too surprised if they have—year after year, these are among the most popular New Year's resolutions. In fact, if you're like many people, these goals were on your list last year—and the year before that.

For some reason, we keep setting (and oftentimes, not achieving) the same goals year after year. There's nothing wrong with these goals, and there's no reason why you can't accomplish them, but why not shake things up a bit by setting (and meeting) a goal you've never thought of before? Here are six *new* goals that will help make 2018 amazing!



If you're looking to make new friends, this is a great goal to set. Don't overdo it—staring into someone's eyes for too long (sometimes even for just a little) might make them uncomfortable—but try to look people directly in their eyes as they talk to you. When you meet someone new, notice the color of their eyes. Looking people directly in their eyes sends the message that you see and appreciate who they are.

*Make eye  
contact  
WITH PEOPLE  
AS YOU  
SPEAK WITH  
AND LISTEN  
TO THEM.*



*Look in the  
mirror every  
morning  
AND SAY, "I AM A  
CHILD OF GOD.  
HE LOVES ME  
AND WILL HELP  
ME TODAY."*

We think thousands of thoughts every day, and if we're not careful, many of these can be negative. Repeating a positive, powerful, and hopeful thought to yourself is a great way to keep out all those complaints, criticism, and fears. Repeating that thought out loud makes it an even more powerful reminder. The fact that you are a child of God who loves you and will help you is one of the most positive, powerful, and hopeful thoughts out there!

What do you do when you're sitting in class before the bell rings? Or waiting for your mom to pick you up? Chances are, you pull your phone out. But what if you didn't?

Set a goal to not pull your phone out every single time you're bored or waiting. Give your mind time to wander. Look around. Notice things. Bored? Good. You can handle a few minutes of boredom. Creativity can happen when you're bored.



*Do something  
BESIDES PULL OUT  
YOUR PHONE WHEN  
YOU HAVE FREE  
TIME.*



*Learn to  
cook 3 NEW MEALS  
THIS YEAR.*

Think outside the (cereal) box. Reach for some fresh ingredients and kitchen gadgets and wow your family with your chef skills. Whether you love to cook or aren't sure what a tsp is, learning a new recipe is always a good idea! You can find someone who cooks well to teach you a few things, or you can find some recipes to try yourself. Don't forget to clean up!



Try something  
new EVERY DAY!

This doesn't mean you have to jump into a new hobby every day. Something new can be something little. Never hang up your coat? Hang it up! Always sit with the same people at lunch? Sit with someone new. Even making the smallest changes can lead to amazing new experiences, and help you learn new things.

"Fill up your memory bank and your book of life with as many 'I'm glad I did' activities as you can possibly crowd into one lifetime," counseled Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.<sup>1</sup> Don't let fear, laziness, or a routine keep you from "I'm glad I did" experiences. Surprise yourself! You'll be glad you did.

You can make someone's day by showing them some gratitude, but studies show that being grateful has a powerful effect on your own mood and well-being. Many people find that the more they focus on things to be grateful for, the happier they are. Want to be happier, healthier, and make someone's day? Amp up the gratitude. "No matter our circumstances, no matter our challenges or trials, there is something in each day to embrace and cherish," said President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency. "There is something in each day that can bring gratitude and joy if only we will see and appreciate it."<sup>2</sup>

Try saying "thank you" 10 times a day. Or finish each day by writing down 10 things you are grateful for.



Say "thank  
you" 10 TIMES  
A DAY.

## It's in the Doing

There are many, many different things you can do to become a little more like Heavenly Father this year. After all, that's the ultimate goal, isn't it? Maybe you really *are* going to practice discipline as you lose weight or save more money this year. Or maybe you want to shake things up and set a brand new goal. Whatever you choose to do, just remember what President Thomas S. Monson has taught: "It is not enough to want to make the effort and to *say* we'll make the effort. . . . It's in the *doing*, not just the *thinking*, that we accomplish our goals."<sup>3</sup>

Happy New Year! NE

### NOTES

1. L. Tom Perry, "Making Memories," *Ensign*, Aug. 1993, 63.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Of Regrets and Resolutions," Oct. 2012 general conference.
3. Thomas S. Monson, "A Royal Priesthood," Oct. 2007 general conference.

IT'S IN THE  
DOING,  
not just the  
*thinking*, that  
we accomplish  
our goals.



# A Question of INTEGRITY



# THINK FAST!

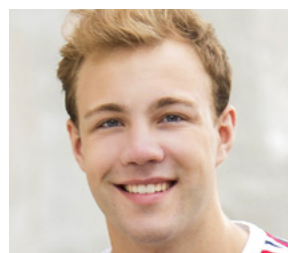


By Sarah Hanson

Fasting. I bet I can guess what your initial reaction is: “Starving myself for a day? My stomach hurts just thinking about it!”

OK, so maybe fasting causes your stomach some mild discomfort. But have you ever stopped to think about the purpose behind fasting? It’s more than just skipping out on food and drink. Fasting is an opportunity to humble ourselves before the Lord and serve others, often through donating fast offerings.

The Lord didn’t give this commandment to make us miserable. Instead, He asks us to fast so we can grow spiritually and think of others and their needs. Doctrine and Covenants 59:14 says, “This is fasting and prayer, or in other words, rejoicing and prayer.” Fasting is a cause for *rejoicing*! When we make that small sacrifice, we can forget ourselves and focus on the Lord—and feel happy while doing it! Check out how fasting has blessed the lives of these youth.

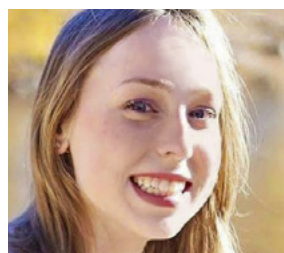


## FASTING STRENGTHENED MY TESTIMONY

My favorite experience with fasting involves a sweet elderly woman I home teach. She once had a stroke and ended up in the hospital. The doctors didn’t expect her to make a recovery and told us we should say our goodbyes.

We asked the ward to fast for her. I had already been fasting for her health and that I could accept God’s plan for her. Afterward, she made a miraculous recovery. It was a really special experience for me and strengthened my testimony a lot.

Michael D., 18, Minnesota, USA



## I HAVE NEVER REGRETTED FASTING

Recently, my mom and I chose to fast on a weekday. We were fasting for my dad and that his heart would be softened towards the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This was the first time I’d ever fasted on a day other than Sunday, and I thought it would be really hard. It was actually the most spiritual fast I’ve ever had! As I tried to focus on my love for both my earthly father and my Heavenly Father, all thoughts of my rumbling stomach disappeared from my mind and I completely forgot my physical needs. I felt the Spirit testify to me that everything would be all right.

Not eating is sometimes hard because I love food! However, I’ve learned that if I simply get down on my knees and tell Heavenly Father, “I’m going to fast now, but I can’t do this on my own,” then His grace and Spirit can help me make it through the rest of the fast. Miracles do happen, and I can testify that I have never, ever come to the end of a fast and regretted it.

Merili R., 18, Minnesota, USA



*Fasting is more than just going without food—  
it's an opportunity to grow closer to the  
Lord and help others.*



### THE MORE I FAST, THE EASIER IT BECOMES

I was really stressed about finals week at the end of the school year. I decided to fast and pray that I could prepare well and be successful in my finals. After the exams, I got my scores back and I had only missed one problem on each of my exams! I was super grateful for that.

This experience helped me feel like Jesus Christ cared about me and that He wanted me to do well in my life. He cares about what is important in my life, and it was important to me to do well in school. I felt like He was more connected to my life.

Fasting was hard for me when I first started, but it becomes increasingly easier the more I do it. I believe that if I fast, I will be able to receive the blessings that Heavenly Father has promised me for fasting.

**Hannah J., 16, Minnesota, USA**

### FASTING ABOUT MY PATRIARCHAL BLESSING

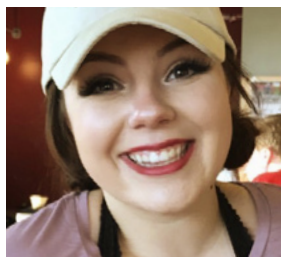
When I was 15, I decided to get my patriarchal blessing. It was something I had wanted to do for a while, but I was nervous. Many of my friends told me it was one of the most spiritual things to ever happen to them. I wanted to make sure I did all I could to make it as special as possible.



When I asked my patriarch how I should prepare, I expected something huge, like “Go to the temple every day” or “Read the whole Book of Mormon this week.” Instead, he suggested I might fast the morning of my blessing. I didn’t totally understand the impact it would have, but I did as he asked, and as a result, my patriarchal blessing was a monumentally spiritual experience for me.

This experience taught me that fasting includes sincerely praying while sacrificing meals to express gratitude to God and bring Him closer to you. When I fasted that morning, I prayed that my heart would be open to the words of my blessing. I felt the Spirit so strongly as a result, and that made my experience very meaningful.

**Lincoln S., 16, Arizona, USA**



### THE SMALL SACRIFICE IS WORTH IT

Last year, I damaged my ACL so badly that I had to get major knee surgery. When I found out the surgery was one of the most intensive knee surgeries, I was terrified! I asked for a priesthood blessing and fasted. My family members fasted for me too. My recovery ended up being smooth and quick, and I was so grateful for that.

Fasting can be hard, but for me, the blessings from fasting always outweigh the hunger. It’s a small sacrifice we get to make, and the blessings you receive from giving up two meals and donating fast offerings are totally worth it, no matter how inconvenient it seems.

In this world, we like instant gratification. But if you fast consistently and do other things while you fast, like read your scriptures or work on Personal Progress or Duty to God, you dedicate time to the Savior. As you’re consistent with that, you will be blessed. **NE**

**Elaina K., 17, Washington, USA**

### HOW TO BOOST YOUR FASTING EXPERIENCE

1. Begin and end your fast with prayer.
2. Fast with a specific purpose or person in mind.
3. Attend fast and testimony meeting.
4. Donate a fast offering.
5. Be humble and happy as you fast!

By David Dickson  
Church Magazines



# LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL



*Take a deep  
breath.  
That C+  
really won't  
haunt you  
forever.*

**T**he landscape was dry, barren, and *ugly*. Beauty, admittedly, is in the eye of the beholder. That holds true for scenery as well as works of art. Yet the expanse of desert in front of me did so little to inspire my imagination that I felt sure plenty of other people might share my sentiment. The only thing growing out there was sage brush and weeds, and even those were spread thin.

I'd spent six hours in a car to reach *this*?  
With my backpacking pack loaded with

three days of food, water, and supplies, I trudged across the hot sand and hoped things would get better. Soon the dry sand deepened, which made every step feel like two or three. Things went on like that for several miles: hot, dry, dusty, and nothing at all like I'd hoped this adventure would be.

And then Coyote Gulch, one of the great slot canyons of the western United States, swallowed me whole.

It's hard to describe the drastic change in





# IT DOES EXIST!

scenery that engulfs you as you drop into this desert canyon. Hot, dry sand gives way to cool, packed earth. Sage brush is replaced with an oasis of towering trees, ferns, and other vibrant plants.

Barren flatland becomes a deep, shadowed canyon with towering walls on either side. A cool and refreshing stream courses through the bottom, whereas you can't see water anywhere from above.

I was blown away at every step. I took pictures by the hundred. Yet for those first few dusty miles, literally none of this staggering beauty was visible, even if you looked for it.

Life is often like that.

## A WORK IN PROGRESS

The respective worlds of junior high and high school can loom larger than life while traveling through them. If your group of friends turns on you suddenly, for example, it can honestly feel like you'll be friendless and lonely forever.

Getting a C+ on your report card when you've worked hard all year can seem like something that will derail your academic train forever. Not making the team, not getting a part in the school play, or not being invited to prom can feel in all honesty like life-altering events that forever taint your future.



The adversary tries to make us think that way, at least. But it's simply not true. Life continues on. Life can improve beyond whatever challenges you're grappling with at the moment.

Most likely you have no idea what wonders lie ahead, nor how Heavenly Father might be using your experiences now to prepare you for them (see D&C 58:3–4).

## A BIT STRONGER EACH DAY

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf shared a story in general conference about a challenge from his own life that became a massive blessing for him. During the challenge, however, it was hard for President Uchtdorf to see much value in the struggle. He was 11 years old at the time and had to pedal a heavy bicycle and cart to deliver laundry for his family's laundry business.

"Most of the time, I was not overly excited about the bike, the cart, or my job," he said. "Sometimes the cart seemed so heavy and the work so tiring that I thought my lungs would burst, and I often had to stop to catch my breath."

There was a reason the work was so hard for him. He was battling a lung disease he didn't even know he had. But here's the miracle: all that strenuous exercise proved to be exactly what he needed to heal his lungs. Not until many years later, when he took a physical exam to enter the military, did President Uchtdorf learn there had ever been anything wrong.

"It became clear to me that my regular exercise in fresh air as a laundry boy had been a key factor in my healing from this illness," he said. "Without the extra effort of pedaling that heavy bicycle day in and day out, pulling the laundry cart up and down the streets of our town, I might never have become a jet fighter pilot and later a 747 airline captain."<sup>1</sup>

## LEARN TO LOOK AHEAD

Life takes time to unfold. We can't hit the gym one time only and expect to get in shape. We don't plant an apple seed a few months before we want to pluck fruit for an apple pie. Some of the most stunning vistas in your own life may not even be visible on the horizon yet. But they're coming! Keep your eyes set for them even if they're some distance away.

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the

Most likely you have no idea what wonders lie ahead, nor how Heavenly Father might be using your experiences now to prepare you for them.



Twelve Apostles taught: "Think of the long view of life, not just what's going to happen today or tomorrow. *Don't give up what you most want in life for something you think you want now.*"<sup>2</sup>

Part of thinking of the long view of life includes recognizing that there's life beyond high school! That sounds obvious enough. But sometimes, in practice, it's not easy to convince your own brain to recognize that truth. If your life falls to pieces here and now, the adversary always heaps on discouragement. And one of the most tried and true forms of discouragement seems to be this: the idea that things are never going to be any different. But, of course, they will. You will change and grow too. With God's help, you can learn to see that brighter future even when things are dark in your life.

President Uchtdorf has taught: "If you trust the Lord and obey Him, His hand shall be over you, He will help you achieve the great

potential He sees in you, and He will help you to see the end from the beginning."<sup>3</sup>

## WATCH AND WAIT

I've been able to look back over my own life and see many parallels to my hike into Coyote Gulch. For instance, I was a lousy student in high school. But with a mission and a few more years' experience behind me, I sailed through college.

Various challenges that felt permanent then proved to be fleeting at best. And don't even get me *started* on all the high school drama at every turn (which seemed like such a big deal at the time) that I haven't thought about since graduation.

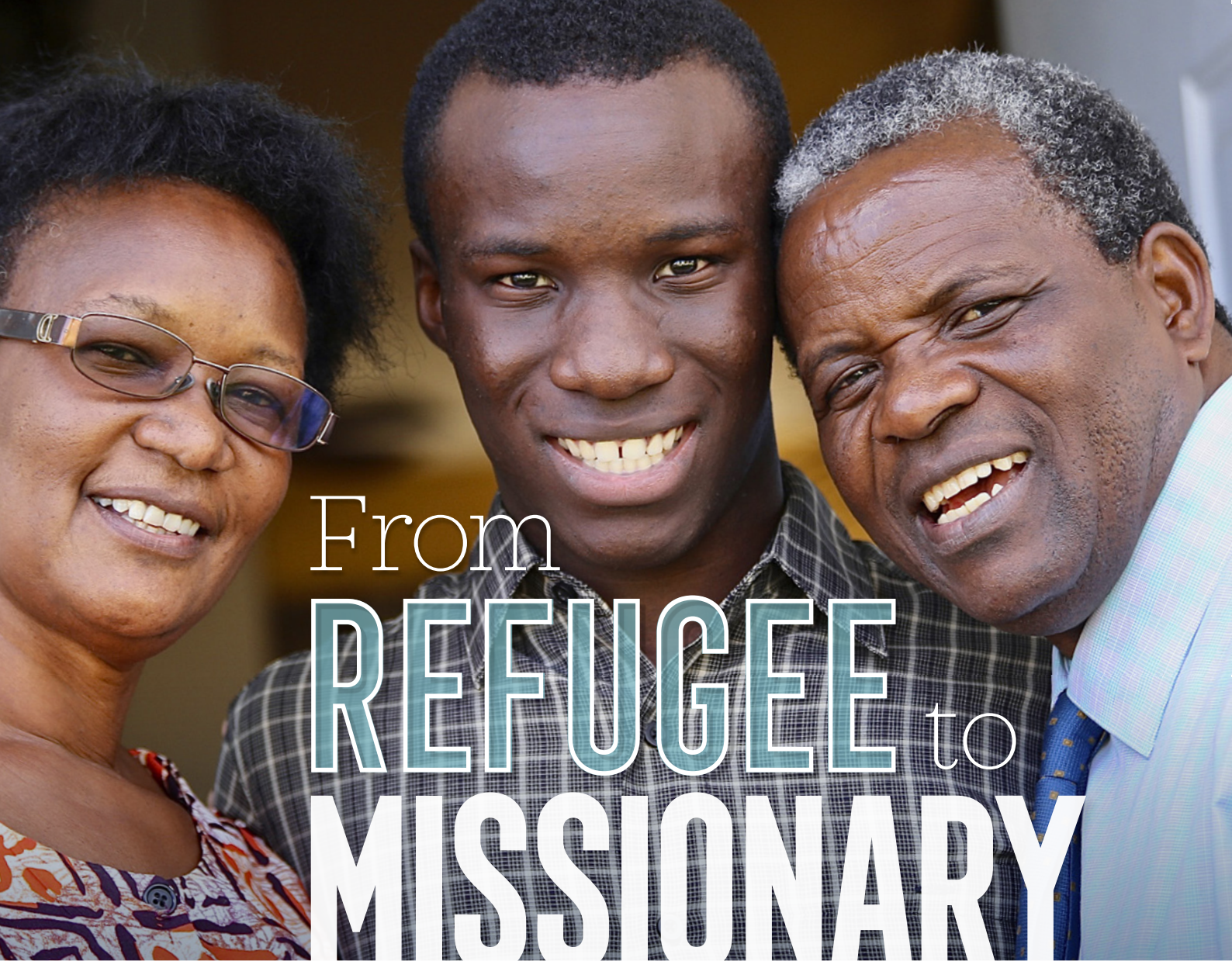
So don't worry if life feels rough-and-tumble right now. Hang in there. As Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, "Stay the course and see the beauty of life unfold for you."<sup>4</sup>

And what a *beautiful* life it will be. **NE**

## NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Apr. 2006 general conference.
2. Richard G. Scott, Apr. 1997 general conference.
3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Apr. 2006 general conference.
4. Jeffrey R. Holland, "Cast Not Away Therefore Your Confidence," *Ensign*, Mar. 2000, 9.





# From REFUGEE to MISSIONARY

*Born as  
a refugee  
in Africa,  
Joshua now  
brings the  
gospel to  
spiritual  
refugees.*







*"In the second camp, life was no easier. . . . We were poor. We were desperate. All we could do was pray."*







By Richard M. Romney

Church Magazines

One night not too long ago, Joshua Mana, who would soon turn 18, was talking with his parents about the years their family spent in refugee camps.

“The camps are not where you would wish to live,” his father Fredrick said, “because of the hardship.”

The first camp was on the eastern border of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The family, fleeing war and genocide to the west, lived there for two years. Shelter was poor, food scarce, and illness common.

“That is where your brother Patric died when he was just 11 years old,” Fredrick said. “We were sad in that place.”

The second camp was south across the border, in Zambia.

“That’s where you were born,” his mother Esperance said. “We named you Joshua, like the righteous prophet in the Bible. To me you will always be Joshua, a gift from God, because even in the camps God was with us.”

## All We Could Do Was Pray

In the second camp, life was no easier. “Sometimes we were able to find jobs, but only as volunteers,” Fredrick explained. “Maybe they gave you food, maybe a little bit of money at the end of the month. But in a refugee camp, even that is a lot. With a few friends, we worked together, and some were able to leave for France, Canada, and other countries.” And Joshua’s family—his mother and father, two older sisters, and himself—were able to move to a one-room apartment in Lusaka, where they scraped by.

“We knew there was a resettlement program,” Esperance said. “But we had no hope. People will take your application, but if you don’t have money to give them, they just trash it. We were poor. We were desperate. All we could do was pray.”

A friend in France kept writing letters and making appeals on their behalf. Then one day, after four years of waiting, their names showed up on a list of those approved for resettlement. It was a miracle!

There was just one catch. “We would be going directly to Salt Lake City, Utah, USA,” Esperance said. “We knew a little about big cities like New York, but we didn’t know Salt Lake City. ‘Are you sure this is in the USA?’ we asked. ‘Yes, yes,’ the official said. ‘Somewhere in USA.’”



## Made to Feel Welcome

“We didn’t expect any help when we got to Utah,” Fredrick said. “But that’s not what happened.”

“The first person we met made us feel welcome,” Esperance recalled. “She came with her family to visit our apartment. They saw how we ate, how we slept, what we worried about. It was the first time someone was concerned about how they could help.”

“She and her husband were like parents to us,” Fredrick said. “They helped us learn about the customs of this new country. They helped us find work.”

“We could tell they were Christians, and we were Christians, too,” Esperance said. “We asked if we could learn about their Church.”

And learn they did. Soon they were meeting regularly with the missionaries. “Each teaching made sense to us, especially what they called the great plan of happiness,” Esperance said. “I cried and cried when they told us we could be together as a family in eternity, and that we would see Patric again. We knew it was true.”

Fredrick and Esperance were baptized and confirmed. Joshua was baptized when he turned eight. And Joshua and Patric have been sealed to their parents, giving them the opportunity to be together when this life is through. Other family members are still learning about the gospel.



## The RM Example

As a member of the Church, Joshua was particularly impressed with a certain group of young adults. “At first, I wasn’t sure what an ‘RM’ was. But the more I watched returned missionaries, and whenever I spent time around one of them, I knew I wanted to be one too,” he recalls.

Year after year, the returned missionaries impressed him. When he came of age, Joshua met with his bishop, submitted his application, and waited to receive his mission call.

That’s when, one Sunday, half a dozen refugees who are returned missionaries—and also friends with Joshua—gathered in the cultural hall after church to counsel with him.

One of them, Madelaine Laham, who served in the New York New York South Mission, said her mission

motto was “Forever Changed.” She reminded Joshua that joining the Church changed his family’s life and that he would be an instrument of change for others as he shared the gospel with them.

Jean-Pierre Benimana, who served in the California Los Angeles Mission, reminded Joshua that “the happiest people on earth are those who live the gospel of Jesus Christ with all their hearts.”

The returned missionaries were refugees from countries like Burundi and Rwanda, in Africa, and Burma, in Asia. They have served in places like Los Angeles, California, and Birmingham, Alabama, in the USA, and in western African countries like Benin and Côte d’Ivoire. They were blessed to receive the gospel, and they were equally blessed to share it. Now they explained to Joshua that he was about to become a part of that legacy.



*To learn more about refugees and how to help them, go to [lds.org/refugees](https://lds.org/refugees).*



*"The more I watched returned missionaries ... I knew I wanted to be one too."*







## The Joy of the Call

A few weeks later, a big, white envelope arrived in the mail. Another group gathered, this time at Fredrick and Esperance's home. The group included family, LDS friends and neighbors, and some friends from other faiths.

Joshua, dressed in a white shirt and tie, stood up, opened the envelope, and read, "Dear Elder Mana: You are hereby called to serve as a missionary of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. You are assigned to labor in the Brazil Porto Alegre South Mission . . ."

There were cheers, tears, hugs, but most of all, joy. Then there was a brief moment for Elder Mana to speak.



Elder Mana with his companion in Brazil

## Freely Give

He quoted a scripture he has learned to love: "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8).

Then he shared his testimony: "The gospel has changed my life so much because it helps me to know that Father in Heaven has a plan for us, and if we follow His commandments we can go back to Him again one day. Every day I follow the Holy Ghost. He prompts me what to do, because there's lots of work that Father in Heaven needs me to do to build His kingdom.

"Being a missionary is part of that, as well. My purpose in going on a mission is to bring people to Christ and give them the gospel."

It's a testimony he will share freely, and often, with the people of Brazil. **NE**

## Transforming Lives

*Elder Mana served faithfully in Brazil for seven months and then developed a serious illness and had to come home. He hopes to return to full-time missionary service when he recovers. "I love being a missionary," he says. "The best part is when you see people embrace the gospel and watch how Heavenly Father transforms their lives."*





# PEACE IN CHRIST

LEARN OF ME, AND LISTEN TO MY WORDS;  
WALK IN THE MEEKNESS OF MY SPIRIT,  
AND YOU SHALL HAVE PEACE IN ME.

DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS 19:23





2018 MUTUAL THEME

# PEACE IN CHRIST

*No matter your circumstances, you can always find peace in Jesus Christ.*



*Bonnie L. Oscarson, President (center); Carol F. McConkie, First Counselor (left); Neill F. Marriott, Second Counselor (right)*



*Stephen W. Owen, President (center); Douglas D. Holmes, First Counselor (left); M. Joseph Brough, Second Counselor (right)*



## By the Young Women and Young Men General Presidencies

In a world filled with commotion, competing ideals, temptations, and confusing philosophies, finding peace is not always easy. But the Savior's promise found in Doctrine and Covenants 19:23 (the 2018 Mutual theme) provides a certain path to peace: "Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me."

As the Young Women and Young Men General Presidencies, we testify that is true. We have seen it in our own lives, and if you follow this pattern, God will fulfill His promise of peace in your life as well.

Many of you may feel anxious and concerned about what the future holds for you. Many of you wonder about your looks, your abilities, your potential. But no matter what you face, you can find peace. That doesn't mean all those questions or concerns will immediately vanish, but you can feel the quiet assurance that things will work out. Most importantly, you can feel the love of Jesus Christ for you personally, and that brings great peace.

Let's talk about each of the elements of this verse.

### LEARN OF ME

Coming to know Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ is a critical

part of your life journey. The Lord said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). As you come to know Christ better, you can understand how good, wise, kind, and loving He is. Your faith in Him will grow, and you will have a greater desire to follow Him and Heavenly Father.

### LISTEN TO MY WORDS

Jesus Christ speaks to us through the scriptures, living prophets, and the Holy Ghost. We need to feast on, ponder, and apply these words in our life. In your study of the Savior's words, focus on the Book of Mormon because it is "the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion," taught Joseph Smith, "and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book."<sup>1</sup> President Thomas S. Monson's powerful invitation in the April 2017 general conference for us to read the Book of Mormon every day will help us listen to and understand the words of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

### WALK IN THE MEEKNESS OF MY SPIRIT

Listening to the Savior's words only begins to change us when

we are willing to obey them. This requires meekness on our part. It requires us to give up our own way and walk in His way. Sometimes we think our way is better. But when we are meek and follow Him wherever He leads us, we will always be on the best path.

### YOU SHALL HAVE PEACE IN ME

This is the great promise: if you will do these three things—learn, listen, and walk with the Savior—you will have peace in your life. You will have the assurance that God is by your side and that He will watch over you, despite any fears, uncertainties, or weaknesses you may have. You can have confidence—not just in yourself but also in Jesus Christ and His love and power.

We invite all the youth of the Church to memorize this verse. Use it as a guide in your life. When the mists of darkness swirl about you and seem overwhelming, you will be able to bring this verse to mind, follow its pattern, and anchor yourself to the sure and certain foundation of Jesus Christ. **NE**

#### NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 64.
2. See Thomas S. Monson, "The Power of the Book of Mormon," Apr. 2017 general conference.





Words and music by  
Nik Day

*Thoughtfully* ♩ = 72

24 New Era



17 on. He gives us shel - ter In the storms of life. When there's no peace on

17 B $\flat$  E $\flat$  A $\flat$  B $\flat$  Cm $^7$

20 To Coda  $\Phi$  1. 2.

earth, There is peace in Christ. Christ.

20 A $\flat$  B $\flat$  E $\flat$  A $\flat$  E $\flat$

23 A $\flat$  B $\flat$  E $\flat$  A $\flat$  B $\flat$  E $\flat$  A $\flat$  B $\flat$

28 D.S. al Coda  $\Phi$  CODA

He gives us Christ. When there's no peace on

28 Cm E $\flat$  A $\flat$  B $\flat$  E $\flat$  31 Cm E $\flat$

32 earth, There is peace in Christ.

32 A $\flat$  B $\flat$  E $\flat$  A $\flat$  Cm A $\flat$  B $\flat$  A $\flat$  E $\flat$

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# Doctrine and Covenants 19:23

*The Lord revealed to Joseph Smith some keys to receiving peace in Jesus Christ.*



## 1 LEARN OF ME

“We know that this ‘teacher come from God’ [John 3:2] was more than a mere teacher. He who taught us to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, all our souls, all our strength, and all our minds, and to love our neighbor as ourselves, is the Master Teacher and the Exemplar of the perfect life. . . .

“When we respond to the Lord’s gentle invitation, ‘Learn of me,’ we become partakers of His divine power.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Learn of Me,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2016, 4, 6.

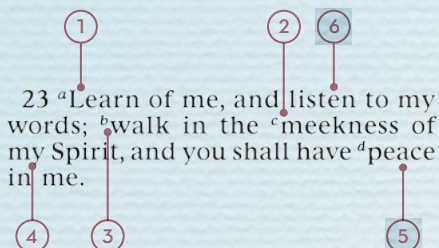
## 2 MEEKNESS

Being meek includes being “patient under suffering” (Guide to the Scriptures, “Meek, Meekness,” scriptures.lds.org). If we meekly endure our trials without resenting God, not only will we be converted, but He will also heal us (see D&C 112:13).

## 3 WALK

Learning and listening are necessary to truly follow Jesus Christ. But they are not enough by themselves. We must also walk, or act, in accordance with what we learn and hear.

“It is always the right time to walk in His way. It is never too late” (President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “The Way of the Disciple,” Apr. 2009 general conference).



23 “Learn of me, and listen to my words; <sup>2</sup>walk in the ‘meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have <sup>3</sup>peace in me.”

## 4 MY SPIRIT

Meekness brings “the visitation of the Holy Ghost” (Moroni 8:26) and is a “fruit of the Spirit” (see Galatians 5:22–23).



## 5 PEACE IN ME

“Peace is not found by attaining great wealth, power, or prominence. Peace

is not found in the pursuit of pleasure, entertainment, or leisure. None of these can, even when attained in abundance, create any lasting happiness or peace.

“... The Savior ... is the source and author of peace. He is the ‘Prince of Peace’ [Isaiah 9:6].”

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2013 general conference.

## 6 LISTEN TO MY WORDS

Listening is important in developing faith in Jesus Christ. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17).

“God’s children should learn to listen, then listen to learn from the Lord” (President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 1991 general conference).

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



# HOW DO YOU FIND PEACE IN CHRIST?

## POSTERS & T-SHIRTS

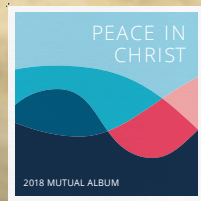


Download graphics for posters and T-shirts.

## KEEP READING



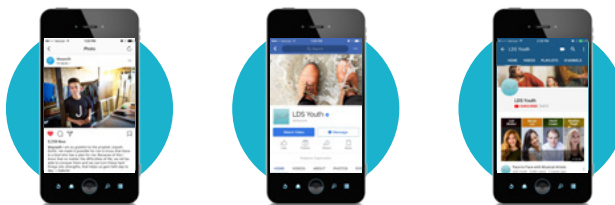
The *New Era* will have articles throughout the year to help you find peace in Christ.



## New Music!

Check out the 2018 Mutual album featuring the song "Peace In Christ."

You can download the album and sheet music from the website for **FREE** or stream the album on Spotify!



## FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL

Follow @LDSYouth on Instagram to see youth talk about their experiences and share their testimonies. You can also find more on the LDS Youth Facebook page and LDS Youth YouTube channel.

**youth.lds.org**



**RUSSIA**



**SAMOA**



**CARIBBEAN**

## DID YOU KNOW?

In many countries around the world, the Church hosts FSJ Conferences for the youth. FSJ stands for "For the Strength of Youth," and the conferences are multistake youth activities held under the direction of Area Presidencies. The 2018 theme for these conferences is—you guessed it—peace in Christ!

## Watch This Year's New Video!

The video was shot with youth from Brazil—in Brazil.





*For Will, choosing not to play soccer on Sundays could mean choosing not to play on one of the best teams.*







# SOCCER, SUNDAYS, AND SPIRITUAL BELLY FLOPS

By Charlotte Larcabal

Church Magazines

When I was a kid, my friends and I played a game called “Jump or Dive.” Basically, all you need is a deep pool or lake and something to jump off of, like a diving board. To play, you launch yourself off the diving board. Right as you do, someone yells, “jump,” which means you need to enter the water feet first, or “dive,” which means you need to enter the water hands first, in a dive.

When you try to react in midair, you usually end up resembling a flapping pretzel or doing a very painful belly flop.

Life doesn’t have to be a game of “Jump or Dive.” You can make a lot of decisions much earlier and avoid a lot of spiritual belly flops. The Old Testament prophet Joshua didn’t say, “Choose just before it’s too late.” He said, “Choose you *this day* whom ye will serve” (Joshua 24:15; emphasis added).

Will W., 14, from San Francisco, California, USA, probably doesn’t do many spiritual belly flops because he believes in making choices before the last minute.

“If you make the choice to do or not to do something before it even comes up, it makes things a lot easier,” he says. “Say you went to a party and someone offered you a drink. If you had to choose right then to take it or not, you might be tempted to take it. But if you had decided a long time ago to say no if anyone ever offered you a drink, you’d feel a lot surer of yourself. You wouldn’t even have time to be tempted. You’d say no because you had already decided to a long time ago.”





The 2018 Mutual theme says, “Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me” (D&C 19:23). For Will, peace means feeling confident as he chooses the right and not worrying about negative comments from others. That peace comes to Will from making the decision to listen to—and obey—Jesus Christ’s words in advance.

“Sometimes kids give me a hard time for what I do or don’t do, but it doesn’t really bother me because I decided a long time ago that that is how I would live,” he says.

One thing Will and his family decided a long time ago was to keep the Sabbath day holy. That got a little tricky when Will made an elite soccer team. But, like Nephi, his family believes that “the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them” (1 Nephi 3:7).

To Will, soccer is just about everything. As his mom says, “He eats, drinks, sleeps, and just loves, loves soccer. It’s his passion and he’s very good.”

So when Will made one of the highest-ranking teams in the area, he was thrilled. The only problem: the team played many of its games on Sundays. Most teams wouldn’t accept a player who would miss every Sunday game. Choosing not to play on Sundays could mean losing his spot on the team.

But Will had made that decision a long time ago. He would keep the Sabbath day holy.

Will and his family prayed together and told Heavenly

Father of their desire to keep His commandments and asked for His help. Then Will and his mother talked to the coaches of the team about their beliefs. To their surprise, the coaches wanted Will on the team even if he didn’t play on Sundays!

“I know that when I honor the Sabbath, I am blessed,” Will says. “I may not get to play as many games as the others, but I’ve seen blessings, like Sunday games suddenly getting changed to another day. I also think I play better because I have a day of rest.”

It gets better. Will soon found out that one of his teammates was also member of the Church. After a few months of playing together, the other boy followed Will’s example and stopped playing on Sunday too.

If you feel like you are not receiving the blessings of obedience, that might be because you can’t see all that Heavenly Father has in store for you. Deciding to listen to Christ’s words and to serve the Lord is always the right decision, so make it now!

“I plead with you to make a determination right here, right now, not to deviate from the path which will lead to our goal: eternal life with our Father in Heaven,” said President Thomas S. Monson (“The Three Rs of Choice,” Oct. 2010 general conference).

Don’t make your life a game of “Jump or Dive.” Don’t risk spiritual or any other kinds of belly flops. Decide right now to follow Jesus Christ and enjoy the peace He brings into your life. **NE**







# My STRANGE NEIGHBOR

By Samantha Best

A few years ago I was depressed because I felt like I had no one to talk to. My family was distant and I had no friends, so I couldn't fathom the idea of living anymore.

I was living with my aunt and uncle, and the only thing they told me not to do was talk to the neighbor. They claimed he was strange, and they made up stories about him to scare me off.

However, one Saturday he and two teenage girls my age asked for my help with building a fence. I agreed and got to work.

After observing these girls, I realized they were nice, so I started talking with them, which led to a conversation about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I had so many questions, which they answered. I became intrigued. My neighbor invited me to go to church with him the next day to see how I liked it. I was at a low point in my life, so I figured I had nothing to lose.

Walking through those doors the following morning, I felt an instant inner peace that I didn't understand, but I knew this church was where I had to be. I was introduced to the missionaries that morning, and I saw how they *knew* the Church to be true.

I began to listen to the various lessons from the missionaries. I couldn't have asked Heavenly Father to send me those two loving, caring, and spiritual missionaries at a better time. Through their help I gained the knowledge they had about the gospel.

After listening to them share how their knowledge of Heavenly Father helped them through trials, I felt like I should pray to see if what they had said was true. After praying, I felt an intense feeling of happiness, peace, and calmness inside me. I knew that I had received my answer that night through the Holy Ghost.

Having this knowledge, my testimony has grown rapidly. Since joining the Church in 2013, I have definitely seen the blessings that the knowledge of our Heavenly Father has given me. I am thankful for those missionaries and for my neighbor inviting me to come unto Christ. **NE**

*The author lives in Victoria, Australia.*

*I was at a low point in my life, but going to church with my neighbor changed everything.*





Samuel W., 15, Cuba



**I'm** Samuel, and I love to go scuba diving with my dad. Being underwater is a great way to relax after a stressful day or week at school. I love the consistency the gospel provides, especially nowadays when we are in a world of changing values. Whenever we feel challenged or unsure about something, we can turn to the scriptures and receive the answers we need to bring us closer to the Savior.



Blanch T., 15, Cavite, Philippines



**Hi**, I'm Blanch, and I love the piano! Right now, my calling is the pianist of our ward. At home, I play hymns and classical pieces for my family. I have a strong testimony of seminary. When I started going to seminary, I felt like the burdens on my shoulders were lifted. My love for the gospel grows because of the principles I learn in every lesson, and I love how it teaches me how to be a better person.



My name is Sabrina, I'm 17, and  
I live in California, USA.

## I love art!


I especially love painting and sketching people and flowers. I always try to make my pictures look as real as possible—I can spend hours drawing in each strand of hair.

My favorite thing about the gospel is eternal families. I was adopted when I was just one day old. Growing up, I dealt with feeling like someone didn't want me so they gave me up. But I realized as I got older how blessed I was. I'm grateful for the sealing power of the temple and that I was sealed to my adoptive family. I'm grateful to know that we can live together forever. My sisters, brothers, and parents are definitely the family for me, and I am so happy Heavenly Father put them in the plan for my life.

For more stories like this one from California, go to **@LDSYouth** on Instagram.

Send your own photos and testimonies to [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org).





# WAYS **YOU** CAN TELL THE BOOK OF MORMON WAS WRITTEN FOR OUR DAY

By David A. Edwards  
Church Magazines

**Y**ou've probably heard people say that the Book of Mormon was written for our day. It's a true statement. Prophets have declared it.<sup>1</sup> The book itself says it.<sup>2</sup> But what makes this book so well suited for this particular time in history?

**1**

**IT TEACHES THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST PLAINLY AND SIMPLY.**

*Here are just five of the many ways you can tell that this ancient book was meant to help with modern life.*

There's always been confusion in the world, but it's a little different today. Not only are there lots of ideas floating around, but there are also many more ways to communicate them to more people. When bloggers and trolls talk religion, finding the truth can feel like listening for a melody while an orchestra's instruments are all tuning up.

Fortunately for us, the Book of Mormon rings true. It teaches us in plain terms about our Heavenly Father's plan and Jesus Christ's role in that plan (see, for instance, 2 Nephi 2; 9; Mosiah 2–5; Alma 11–12; 34; 42). It teaches us very simply what the steps are on the path to eternal life (see, for instance, 2 Nephi 31). And it contains Jesus Christ's teachings, in person, following His Resurrection (see 3 Nephi 11–28).





2

## IT SHOWS HOW TO FOLLOW THE LIVING PROPHET AND FACE RIDICULE AND PERSECUTION.

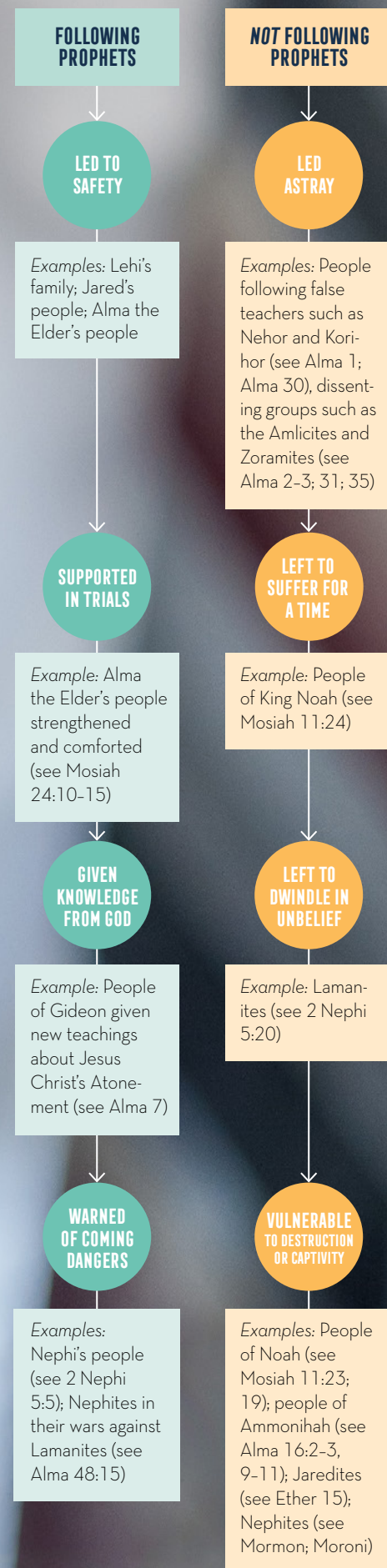
Prophets have never been all that popular, and that hasn't really changed. People still question and criticize them and their teachings—they just have a multitude of communication platforms to do it on. There's never been a time when it's been more important to follow the prophet.

In one sense, the Book of Mormon is the story of what happens when people choose to be humble and follow the Lord's prophets—or not—in good times or in bad.

In addition, the Book of Mormon has many examples of how to react when people are

making fun of or questioning your beliefs. For instance:

- Don't let ridicule get to you—"heed them not" (see 1 Nephi 8:33–34).
- Bear testimony (see Jacob 7:12).
- Answer questions with the word of God you have studied (see Jacob 7:10–11; Alma 1:7).
- Counter false claims with the truth (see Alma 30:31–34).
- Show that all kinds of evidence can support faith (see Alma 30:44).
- Be steadfast and patient in heeding the prophets' words (see 3 Nephi 1:8).





# 3

## IT SHOWS HOW TO GAIN YOUR OWN TESTIMONY.

In our time, it is absolutely essential that we learn spiritual truths and gain a personal testimony. Those who will spiritually survive the last days are those who “are wise and have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide” (D&C 45:57).

Fortunately, the Book of Mormon is like a how-to guide on coming to know the truth for yourself. From Nephi to Moroni, we read how those with “desires to know” can study and “ponder” and “cry unto the Lord,” asking “with a sincere heart, with real

intent, having faith in Christ,” and can have the truth “manifested unto [them] by [the] Holy Spirit,” because “by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things” (1 Nephi 2:16–17; Moroni 10:3–5).



THE PROPHET'S PLEA

**“I IMPORE EACH OF US TO PRAYERFULLY STUDY AND PONDER THE BOOK OF MORMON EACH DAY. AS WE DO SO, WE WILL BE IN A POSITION TO HEAR THE VOICE OF THE SPIRIT, TO RESIST TEMPTATION, TO OVERCOME DOUBT AND FEAR, AND TO RECEIVE HEAVEN’S HELP IN OUR LIVES. I SO TESTIFY WITH ALL MY HEART.”**

President Thomas S. Monson, “The Power of the Book of Mormon,” Apr. 2017 general conference.

## SOME BASIC ELEMENTS OF TESTIMONY FROM THE BOOK OF MORMON

### STUDYING & PONDERING THE WORD OF GOD

- Alma 17:2
- Moroni 10:3

### PRAYER & FASTING

- Alma 5:45–46
- Alma 17:2–3

### AN OPEN HEART

- 1 Nephi 15:11

### DESIRE

- 1 Nephi 2:16
- 1 Nephi 10:17
- Alma 32:27

### REAL INTENT

- Moroni 10:4

### FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

- Enos 1:1–8
- Mosiah 4:3–4
- Alma 36:17–19
- Moroni 10:4

### HUMILITY & REPENTANCE

- 1 Nephi 2:19
- Jarom 1:4
- Alma 22:18
- Alma 26:21–22

### A WITNESS OF THE HOLY GHOST

- 1 Nephi 2:17
- Jacob 4:13; 7:12
- Alma 5:46
- Moroni 10:4–5

### DILIGENT OBEDIENCE

- 1 Nephi 15:11







# 4

## IT SHOWS HOW TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH POWER.

President Monson has said: “Now is the time for members and missionaries to come together, to work together, to labor in the Lord’s vineyard to bring souls unto Him. He has prepared the means for us to share the gospel in a multitude of ways, and He will assist us in our labors if we will act in faith to fulfill His work.”<sup>3</sup>

The Book of Mormon gives us some of the greatest examples of how to share the gospel powerfully and effectively. For instance, the sons of Mosiah had the right motivation (see Mosiah 28:3), studied the scriptures and taught with power and authority (see Alma 17:2–3), loved and served the people, built on common beliefs, bore bold testimony at the opportune moment, worked hard, and followed the Spirit (see Alma 17–22).

# 5

## IT SHOWS HOW TO PREPARE FOR JESUS CHRIST’S COMING.

This is the winding-up scene of the history of the world: the latter days. We’ve been told that part of the Church’s mission is to help prepare the world for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. It’s a tall task, but the Book of Mormon offers us some help.

President Ezra Taft Benson said, “In the Book of Mormon we find a pattern for preparing for the Second Coming.” He said we could see this pattern if we study the “portion of the book [that] centers on the few decades just prior to Christ’s coming to America.”<sup>4</sup>

This portion of the Book of Mormon (Helaman through 3 Nephi 8), contains, for instance, a record of people rejecting prophets, leaving the faith, persecuting the faithful, and explaining away the fulfillment of signs and prophecies. It shows societal disruption, materialism, pride, and war. But it also contains a record of prophets’ warnings; prophecies and signs fulfilled; and people humbling themselves, repenting, following the prophets, and being blessed and protected.

## CONCLUSION

As you study the Book of Mormon and compare it to your own life, you’ll doubtless find other evidence that it was written for our day. As the Spirit helps you see this truth more clearly, you’ll appreciate the book more and your testimony of it will grow. And who knows? You may want to go back and read it again. **NE**

### NOTES

1. See, for instance, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* (2014), 140.
2. See Book of Mormon title page; Mormon 8:34–35.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “Welcome to Conference,” Oct. 2013 general conference.
4. *Teachings: Ezra Taft Benson*, 140.



By Brittney Achter

Returning home one Tuesday night, I was surprised to find everyone but my mom asleep. During the few weeks since I completed my first year of college, I felt almost guilty turning out my light and going to bed when I knew my sister Hailey was down the hall staying up until all hours of the night rushing to complete math assignments, term projects, and study for end-of-school tests. But tonight Hailey's light wasn't on.

I didn't think I'd gotten home late and asked my mom why everyone else was in bed. She said that the usually cheerful and conversational Hailey had returned

# DANCE DISAPPOINTMENTS

home from her ninth grade dance an hour before, not said much more than "Goodnight," and gone to bed.

I decided to see how she was doing. I entered her bedroom, sat down on the floor, and asked, "So . . . how was it?"

A simple, "Fine," was all I got.

Not knowing if I should leave the room and go to bed myself or keep pressing, I filled up time by saying, "So . . ."

"And no, I didn't dance with anyone," she finished, thinking she would spare me the effort of asking the question she was sure would be next.

"Oh, Hailey, that's OK," I said. But I knew that inside her 15-year-old mind it wasn't.

I had been to those dances where my girl friends around me seemed to disappear like hot doughnuts anytime a slow





HOW COULD I LET  
MY SISTER KNOW  
EVERYTHING  
WOULD BE OK?

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MASON COBERLY

song began. As I would look around the room, I would notice two kinds of boys: those sitting on the side of the gym in chairs, oblivious to the fact that they were at a dance where the proper thing to do when a slow song began was to go ask a girl to dance, and those who had already found themselves a partner.

It was in these moments when I would wonder, “What’s wrong with me?” as my perception of my own self-worth seemed to tumble in around me. At those times I had longed to hear what I hadn’t learned yet but would as I progressed through my teenage years: that just because you sat out every song at a school dance doesn’t mean it will go on some kind of permanent record. And even if it did, no one would really care; they’d be much more worried about their own record, anyway.

I told her that believe it or not, several girls went home that night feeling the exact same way she did. And that there would likely be other dances when she’d feel like she’d danced the night away that would more than make up for the bad ones. And that most importantly, her worth as a beautiful 15-year-old young woman had not diminished in my eyes, or most especially in the eyes of her Heavenly Father.

So that she’d know I wasn’t just saying those things to be nice but that I was truly sincere, I reached back into my teenage past and dusted off experiences that I had hoped I would forget and had never planned on sharing with anyone.

Like the first dance of my eighth grade year. I was serving as the eighth-grade secretary. I was excited for the opportunity I had to have a voice in what went on at the school and for the chance I would have to reach out to other students around me. I was also sure that my new title would brighten my prospects at the school dances I so anxiously

awaited. In my mind I pictured the line of boys that would spend the entire dance waiting for the opportunity to dance with me. Looking back, I’m grateful for the experience of returning home that day after dancing with no one. It kept me humble, and gave Hailey and me a good laugh.

Or the time I attended an Especially for Youth conference. I had heard rumors of girls dancing every dance with boys from all over the country. Knowing there would be a dance at the beginning, middle, and end of the week, I was ready to have the time of my life! The fact that there were two or three girls for every boy at my session that year left my hopes shattered when I went home having

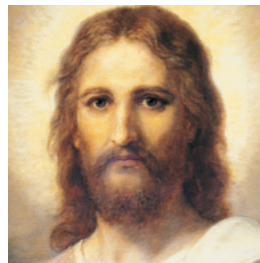
only been asked to dance once the entire week.

By the time I’d uncovered all of my deep, dark dancing disappointments, Hailey and I were laughing hysterically, and I was grateful I could dispel some of her fears.

As I returned to my bedroom, I felt like I had gained the smallest understanding of our Savior’s empathy for us in our trials. Because I had experienced similar feelings and experiences as Hailey, I was better able to comfort her in her frustrations. I felt an overwhelming gratitude for my Savior, who took upon Himself our “infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he [might] know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities” (Alma 7:12).

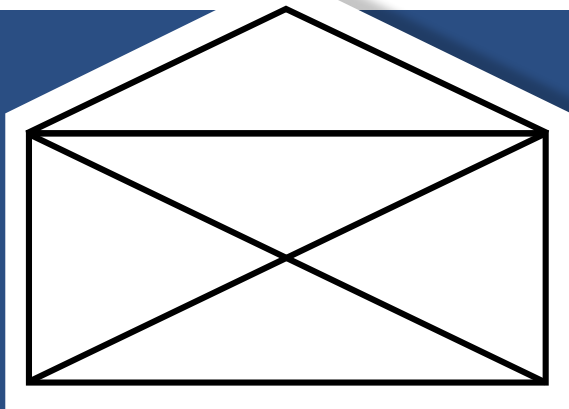
Although I was grateful I could help that night, I won’t always be able to understand all of Hailey’s pain, fear, and disappointment, but her Savior will, as He understands all of our pains. And if we ask our Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, I know that He knows how to make them light. **NE**

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*





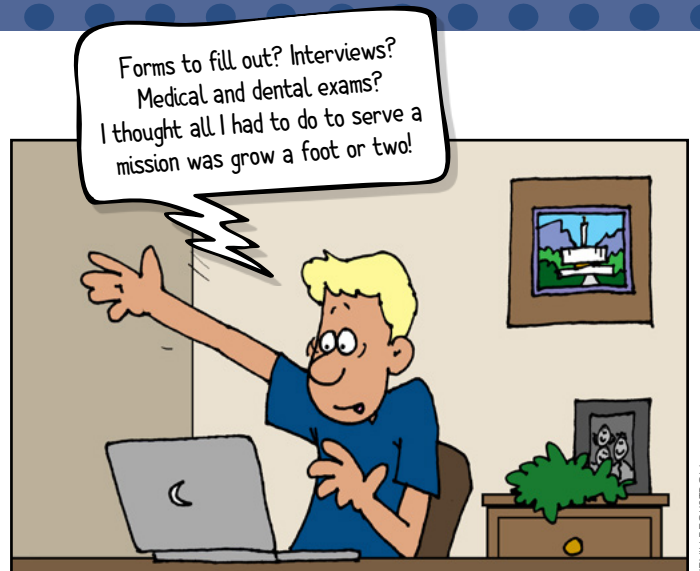
# FUN STOP



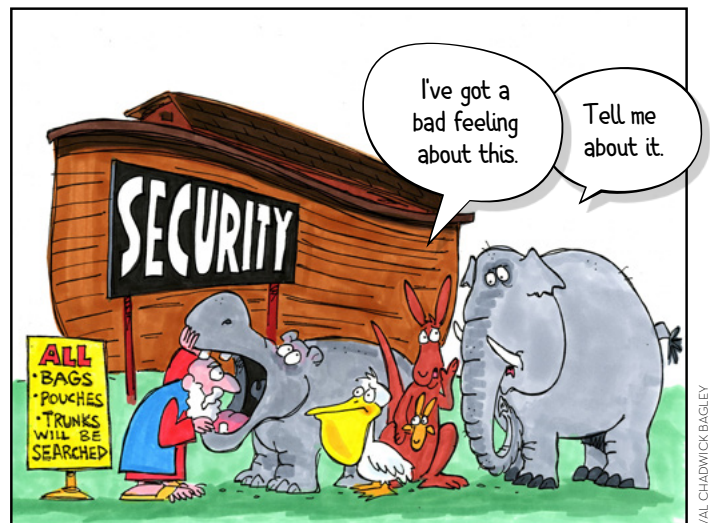
## Relic Replication

In your study of *ancient history*, you learned that people used to send communication to one another in paper containers that resembled this object above. **Can you draw a picture of this historic relic while following these three rules?**

1. You can't pick up your pencil.
2. You can't cross your own lines.
3. You can't trace over any of your own lines.



KEVIN BECKSTROM

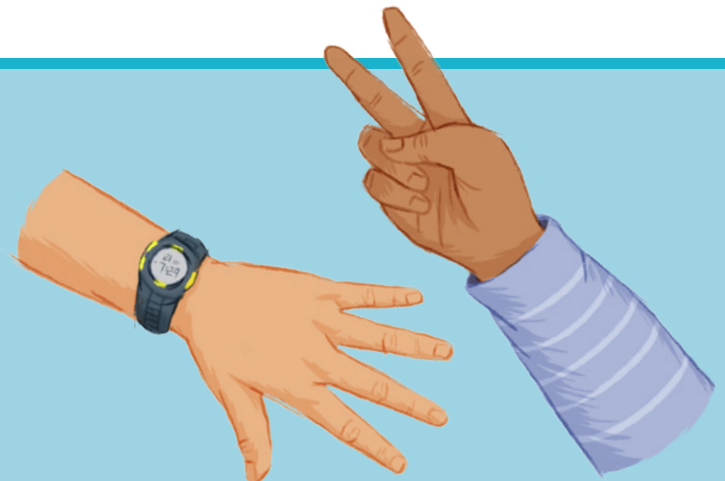


VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

## Brownie Battle

Nathan and Miguel are locked in an epic battle. There's only one brownie left after their Mutual activity, and they've agreed to a nine-round tournament of rock, paper, scissors to decide the winner. **Using only the following clues, can you discover who secured some sweet, sugary success?**

1. Nathan played: 1 paper, 4 rocks, and 4 scissors
2. Miguel played: 1 paper, 5 rocks, and 3 scissors
3. There were NO ties in the nine games.





## Number Trek

Which section of the Doctrine and Covenants contains the restoration of various priesthood keys? **To find the answer, solve the following math problem, replacing the letters with the numbers they represent.**

Divide G by D. Divide the result by B. Then take that number and add E. Divide that number by A. Then add F. Then subtract C.

- A. The number of Nephi's brothers born in the wilderness (see 1 Nephi 1 18:7).
- B. The total number of Nephi's brothers.
- C. The number of years the sons of Mosiah preached among the Lamanites (see Alma 17).
- D. Joseph Smith's age when he prayed in the Sacred Grove.
- E. The number of lepers who did not return to thank the Savior after He healed them (see Luke 17:12-17).
- F. The number of Book of Mormon manuscript pages lost (see D&C 10).
- G. The number of times to forgive someone—though of course it's just a big number meant to represent "always" (see Matthew 18:21-22).

## Left or Right?

Which side of the inner rectangle is darker?



Answers on page 44.

## Mystery Messages

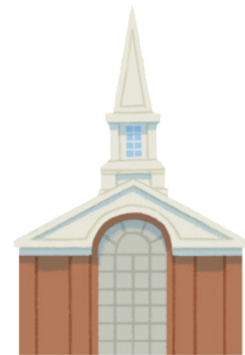
Can you solve these terms and phrases hidden in plain sight?

**SUNDAY**

NUTS  
NSUT  
TNSU  
UNTS  
TSNU  
SNTU  
SUTN

**WALK  
WATER**

**DATE**



D&C 20:53



**GOODBYE**



RYAN STOKER



HELP

# “How can I support a family member who is going through depression?”

*You might take some time to learn about depression and other mental health disorders. When you understand what mental illness is, it becomes less frightening and you are better able to help. A good resource is [mentalhealth.lds.org](http://mentalhealth.lds.org). Listen with love to your family member. Sometimes a listening ear is the best gift you can give someone struggling with depression.*



## Look at Resources

Recovering from depression can be very difficult. First, try to find the source. Depression

is often caused by a combination of factors, such as poor nutrition, lack of sleep and exercise, genetics, and depressive tendencies. As a family, try to keep a healthy lifestyle, think and speak positively, and always be supportive. Bring the Spirit into your home, and encourage your family to have a close relationship with Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father. Help them understand Christ's Atonement can help them through their struggles. The mental health page on LDS.org is a fantastic resource.

*Rose B., 17, North Dakota, USA*



## Love and Care for Them

One of my cousins has been struggling with depression for the past

few years. We try to keep in contact, but because of the miles between us, being there physically for her is hard. I started a care package and filled it with things that she loves and could use as a pick-me-up. I also wrote letters of advice, concern, and inspiring quotes. It doesn't have to be fancy, but letting someone know that you love and care for them can be enough to help them get through the darkest of times.

*Hanne J., Georgia, USA*



## Give Support

The first step to helping someone with depression is to understand that mental illness is not something people choose to have. After that, you need to support them. Help them want to get up in the morning, to want to keep going, and most important: help them find help. You don't have the full capacity to help them in the same way a professional psychiatrist can, but you can ease their burdens. More importantly, help them understand that they need the Lord and the power of His Atonement.

*Rebekah H., 16, Washington, USA*

## Pray for Direction

Pray for direction. Heavenly Father knows everyone perfectly, and He knows what people with depression might need. I have felt a lot of hope through others' inspired acts. If you pray for help, Heavenly Father will help you do what is most needed.

*Emily A., 17, New Mexico, USA*

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



## Choosing a spouse will be a big decision, and it makes me nervous. How will I know I've made the right choice?

**Deciding whom to marry** is something that can affect your happiness in this life and in the eternities. But it also shouldn't cause you the kind of anxiety that could eventually paralyze you. You can have peace and joy about this decision if you keep the commandments and follow good counsel. Here are a few things that Church leaders have frequently taught about this:

There are many potentially "right" choices regarding whom to marry. Get to know a lot of people. Date people with high standards. Live worthy. When you're a young adult, date people you could go to the temple with. A potential spouse is someone you get to know well enough that you know whether you could enter covenants with Heavenly Father together. Get advice from your parents. "Study it out in your mind" and then "ask [God] if it be right" (D&C 9:8). The confirmation you receive may come in a variety of ways, but the other person must also have a confirmation. Once you've committed to each other, you *work to become* each other's "soul mates." **NE**

## Tell Us What You Think

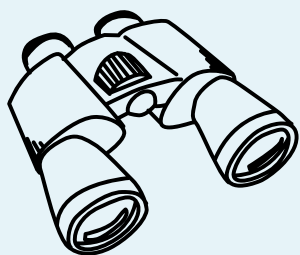
"We have so many distractions today. How can we focus more on our personal relationship with our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ?"

**Send your answer and photo by February 15, 2018.**

Go to [newera.lds.org](http://newera.lds.org), and click "Submit Your Work." Sign in with your LDS Account and then select "New Era" under "Choose Magazine." Click "Add File" to select your file and photos, and then click "Submit" to upload and send us your file.

*Responses may be edited for length or clarity.*





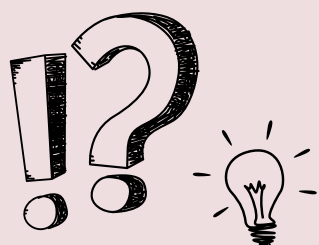
## WHEN YOU GAZE INTO YOUR FUTURE,

what do you see? Do you have a clear picture of what you'll be doing in a few years? Or is it more like trying to see the bottom of a muddy river?

Sometimes it's overwhelming to prepare for the future when you aren't even sure what's around the next bend. But don't stress. There are ways to prepare for whatever lies ahead even when you don't know what that might be.

Certain life skills—skills you can develop now—will help in almost any situation. They also tend to improve most areas of your life in sometimes obvious, sometimes subtle ways.

Keep an eye on the *New Era* for an ongoing discussion of these “Life Prep” skills. Bit by bit, you can become more prepared for whatever life throws at you! For this month, let's take a look at strengthening social skills.



**PLAY “THE QUESTION GAME”** with your family and close friends. Take turns asking get-to-know-you questions like, “When in your life did you laugh the hardest?” or “What's the most you've ever been surprised by a book or movie?” Be creative and try to get beyond the favorite-ice-cream-flavor type questions. Really get to know them.



## PRACTICE HOLDING 30-MINUTE CONVERSATIONS

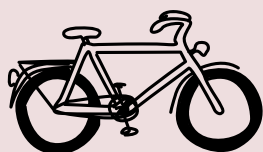
with friends and relatives where nobody checks an electronic device the entire time.

## TRY IT OUT!



## ONE WAY TO SHOW INTEREST IS BY SPENDING TIME ON WHAT YOUR FRIENDS ENJOY.

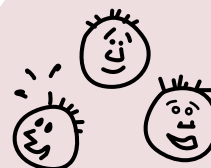
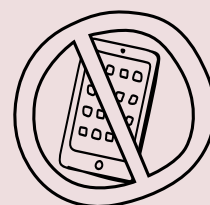
For the *Strength of Youth*, says: “To have good friends, be a good friend. Show genuine interest in others” ([2011], 16). Try doing one activity a week with a friend or family member that's one of their favorite things, even if it's not something you'd normally be interested in.



# SOCIAL SKILLS

» The social skill set we're talking about has little to do with popularity. The type of social skills that truly improve your life are those that help you get to know other people on a deeper level and help you build real friendships.

These skills play a big role in school, church callings, dating, meeting your spouse, career, and pretty much everything else you do in life where you might encounter another living person. The best way to strengthen these skills is with a little practice.



**SMILE AT 25 DIFFERENT PEOPLE** a day for a month (or smile at everybody you meet if you don't see that many in a given day). Try to include a few strangers in the mix.



**SAY SOMETHING KIND**, face-to-face, to 10 different people every day for a month.

ANSWERS (from pages 40-41) **Brownie Battle:** Miguel wins, 5 games to 4. **Number Trek:** 110 (A=2, B=5, C=14, D=14, E=9, F=116, G=490). **Left or Right:** Both sides are equally dark. **Mystery Messages:** fast Sunday, mixed nuts, walk on water, double date, watch over the church, tree of life, turn over a new leaf, wave good-bye.



## WHO KNEW?

Church facts, news & trends

### FACTS & FIGURES

## Book of Mormon

239

Chapters in the Book of Mormon



23

Age at which Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon



65

Approximate number of working days to complete the translation



111

Translated languages of the Book of Mormon

5

New translations in progress

For more on the Book of Mormon, check out Tad R. Callister's October 2017 general conference address.

### TEMPLE SPOTLIGHT

## Buenos Aires Argentina Temple

- 39th operating temple
- 1 of 2 temples in Argentina (with Córdoba Argentina Temple)
- Over 29,000 visitors during 1985 open house
- Nearly 100,000 visitors during 2012 open house



Dedicated

JANUARY 1986

Rededicated

SEPTEMBER 2012

### HYMN 227

“There is sunshine in my soul today, more **GLORIOUS** and **BRIGHT** than glows in any earthly sky, for **JESUS IS MY LIGHT.**”

Isaiah 60:19; Psalm 16:9, 11

### HYMN 243

“**FEAR NOT**, though the enemy deride; courage, for **THE LORD IS ON OUR SIDE.** We will heed not what the wicked may say, but the Lord alone we will obey.”

D&C 6:33-37; 1 Nephi 22:15-17

HYMNASTIC THOUGHTS

### MORMON TRIVIA Church Presidents



- ▶ There has been one set of father and son prophets: Joseph F. Smith and Joseph Fielding Smith.



- ▶ Gordon B. Hinckley was the first prophet to be baptized in a meetinghouse font.



- ▶ Brigham Young was prophet for 30 years. His was the longest term as Church President.



- ▶ Howard W. Hunter had the shortest term for a prophet. He was President for only nine months.





## I PUT MY FAITH TO WORK

**MY PING-PONG MATCH** with my friend Erfrey was interrupted by three knocks on his front door. I heard an unfamiliar voice with a strange accent of Hiligaynon, our native dialect.

Erfrey rushed toward the door, apparently expecting them. “Come on!” he said to me. “I want you to meet my friends!”

They were wearing white shirts and ties and had come to teach Erfrey’s younger brother to prepare him for baptism. I spoke to them in English, and they were impressed enough to ask if I would interpret during their discussion with Erfrey’s brother.

“The future of your faith is not by chance, but by choice.”

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Oct. 2015 general conference.

I thought my role would just be the passive interpreter. But I became an active participant as their words took root in my heart. I had an unexplainable feeling, a lingering happy feeling I had never experienced before.

After that experience, I asked the missionaries to teach my family. But when they came, my parents took a stand that a Mormon would never have a place in our family.

I wanted to be baptized, so I put my faith to work. I fasted and prayed. I strived to be an example to them.

Two years later, through my own simple faith and the loving support of Heavenly Father, my father’s heart was finally softened and he signed my baptismal consent. I am happy to say that my testimony of the restored gospel is my most prized possession.

**Arnel M., Negros Occidental, Philippines**



### How Do We Grow Our Faith?

1. Plant the seed, which is the word of God, in your heart (see Alma 32:28).
2. As your faith grows, “nourish it with great care” (Alma 32:37). Don’t neglect it. Pray, study the scriptures, and obey the commandments.
3. Treasure the fruit of your faith. In Lehi’s vision, those who treasured the fruit were happy, while others gave it up because of what other people said (see 1 Nephi 8:28).



# A CLEAN SPIRIT: MORE IMPORTANT THAN A COMPETITION

**IN EIGHTH GRADE** I was in a book club. Each month we met to discuss a book, and at the end of the year we had a competition to see whose team knew the most about each book. One rule we always upheld was to read only clean books.

One month, when I started reading the next book, I felt like it wasn't clean. But I needed to read it if I wanted my team to win the competition. I couldn't let them down. A few chapters later, the book got worse. Finally, I put it down. I knew that I couldn't read it—my spiritual cleanliness was worth more than winning a competition.

But I was so worried about telling my team. The night before our club's meeting, I prayed to Heavenly Father to help me have courage to face them.

The next day I was really worried. I sat down with my team. Once the meeting started, I was about to explain to everyone that I couldn't read the book. But before I could, the leader got up and apologized. She explained that she hadn't read the book before putting it on our booklist and didn't realize what was in it. She said she would take it off the list. When I got home, I thanked Heavenly Father.

I know that when we uphold our standards, the Lord watches over us. He doesn't always take care of the situation as He did for me, but He will always give us the courage to make good decisions.

**Ashleigh A., Utah, USA**



# FROM PRIMARY TO YOUNG WOMEN

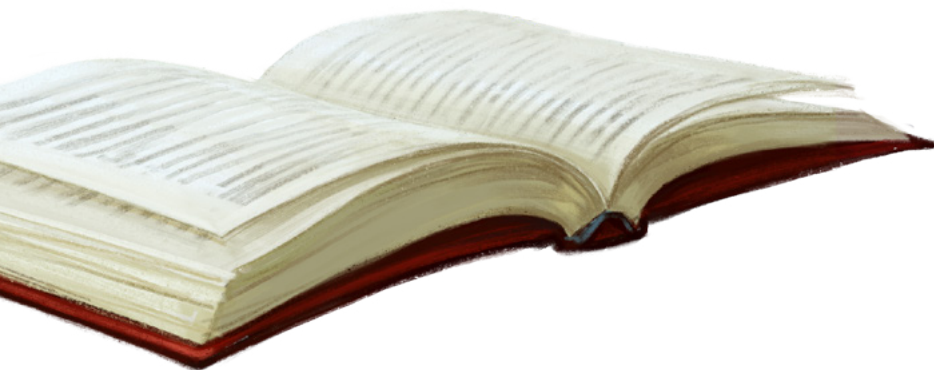
**I'VE ALWAYS FOUND** it difficult to adjust to new situations. That's why I was nervous to leave Primary and start Young Women. At first the schedule was strange to me. Young Women was a totally different environment—no singing time, no sharing time. We also had Mutual during the week.

I just wanted to fit in and feel comfortable, so I gave my new schedule a chance. I prayed a lot, and I began to adjust to the new routine and bond with the other young women.

As the weeks went by, I started to realize why I was in the Young Women program. I was learning more about the gospel, I was getting more opportunities to have a little goodness each week, and I was able to go to the temple and feel the Lord's Spirit in His house.

Now I am very thankful for Young Women. I'm happy I gave this change a chance and that my Heavenly Father helped me do so.

**Bethany W., Florida, USA**





# Becoming Spiritual First Responders

By Elder Ronald A. Rasband

*Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles*

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*From an April 2017 general conference address*

First promptings are pure inspiration from heaven. When they confirm or testify to us, we need to recognize them for what they are and never let them slip past. So often, it is the Spirit inspiring us to reach out to someone in need, family and friends in particular. “Thus . . . the still small voice, which whispereth through and pierceth all things” (D&C 85:6), points us to opportunities to teach the gospel, to bear testimony of the Restoration and Jesus Christ, to offer support and concern, and to rescue one of God’s precious children.

Think of it as being what is called a first responder. In most communities the first responders to a tragedy, disaster, or calamity are firefighters, police officers, paramedics. They arrive with lights flashing, and may I add, we are so incredibly grateful for them. The Lord’s way is less obvious but requires just as immediate a response. The Lord knows the needs of all His children—and He knows who is prepared to help. If we let the Lord know in our morning prayers that we are ready, He will call on us to respond. If we respond, He will call on us time and time again and we will find ourselves on what President Monson calls “the Lord’s errand.”<sup>1</sup> We will become spiritual first responders bringing help from on high.

If we pay attention to the promptings that come to us, we will grow in the spirit of revelation and receive more and more Spirit-driven insight and direction. The Lord has said, “Put your trust in that Spirit which leadeth to do good” (D&C 11:12).

May we take seriously the Lord’s call to “be of good cheer, for I will lead you along” (D&C 78:18). He leads us by the Holy Ghost. May we live close to the Spirit, acting quickly upon our first promptings, knowing they come from God.

**NOTE**

1. Thomas S. Monson, “To Learn, to Do, to Be,” Oct. 2008 general conference.

Born Feb. 6, 1951, in  
**Salt Lake City, Utah**  
*He graduated from  
Olympus High School.*



Attended the  
**University  
of Utah.**



Called to serve in the  
Eastern States Mission.

**1970-72**

# Elder **RONALD A. RASBAND**

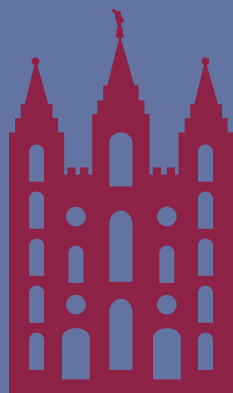


He has 5  
children and 27  
grandchildren.



Once served as a Temple  
Square missionary guide  
in Salt Lake City.

Married Melanie Twitchell  
September 4, 1973, in  
the Salt Lake Temple.



Growing up, friends  
were an important  
part of his life.



*Promised his mom to  
never break the*  
**Word of Wisdom.**

*He was really  
into cars in high school,*  
**owning 4 before  
his mission.**

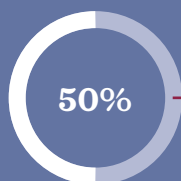


*Served as  
president of  
the New York,  
New York  
North Mission  
from 1996  
to 1999.*



As a young man he  
worked as a **grocery  
checker and  
bagger.**

*He worked as a sales  
representative for Huntsman  
Container Company and later  
became President and  
Chief Operating  
Officer of Huntsman  
Chemical Corporation.*



*He finished his chore  
of mowing the lawn  
50% of the time.*

*The other 50% of the  
time, he convinced  
his friends to do it  
for him.*



*He had zero time for  
sports in high school  
because he always  
had a job.*



*As a 12-year-old, he  
found a job driving a  
tractor that picked up  
driving-range golf balls.*



*While in Boy Scouts,  
he led his troop on  
a mile-long swim  
across a lake.*



He was called to  
be an Apostle in  
**October 2015.**



DON'T MISS **FACE<sup>to</sup>FACE!**



**SET A REMINDER!**

The next Face to Face event is on  
Saturday, February 3, at 11 a.m. MST.

President Russell M.  
Nelson and his wife,  
Wendy Watson Nelson, will speak  
to youth worldwide, answering real questions.



► You can watch the live stream on [face2face.lds.org](http://face2face.lds.org).



THE CHURCH OF  
**JESUS CHRIST**  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS