

THE New Era



LOVE GOD

2019 MUTUAL THEME

pp. 2-17

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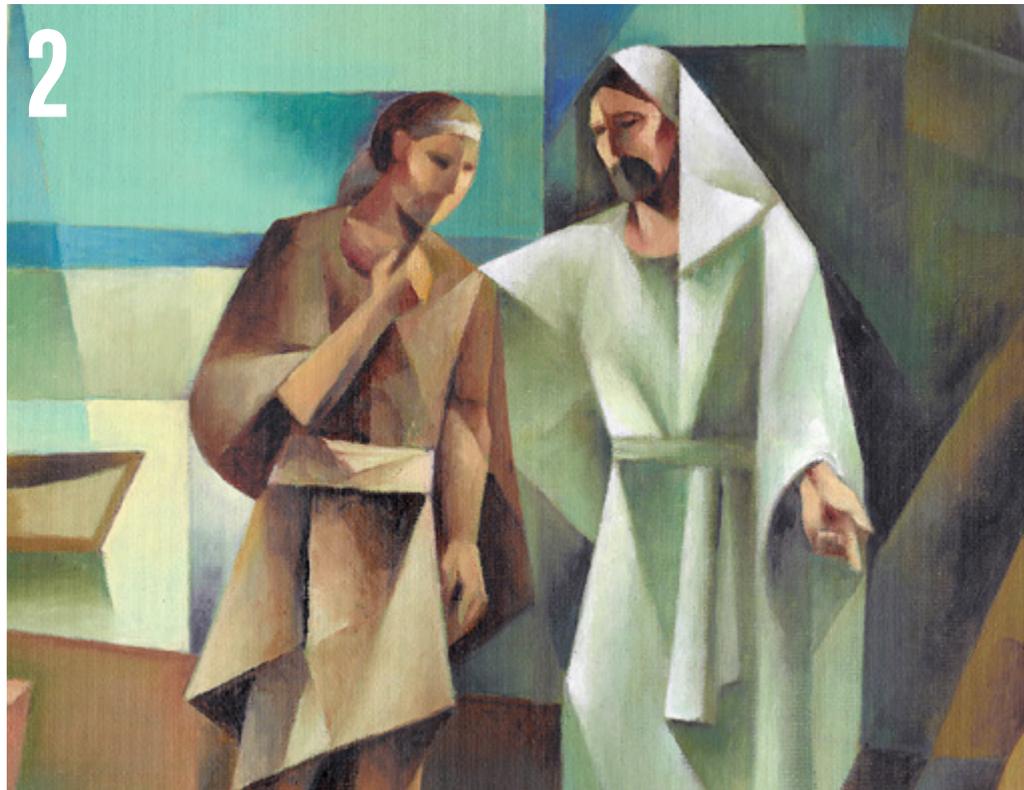
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Prepress: Joshua Dennis

Printing Director: Steven T. Lewis

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DO WE LOVE HIM?

We have a life of devoted discipleship to give in demonstrating our love of the Lord.



By Elder
Jeffrey R. Holland
Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

Following the Savior’s Resurrection, the Apostle Peter decided to “go a fishing.” And at least six of the ten other remaining Apostles said in agreement, “We also go with thee.” John, who was one of them, writes, “They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately” (John 21:3).

But, alas, the fishing wasn’t very good. Their first night back on the lake, they caught nothing—not a single fish. With the first rays of dawn, they disappointingly turned toward the shore. Although they did not know it then, the Savior called out to them from the shore and asked if they had caught anything. Glumly, the Apostles said no. The Savior told them to cast their nets on the other side. John recorded that “they cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes” (John 21:6).

As recognition began to flood over them, John said the obvious: “It is the Lord” (John 21:7). And over the edge of the boat, the irrepressible Peter leaped.

“DO YOU LOVE ME?”

After a joyful reunion with the resurrected Jesus, Peter had an exchange with the Savior that I consider the crucial turning point of the apostolic ministry generally and certainly for Peter personally, moving this great rock of a man to a majestic life of devoted service and leadership. Looking at their battered little





boats, their frayed nets, and a stunning pile of 153 fish, Jesus said to His senior Apostle, "Peter, do you love me more than you love all this?" Peter said, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee" (John 21:15).

The Savior responds to that reply but continues to look into the eyes of His disciple and says again, "Peter, do you love me?" Undoubtedly confused a bit by the repetition of the question, the great fisherman

answers a second time, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee" (John 21:16).

The Savior again gives a brief response, but with relentless scrutiny He asks for the third time, "Peter, do you love me?" By now surely Peter is feeling truly uncomfortable. Perhaps there is in his heart the memory of only a few days earlier when he had been asked another question three times and he had answered equally emphatically—but

in the negative. Or perhaps he began to wonder if he misunderstood the Master Teacher's question. Or perhaps he was searching his heart, seeking honest confirmation of the answer he had given so readily, almost automatically. Whatever his feelings, Peter said for the third time, "Lord, . . . thou knowest that I love thee" (John 21:17).

To which Jesus responded, perhaps saying something like: "Then Peter, why are you



“IF YE LOVE ME, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS,” JESUS SAID.

here? Why are we back on this same shore, by these same nets, having this same conversation? Wasn't it obvious then and isn't it obvious now that if I want fish, I can get fish? What I need, Peter, are disciples—and I need them forever. I need someone to feed my sheep and save my lambs. I need someone to preach my gospel and defend my faith. I need someone who loves me, truly, truly loves me, and loves what our Father in Heaven has commissioned me to do. Ours is not a feeble message. It is not a fleeting task. It is not hapless; it is not hopeless; it is not to be consigned to the ash heap of history. It is the work of Almighty God, and it is to change the world. So, Peter, for the second and presumably the last time, I am asking you to leave all this and to go teach and testify, labor and serve loyally until the day in which they will do to you exactly what they did to me.”

Then, turning to all the Apostles, He might well have said something like: “Were you as foolhardy as the scribes and Pharisees? As Herod and Pilate? Did you, like they, think that this work could be killed simply by killing me? Did you, like they, think the cross and the nails and the tomb were the end of it all and each could blissfully go back to being whatever you were before? Children, did not my life and my love touch your hearts more deeply than this?”

A LIFE OF DEVOTED DISCIPLESHIP

My beloved brothers and sisters, I am not certain just what our experience will be on Judgment Day, but I will be very surprised if at some point in that conversation, God does not ask us exactly what Christ asked Peter: “Did you love me?” I think He will want to

know if in our very mortal, very inadequate, and sometimes childish grasp of things, did we at least understand *one* commandment, the first and greatest commandment of them all—“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind” (Luke 10:27; see also Matthew 22:37–38). And if at such a moment we can stammer out, “Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee,” then He may remind us that the crowning characteristic of love is always loyalty.

“If ye love me, keep my commandments,” Jesus said (John 14:15). So we have neighbors to bless, children to protect, the poor to lift up, and the truth to defend. We have wrongs to make right, truths to share, and good to do. In short, we have a life of devoted discipleship to give in demonstrating our love of the Lord. We can't quit and we can't go back. After an encounter with the living Son of the living God, nothing is ever again to be as it was before. The Crucifixion, Atonement, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ mark the beginning of a Christian life, not the end of it. It was this truth, this reality, that allowed a handful of Galilean fishermen-turned-again-Apostles to leave those nets a second time and go on to shape the history of the world in which we now live.

The voice of Christ comes ringing down through the halls of time, asking each one of us while there is time, “Do you love me?” And for every one of us, I answer with my honor and my soul, “Yea, Lord, we do love thee.” And having set our “hand to the plough” (Luke 9:62), we will never look back until this work is finished and love of God and neighbor rules the world. **NE**
From an October 2012 general conference address.



IF YE LOVE ME, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS

JOHN 14:15



Young Women General President Sister Bonnie H. Cordon (center); Sister Michelle D. Craig, First Counselor (left); and Sister Becky Craven, Second Counselor (right).



Young Men General President Brother Stephen W. Owen (center); Brother Douglas D. Holmes, First Counselor (left); and Brother M. Joseph Brough, Second Counselor (right).

IF YE LOVE ME

By the Young Women General Presidency

The 2019 annual youth theme is a call to action—a personal invitation from our Savior. Are you all in? Do you love Him? Are you willing to follow in His footsteps?

Our Savior Jesus Christ did something for us that we couldn't possibly do for ourselves. And what does He ask in return? He asks that we keep His commandments so we may be blessed to always have His Spirit to be with us (see Moroni 4:3).

The commandments are a gift of love. The Savior said simply, “If ye love me, keep my commandments,” but *why*? Because He loves YOU! He wants *you* to be happy. He wants *your* life to be full of joy and endless possibilities. He wants *you* to be safe and protected from the evils of the world. He wants to pour blessings upon *you* that are so great “that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (3 Nephi 24:10). He wants *you* to return and live with Him again and be a partaker of *all* of Heavenly Father’s promised blessings.

Always remember how much Heavenly Father loves His children. He has perfect love for you. You can show

your love for Him by keeping His commandments. Your righteous actions will bring tremendous blessings to you and to those around you.

As our prophet, President Russell M. Nelson, said: “We need you with us in the youth battalion of the Lord. It just won’t be the same without you!” He invited you to “stand out [and] be different from the world” by living the standards in *For the Strength of Youth* and by keeping the commandments—to “look like, sound like, act like, and dress like a true disciple of Jesus Christ” (“Hope of Israel” [worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018], 8, HopeOfIsrael.lds.org).

As you strive to obey the Lord and His prophets, the power of the Holy Ghost will fill you with God’s love and testify to you of your divine identity as a son or daughter of God. Those blessings grow as you strive to live righteously. The Lord and the prophet trust you. They love you. We promise that great confidence, self-assurance, and comfort come when you obey and keep the commandments.



KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS

By the Young Men General Presidency

Have you ever thought, “How can I show Heavenly Father that I really want Him to answer my prayers and bless me?” The Savior Jesus Christ gave us a key when He said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

In other words, we show our love to Heavenly Father by keeping His commandments.

Sometimes the answers to our prayers don’t come when or how we expect, and we may be tempted to give up or stop being obedient. But if we are patient and listen, the Lord will answer in His own time and way. He always answers sincere prayers. He

always blesses us for our obedience (see Mosiah 2:21–24).

The world teaches that love contains no responsibilities. But the opposite is actually true. Our love for God is demonstrated by our willingness and diligence in keeping His commandments.

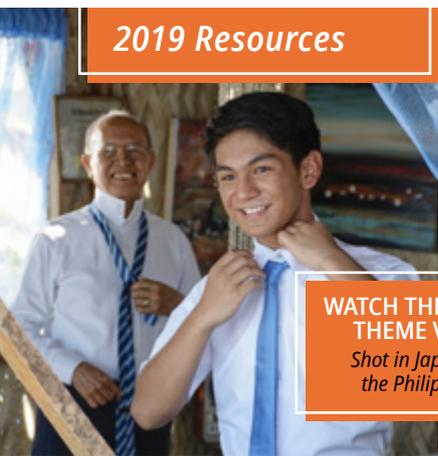
The Savior taught, “The truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). The prophet Alma further declared, “wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10). And through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord taught, “There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—and when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated” (Doctrine and Covenants 130:20–21).

Happiness, blessings, and guidance come through obedience.

Heavenly Father wants you to be happy and free because He loves you, and that is why He gives commandments. To find the peace not found in this world, we must learn that submitting to Heavenly Father’s will is the only way to happiness.

Heavenly Father wants you to find eternal happiness. His prophets want you to find joy beyond measure. We want you to find the peace we have found in following the Savior. Walk the path that He has shown (see “Lord, I Would Follow Thee,” *Hymns*, no. 220). Choose to be obedient. Your willing obedience will lead to true freedom and happiness. **NE**

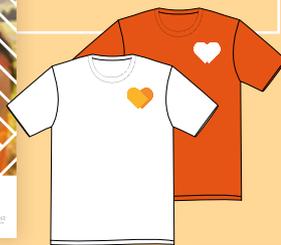
2019 Resources



WATCH THIS YEAR'S THEME VIDEO
Shot in Japan and the Philippines!



POSTERS & T-SHIRTS
Download graphics for posters and T-shirts.



NEW MUSIC!
Check out the 2019 Mutual theme album.

Download the album and sheet music **FREE**.

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IF WE LOVE HIM

2019 Mutual Theme Song

Words and Music by Nik Day

Energetically ♩ = 96-108

F Gm Dm B♭

5

1. Love is more than just a word; It's more than just a feel - ing in our souls.
2. He has gi - ven us di - rec - tion So that He can bless us with His grace.

F Gm Dm

8

— Love is why He came to earth, To be the hope we
— As we show Him that we love Him, Fol - low what He

B♭ F Gm

11

turn to When we feel a - lone. — We can love — like He loves
says, We'll be for - ev - er — changed. —

Dm B♭ F

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14

— us — When we walk in His foot - steps. — If we love,

14 Gm Dm B \flat

17

— if we love — Him, — we will show — Him. —

17 F Gm Dm

20

⌘

We'll go — and serve our neigh - bor with an o - pen heart, Find

20 B \flat F Gm 7

23

— the hea - vy hands and try to lift them up, Live — the way He lived and do the

23 F B \flat F

26

things He taught if we love Him. If we love Him. If we love

26 Gm⁷ F B^b

29 1. 2. 3.

— Him. — Him. —

29 F Gm Dm B^b F

34 To Coda ☺

If we love Him. When we love,

34 Gm⁷ Dm⁷ B^b C

38

e - very - thing chang - es. His love sus - tains us. So we'll take

38 Dm B^b F C

42

— all the love — that He gave us, — That He gave — us, — And go

Dm C7

45

— and serve our neigh - bor with an o - pen heart, Find — the hea - vy hands and try to

F Gm Dm

48

lift them up, Live — the way he lived and do the things He taught if we love — Him. —

Bb F Gm Dm

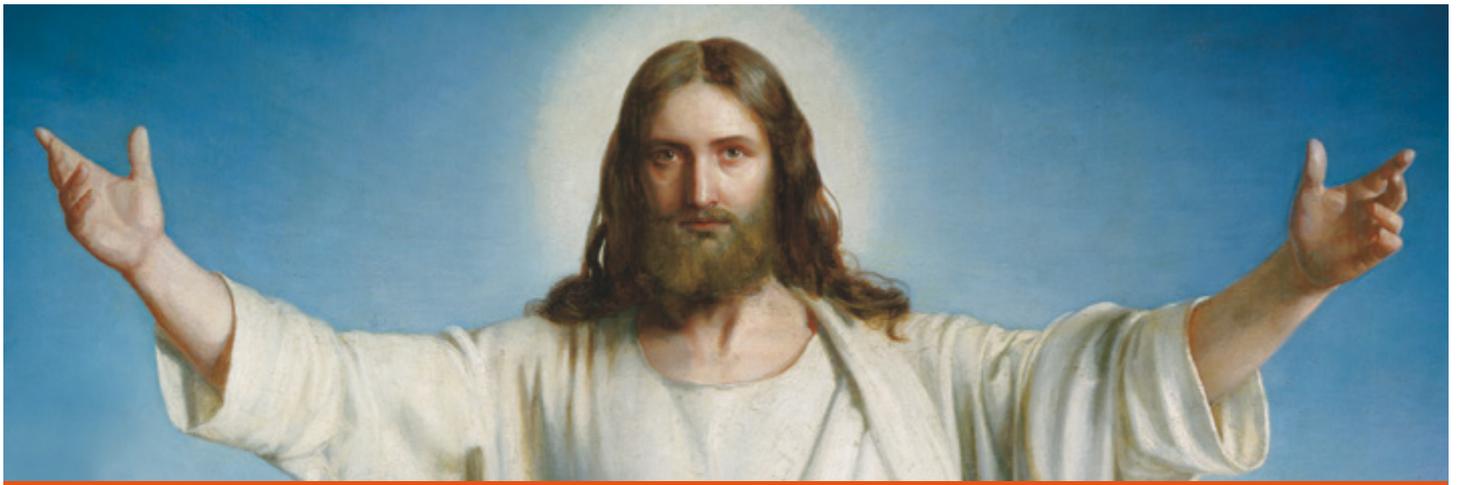
52 D.S. al Coda

We'll go —

53 CODA rit.

Bb F Gm Dm Bb

rit.



LOVE AND COMMANDMENTS

DOCTRINAL MASTERY

IF

The word *if* introduces a *conditional proposition*. An *if*-statement sets conditions; a *then*-statement follows, representing a consequence. “If *a*, then *b*” basically means, “Supposing that *a* is true, *b* will also be true.”

*if a = truth,
then b = truth*

YE LOVE ME

*The Savior declared:
To love God =
the first great
commandment*



See Matthew 22:37–38.

KEEP

To keep the commandments means to know them, to observe them, to do them, and to cherish them. There are many promises linked to keeping the Lord’s commandments.

Here are just a few:

- “[A] blessed and happy state” (Mosiah 2:41).
- “Mercy” (Exodus 20:6; Deuteronomy 5:10).
- “Length of days, and long life, and peace” (Proverbs 3:1–2).
- “Peace in this world” (Doctrine and Covenants 59:23).
- “The Holy Ghost” (Acts 5:32).
- “[To] abide in [the Savior’s] love” (John 15:10).
- “Eternal life” (Doctrine and Covenants 14:7).
- “[To] receive of [the Father’s] fulness” (Doctrine and Covenants 93:20).

MY COMMANDMENTS

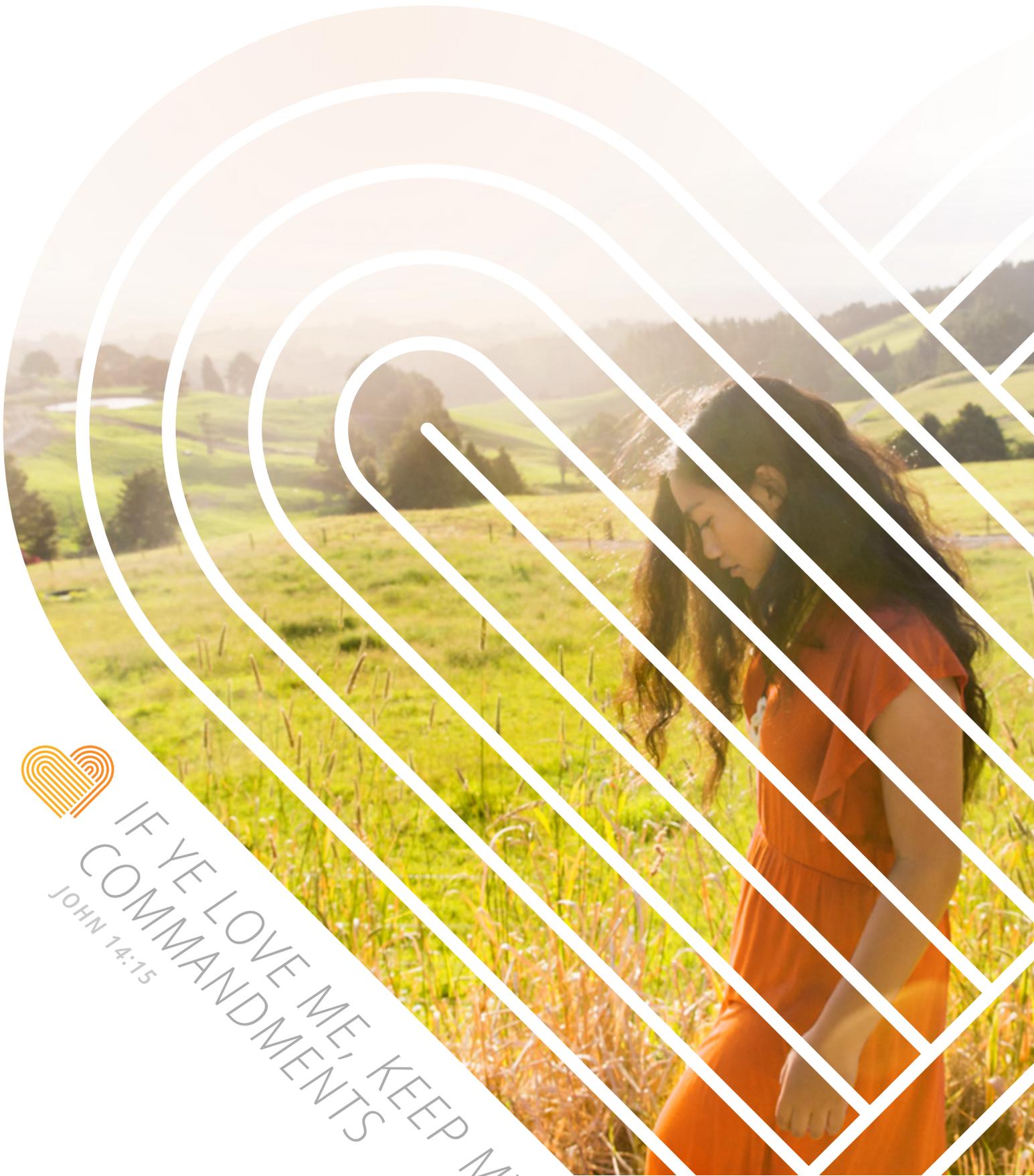
Commandments:

- Are laws or rules God gives because He loves us and wants us to become like Him.
- Are given through prophets (see Doctrine and Covenants 1:24).
- Play a major role in Heavenly Father’s plan in this life (see Abraham 3:25).
- Are always possible to keep, because the Lord prepares a way (see 1 Nephi 3:7).



“Will you not love Him who first loved you [see 1 John 4:19]? Then keep His commandments [see John 14:15]. Will you not be a friend to Him who laid down His life for His friends [see John 15:13]? Then keep His commandments [see John 15:14]. Will you not abide in His love and receive all that He graciously offers you? Then keep His commandments [see John 15:10].”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Oct. 2016 general conference.



IF YE LOVE ME, KEEP MY
COMMANDMENTS
JOHN 14:15

By Diane Thomas
Seminaries and Institutes

LIKE THE SAVIOR:

GROWING IN FOUR IMPORTANT AREAS

We don't know much about how Jesus Christ grew up, but Luke 2:52 gives us a big clue.



"So, I'm supposed to . . . what?" I had listened. Really, I had. The instructor had checked my harness, had shown me exactly how to release the rope, had even looked me right in the eyes and said, "I will NOT let you fall!"

But at that crucial moment, there I stood: shaking and sweating, as I looked over my shoulder and down . . . way down, knowing I had to take that first step.

Off a cliff.

Now, perhaps you haven't been in my shoes, about to literally step off a cliff, hoping that you're prepared enough to rappel safely down. But you've likely been there spiritually. You know, when you've studied the scriptures on your own and you've heard teachers testify of true doctrine and principles. You feel the Spirit inviting you to act in ways that will help you become more like the Savior. You're excited to take this step and show the Lord how committed you are to His gospel.

Then you think, "How do I do that?"

And what seemed so clear and doable just a moment ago drops away. There you are, standing at the edge of a spiritual cliff, not sure if you have the right equipment or preparation to act on the truth you've received.

To become like Jesus Christ: How do you *do* that?

START AT THE BEGINNING

The Savior began His mortal life the same way you and I did: as an infant. And in time, like us, Jesus began to grow up (see Doctrine and Covenants 93:11–17). He learned how to walk, talk, and laugh. He learned how to work, read, and get along with people.

In fact, the way the Lord "grew up" is recorded in Luke 2:52: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

If we want to become like the Savior, we can follow His example.

So let's look at this pattern and see for ourselves how becoming like Jesus Christ *is* possible!



There you are, standing at the edge of a spiritual cliff, not sure if you have the right equipment or preparation to act on the truth you've received.

"INCREASE IN WISDOM"

God created our minds to have an amazing capacity to evaluate, process, and implement knowledge. Facts, figures, skills, procedures—the amount of information we can accumulate is nearly limitless!

But like the Savior, we seek to increase in *wisdom*, not just information. Wisdom is being able to correctly use information, understand our choices, and make good decisions.

"The proper use of knowledge constitutes wisdom," taught Elder James E.

Talmage (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.¹ He also explained how the Savior gained wisdom: "He garnered knowledge by study, and gained wisdom by prayer, thought, and effort."² Alma taught his son Helaman, "O, remember, my son, and learn *wisdom* in thy youth; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God" (Alma 37:35; emphasis added). Think about it: Faith, study, and obedience enhance our ability to obtain knowledge and increase in wisdom!

WISDOM

How could you apply the principles of faith and obedience to help you increase in wisdom?

In what ways can increasing in wisdom help you become more like the Savior?

LEARN MORE:

See 2 Nephi 9:28–29; Doctrine and Covenants 130:18–19.

“INCREASE IN STATURE”

Nephi was big and strong. He was what the scriptures call “large in stature” (1 Nephi 2:16). I am not. Nephi’s stature was designed to carry out very different activities than my stature because the Lord had different tasks for Nephi. Nephi had to build a ship, find food for his family, and help them travel through the wilderness.

Our physical bodies have what we

STATURE

In what ways is caring for your physical body related to caring for your spirit?

What will you change or improve in how you care for your body?

LEARN MORE:

Read the April 2012 general conference talk “Thanks Be to God,” or watch the video “God’s Greatest Creation” by President Russell M. Nelson.

need in order to live in and enjoy mortal life. Because of God’s divine design, a newborn child increases in stature over time. We don’t have to develop additional organs or limbs as we age—those elements were already created as a part of our bodies. There is no additional assembly required! But in order for us to serve God and those around us, we must maintain the health of our bodies.

Our physical bodies are the perfectly designed temple, or house, for our spirits (see 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 6:19–20). President Russell M. Nelson taught: “Your body, whatever its natural gifts, is a magnificent creation of God. It is a tabernacle of flesh—a temple for your spirit.”³

Our bodies might experience severe physical challenges, disabilities, and pain because we are having a mortal experience, but our Heavenly Father designed our bodies perfectly to successfully accomplish our opportunities in life.

“INCREASE IN FAVOR WITH GOD”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that “the first great *truth* of all eternity is that God loves *us* with all of *His* heart, might, mind, and strength.”⁴

God loves *you*. Even when you’re having a bad hair day, He loves *you*—with all of your strengths, weaknesses, questions, and hopes. So how do you “increase in favor with God”? You show Him that you love Him back!

Jesus once told His disciples, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Your obedience demonstrates your love for God. Your willing obedience in small, daily activities can prepare you to respond, as His invitations come in the future, and accomplish even greater things.

FAVOR WITH GOD

How did the Savior demonstrate that He loved Heavenly Father? What does this teach you about Jesus?

What effective, righteous action could you take *today* to show your love for God?

LEARN MORE:

See Mosiah 2:22, 41.

“As we learn more about Jesus Christ, we develop greater faith in Him and we naturally want to follow His example.”

Jean B. Bingham, Oct. 2017 general conference.

“INCREASE IN FAVOR WITH MAN”

Surprise! Having the most social media followers does *not* mean you have “favor with man.”

Jesus demonstrated a different way of influencing others—and who He allowed to influence Him. He “went about doing good, . . . for God was with him” (Acts 10:38).

LEARN MORE:

Be a friend like Ammon was to King Lamoni. See Alma 17:19–18:41.

FAVOR WITH MAN

What are some ways you can be a better friend to those around you?

How could following the Savior’s example of “going about doing good” increase your righteous influence with others?

President Henry B. Eyring, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, once said, “I can still remember, as if it were today, friends who touched my life for good long ago. They are gone, but the memory of their love, example, faith, and testimony still lifts me.”⁵

You can increase your influence by being a friend who touches lives for good! *For the Strength of Youth* teaches you how: “Show genuine interest in others; smile and let them know you care about them. Treat everyone with kindness and respect, and refrain from judging and criticizing those around you . . . Make a special effort to be a friend to those who are shy or lonely, have special needs, or do not feel included.”⁶

Think about the individuals you honestly admire and respect—the ones you *favor*. What characteristics have they developed that remind you of Jesus Christ? Because as good as our friends may be, our very best Friend is Jesus Christ, and His example is the one we want to follow!

IT’S ALL CONNECTED

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:52). As you follow the Savior’s pattern of growth, you’ll find that the elements work together perfectly, and you *will* become more like Him. Your mind, body, and spirit will work together for your good, and you will be able to bless the lives of many others and “serve [God] with all your heart, might, mind and strength!” (Doctrine and Covenants 4:2). **NE**

NOTES

1. James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. (1924), 90.
2. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (1916), 112.
3. Russell M. Nelson, Oct. 1998 general conference.
4. Jeffrey R. Holland, Apr. 2016 general conference.
5. Henry B. Eyring, Apr. 2002 general conference.
6. *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), 16.



Snow
JUMPING



By Gale Sears

*I didn't understand the need for rules and commandments—
until I broke one.*

I grew up in the high mountain town of Lake Tahoe, California, USA. As kids, we spent magical winters navigating through four to six feet of snow, digging tunnels, and engineering impressive ice caves. Winter was a wonderland of fun and adventure.

In our neighborhood there were many cabins that people used only in the summertime, and another breathtaking snow sport, indulged in by some of the older kids, was climbing up onto the low roofs or porches of these empty cottages and jumping into the snow drifts far below. This roof-jumping excitement was a big no-no for me; a mom and dad rule that I found very restrictive.

The temptation grew to be too much. One day, at the age of nine, I climbed up a woodpile, monkeyed over an old ivy trellis, and scrambled onto the roof of the neighbor's house. I sat triumphant for several minutes, surveying my domain. I felt free, and confident. It was glorious up here! I was absolutely sure my mom and dad didn't know what they were talking about.

I remember so clearly that first jiggle of doubt as I moved to the edge of the roof and looked down at the snow. It seemed a long way down. "Aw, come on," I chided myself. "You've seen the other kids do it, and they come out laughing, so it must be tons of fun."

Temptation took hold of me, and I launched myself off the roof. Actually, everything seemed wonderful for the two seconds until my feet hit the snow. Then I remembered something important. The big kids always put their arms out, like bird wings, so that they'd only sink into the snow up to their armpits.

My thin little arms were straight down at my sides. The result of this was that I entered the snow like a rocket—sleek, smooth—and I got stuck. The snow pressed around me. I was in about 4 feet 4 inches (1.32 m) deep, and since I was only 4 feet 2 inches (1.27 m) tall, I was in trouble. I was wedged in tight, and it was a terrible feeling. I was not free anymore.

I shoved my head back, looked up into the brilliant blue sky, and yelled. I knew my mom was just inside our house. Sure that she would hear me and come running, I yelled again. No answer. The snow was absorbing my voice like cotton.

Five minutes went by; then 10. I was getting cold and very panicked. I tried to wiggle my way up. No good. I tried to kick my legs. I lost a boot. Fifteen minutes went by. I started to cry. I was so afraid I'd be stuck here forever.

Then I heard my mom's voice calling. It sounded far away, but it was unmistakably her voice, and it was yelling my name.

I yelled out, "Mom, mom, I'm over here! I'm in the snow!"

It took some time, but eventually she found me. She dug me out and took me in to thaw by the fire. I'd been stuck only about 20 minutes, but it seemed like days. I was so glad to be free.

Mom didn't say anything about jumping off roofs, or the loss of my boot. I guess she could tell by the look on my face that I was pondering the big issues of life: rules, foolish acts, and consequences.

Later that day my dad came to my room to have a little talk with me.

"Gale."

"Yes, Dad."

"Your mom and I love you."

I felt tears coming. "Yes, Dad."

"We give you rules because we love you, and we want you to be safe. You may not always understand why there's a rule, but you have to trust us."

"Yes, Dad."

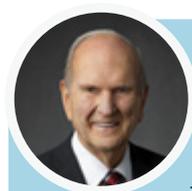
That was it. He must have known that I'd already learned a big lesson from my snowbound mistake. He stopped at the door to smile at me, and I knew without a doubt I was precious to him. I also knew that he would be so sad if I did anything that brought pain into my life. I remember promising myself that I would try to be a better girl.

Junior high and high school brought their share of boundary pushing and challenges. There were times when I put my toes right on the edge of the roof and peered over. It was hard not to jump when so many of the other kids were rebelling. Whenever I thought about jumping, the memory of being stuck in the snow would come to me, and I'd feel again that fear, and cold, and loss of freedom. I'd remember my father's voice of love and concern.

I know that Heavenly Father gives us rules to keep us safe. He does this out of love. I also know that He's very sad when we make choices that bring pain into our lives.

The world may think they're free as they go about breaking or flouting God's laws, but true freedom, safety, and peace come by being obedient to the rules of a loving Heavenly Father. **NE**

The author lives in Utah, USA.



REACH FOR THE LORD'S POWER

"When you reach up for the Lord's power in your life with the same intensity that a drowning person has when grasping and gasping for air, power from Jesus Christ will be yours. When the Savior knows you truly want to reach up to Him—when He can feel that the greatest desire of your heart is to draw His power into your life—you will be led by the Holy Ghost to know exactly what you should do."

President Russell M. Nelson, Apr. 2017 general conference.



MORMONAD

TAKE A STAND

If you don't stand
for something,
you'll fall
for anything.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID STOKER



How to Get BETTER REVELATION RECEPTION

By David Dickson
Church Magazines

Use this activity to see how we can get a clear signal for spiritual communication.

SUPPLIES

- Two paper or plastic cups
- Two paper clips (optional)
- Length of cotton string or fishing line 10–20 feet (3–6 m) long
- Five sheets of construction paper, folded twice



Do you ever stop and think about how many messages compete for your attention each day? And text messages are only the beginning. Add up every billboard, poster, TV commercial, online ad, etc., and soon you're swimming in an ocean of competing voices, all crying out, "Hey, look over here!"

With all those messages swirling around, it can be easy to miss the "still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12). However, we can't afford to miss those crucial pieces of revelation.

Object lesson time!

1. Preparation

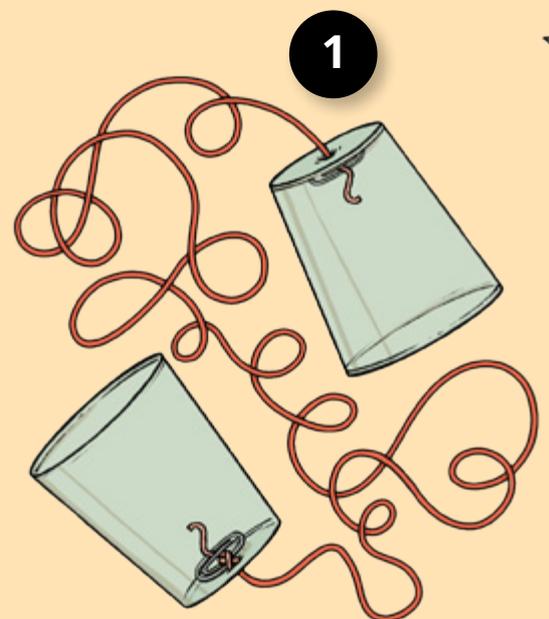
Before the lesson, poke one small hole through the bottom of each cup. Insert the string through the holes and tie a large knot or tie to a paper clip. You need to be able to pull the two cups enough to tighten the string.

Set aside five folded pieces of paper. You're all set!

2. Message Blockers

Share the following quote from President Russell M. Nelson: "I urge you to stretch beyond your current spiritual ability to receive personal revelation."¹

Discuss with your family some possible things that might interfere with our spiritual ability to receive revelation. Answers might include overscheduling our day, failing to pray, skipping scripture study, or making poor choices. You might write the answers on the five folded pieces of paper.



3. Losing the Signal

Ask a family member to hold one of the cups. You'll hold the other. Stretch them apart until the string is tight. Tell your family that you have an important message to share with them, such as the location of tonight's FHE treat! But before speaking into the cup, place the five folded sheets of construction paper at various places across the string. Tell your family that these represent those different ways that we might be blocking out revelation.

Speak your secret message quietly into the cup. Most likely, your other family member will not be able to understand you. But have no fear! All is not lost.

We can get rid of such blocks to revelation. Discuss as many strategies as you can imagine. In addition, you might consider going over this five-part formula that President Nelson provided as a way to increase our ability to receive revelation.²

- Increased purity
- Exact obedience
- Earnest seeking
- Daily feasting on the words of Christ in the Book of Mormon
- Regular time committed to temple and family history work

4. Crystal Clear

Never doubt that those still, small messages from the Holy Ghost can change your life. President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, taught, “The still, small voice, though still and small, is very powerful.”³

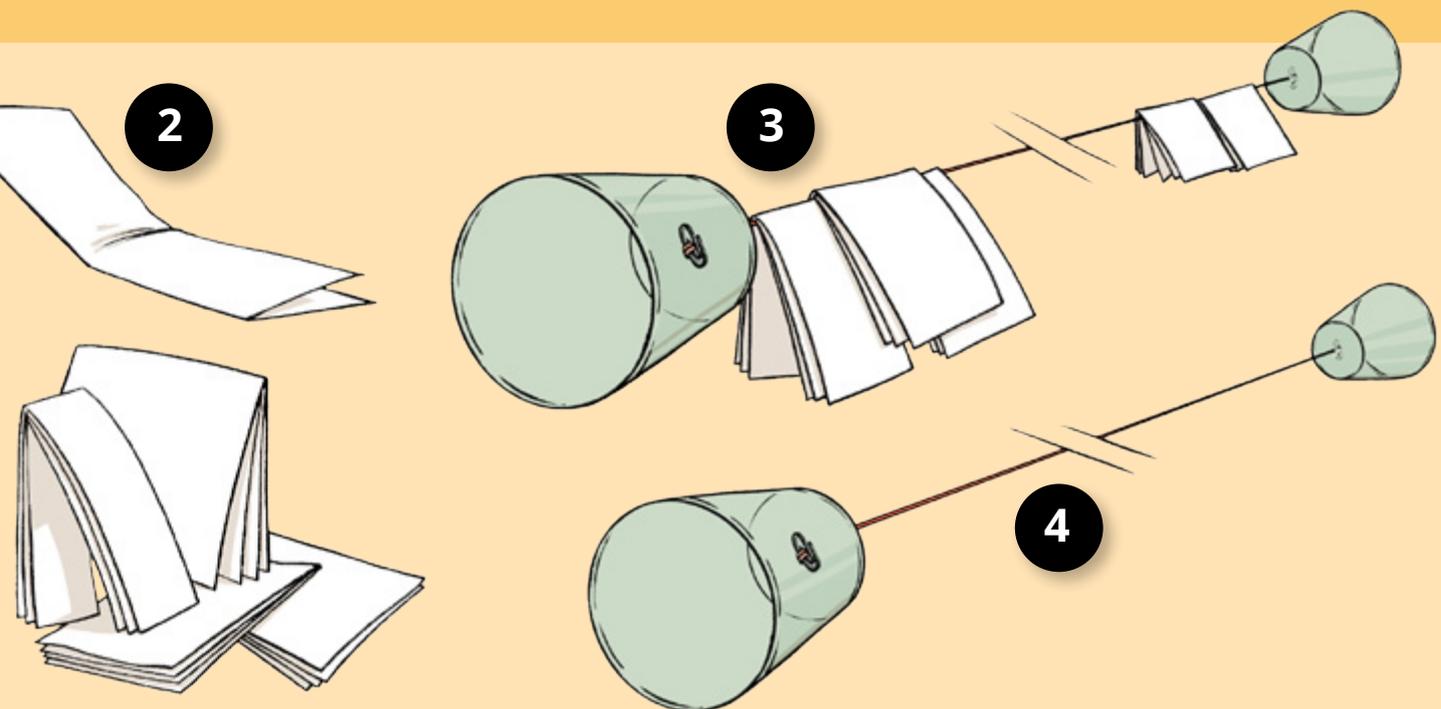
Now that you've chatted about how to increase your ability to receive revelation, repeat the experiment. This time, first remove the strips of paper from the string.

With an open, tight string, repeat your message at the same low volume as before into your cup. This time your voice should come through clearly. And, if you've chosen to reveal the location of a treat, a high-speed search should soon commence. **NE**

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” Apr. 2018 general conference.
2. See Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives.”
3. James E. Faust, “Did You Get the Right Message?” Apr. 2004 general conference.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID HABBEN AND BACKGROUND TEXTURE BY GETTY IMAGES





KICONCO:

When a young woman in Georgia, USA, saw a picture of a family in her homeland of Uganda, she knew she wanted to help them.

By Breanna Call Herbert

Bring! As Kiconco B. sat in her home in Georgia, USA, another picture came into her mom's inbox. It was from Kiconco's uncle who was working in Uganda, the country where Kiconco had been born 12 years earlier. Kiconco expected to see the pictures and texts that her uncle sent every Sunday, but what she didn't expect was the impact this picture would have on her and her summer.

AN INSPIRED PICTURE

In the picture, a group of children were huddled together. Normally, Kiconco and her mom looked at the pictures and then deleted them, but this time, the Spirit inspired them not to. Kiconco looked at the children more closely. "They were wearing clothing that was ripped and didn't fit them

properly," Kiconco, now 13, says.

"They were wearing rags," Kiconco's mom adds.

Kiconco was especially drawn to the two girls in the picture. She asked her uncle about

them and found out that they were sisters being raised by their widowed grandmother, Nuliati. Her uncle then sent another picture of the two girls with their grandmother in front of their home, which had dirt floors and grass for a roof. Kiconco's mom says, "They were standing right in front of their little house that was so beat up." When the rainy season hit Uganda, their home would turn into a mud puddle. This made it hard for the family to cook because they couldn't light a fire. It also made it difficult to sleep because there wasn't a dry place to lie down.



Above: Kiconco and her mom were prompted not to delete this photo. Below: Her uncle later sent another photo of Nuliati and her granddaughters.

DECIDING TO HELP

This picture touched Kiconco. She told her mom, "I'm going to help this family." At first Kiconco decided she was going to send her clothes to the two girls in the picture. But then she says, "I decided to think bigger and brainstormed with

12-YEAR-OLD
HOME BUILDER



Kiconco worked hard and did many different jobs to raise money for Nuliati's home.

my mom. Sending clothes wasn't enough. It would help them more just to have a house. They had clothes. They just needed a house more." And so Kiconco decided to raise money to give them a home.

When Nuliati heard that Kiconco was going to help them get a house, she fell to her knees and cried. She had been praying that God would help her. Kiconco's mom says, "She got to the point that she suffered so much that she thought God didn't know she existed." But God had been listening to Nuliati's prayers, and they were answered in a unique way.

A SUMMER OF SACRIFICE

Kiconco knew she would have to raise money to help give the family a home. She decided to complete small projects and to send the money to her uncle in Uganda, who had found a contractor to build the house. It would take a lot of time and energy, but Kiconco went to work. She says, "When you help people and serve them, it makes you feel good. And it makes them happy—and everyone around you."

She babysat, made and sold bread, watched people's dogs, and painted fingernails. Every day, Kiconco tried to find projects so she could continue to raise enough money to build the house. She packed and moved boxes, cleared poison ivy, harvested corn,

and washed decks. Little by little Kiconco made progress toward her goal. As she earned money, she sent it to her uncle so that the contractor could start building Nuliati's home.

Raising money was hard work, and every now and then, Kiconco was worn out. "Sometimes I didn't want to work anymore. I just wanted to stay home," she says. Kiconco's mom adds, "She really was sacrificing her whole summer." But on those days, Kiconco felt God helping her move forward.

"SENDING CLOTHES
WASN'T ENOUGH. IT
WOULD HELP THEM MORE
JUST TO HAVE A HOUSE."

RECEIVING HELP

Kiconco's mom started a GoFundMe page and posted about Kiconco's project on social media. A stranger from Chicago saw the post and told her grandson about it. He donated the money he earned from mowing grass. One of Kiconco's school teachers told her Sunday School class about Kiconco's goal. The members were so touched that they donated money. One of Kiconco's friends also told her grandmother about it. Her grandmother told the members of her church, who were so happy to hear about it that they also donated money. A woman from Kiconco's ward also sewed a quilt and sold it to raise money for the family. Kiconco's friends and family donated to the cause too. Overall, 35 people donated money to Kiconco's project.





When Kiconco started receiving help from others, she said, "Wow! This could actually work!" From the support of others, Kiconco gained an extra boost of energy and found more work. Finally, after many hours of hard work, Kiconco had raised enough money to finish building Nuliati's home.

ONE STEP FURTHER

The week before Nuliati and her granddaughters moved into their new home, it rained every single day and night, and the little grass roof the family slept under didn't keep out the water. Their new home had a tin roof and cement floors. Here, they could sleep and cook during the rainy season.

Even though the home was finished, Kiconco knew the family didn't have any furniture. In fact, they had never owned beds or even blankets. Kiconco wanted to help but didn't know what else to do, because they had sent all of the money they had raised, and there weren't any more jobs for them to do to raise money.

Then Kiconco told her mom, "I think you might need to take the money from my savings account and go and buy them three beds so they don't have to sleep on the cold cement floor."

The next morning, Kiconco's mom prepared to go to the bank but felt she should wait for the mail to come before she went. When the



Have you or someone you know provided an act of extraordinary service like Kiconco? Share it with us by emailing newera@ldschurch.org. We can't wait to hear from you!

mail finally came, to Kiconco's surprise, she found two envelopes that each had a check donating to the project. Kiconco's mom says, "We opened the mail, looked at each other, and laughed. We almost did a dance!" Now, Kiconco had just enough money to buy furniture for the family. She says, "I knew God was helping me."

Kiconco immediately sent the money to her uncle, who bought the family three beds, blankets, a table, and chairs.





With help from Kiconco's donations, the home for Nuliati and her granddaughters was built.

A FINISHED HOUSE

When the truck pulled up with the furniture, the family was so happy and grateful. Kiconco's mom says, "Even after they moved in, they felt like it was a dream. They were just amazed at the whole thing."

Kiconco says, "It made me happy to finally look at the family's home and to look back at what I had done. It was awesome!" To other youth who want to help others, she says, "Just have faith. You can do anything if you believe you can."

Kiconco's mom adds, "It really strengthened our faith because we never got stuck in any stage of building the house. Every time we ran out of funds, something big would happen."

Nuliati and her two granddaughters still walk barefoot and don't have electricity. But when they walk home in the drenching Uganda rains, they can dry off, cook a meal, and rest. Kiconco says the most important thing she learned was that "when we serve others, we are serving God." Kiconco's small and simple projects came together to bless a family. **NE**

The author lives in Utah, USA.

Marty Arrington, a director of Church public affairs in Georgia, USA, contributed to this article.



"WHEN WE SERVE OTHERS, WE ARE SERVING GOD."





THE PARTY PLAN

Written by
BREANNA CALL
HERBERT

Illustrated by
JIMMY HOLDER

OK, I HAVE A FEW MORE THINGS I NEED TO FINISH BEFORE THE PARTY. I DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME TO BAKE AND DECORATE THE CAKE.

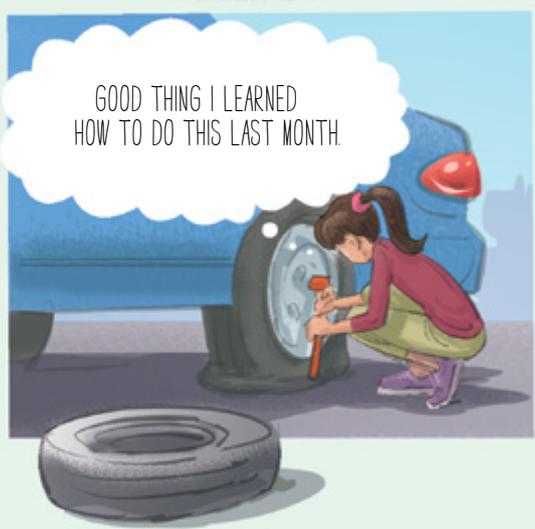
HMM, THE CAKE IS STILL TOO YELLOW ON TOP. I BET IF I PUT IT IN ON THE TOP RACK, IT WILL BAKE FASTER.

WHAT?! IT'S BURNT ON TOP AND GOOEY ON THE BOTTOM!

I REALLY WANT TO WEAR MY NEW BLOUSE TO THE PARTY, BUT IT'S STILL WET FROM THE WASHER.

OH, NO! IT'S TOO SMALL NOW!

I'LL JUST THROW IT IN THE DRYER REAL QUICK.



“Maintain an enthusiasm for learning throughout your life. Find joy in continuing to learn and in expanding your interests.”

For the Strength of Youth (2011), 10.



AN Ensign FOR THE Nations

A signal banner teaches us about how the Lord will gather Israel.

ENSIGN

"In the scriptures, a flag or standard around which people gather in a unity of purpose or identity. In ancient times an ensign served as a rallying point for soldiers in battle" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Ensign," scriptures.lds.org).

BIBLE FACTS



When Moses raised the brazen serpent on a pole (see Numbers 21:8), the word translated as "pole" is the same Hebrew word that is translated as "ensign" elsewhere. Because those who looked on the serpent were healed, it represents Jesus Christ, the Master Healer (see John 3:14–15; Alma 33:19–22).



In the last days, the "root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people" (Isaiah 11:10) for the gathering of Israel, is Jesus Christ.



An ensign was usually raised on a hill or mountain (see Isaiah 18:3). In former times, mountains often represented or served as temples (see Isaiah 2:2).

What We Can Learn

An ensign:



Gathers.

In the last days, the Lord will gather scattered Israel. He has begun this work by restoring His authority and His Church (see Doctrine and Covenants 110:11–12), as well as by sending His servants to preach the gospel. They invite people to “gather” by accepting Jesus Christ, obeying Him, making covenants, and assembling in stakes of Zion in their own lands. “The Book of Mormon and the Church of Jesus Christ are symbolic ensigns to all nations of the earth” (Guide to the Scriptures, “Ensign,” scriptures.lds.org). Also included in the work of gathering are ordinances performed for deceased ancestors.



Is raised up.

The Lord urges us to look upward, to raise our sights and serve a higher cause—His cause.

Focuses on a rallying point.

The center of our faith, devotion, and service is Jesus Christ. He said, “My Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father” (3 Nephi 27:14).

Rallies an army.

We rally to the Lord’s cause by making and keeping covenants, preaching God’s word, keeping His commandments, and serving in His Church. As we minister to one another and stand up for the cause of truth and righteousness, we join the ranks of the Lord’s army.



HOW TO BE AN ENSIGN

“If we are to hold up this Church as an ensign to the nations and a light to the world, we must take on more of the luster of the life of Christ individually and in our own personal circumstances.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), “An Ensign to the Nations, a Light to the World,” Oct. 2003 general conference.



“And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. . . .”

“And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”

Isaiah 11:10, 12.

By Kuinini Manumua

When I was a freshman in high school, the weightlifting coach asked me to join weightlifting. “Mmm . . . no thanks,” I said. “Not my thing.”

But he kept at it. For weeks.

Finally, I tried it out. He was right: I really liked weightlifting. It was definitely weird at first; my body had never done anything like it before. But I grew to love the feeling of working out. I also loved my teammates and the competitions. And I started doing really well!

Now weightlifting is a huge part of my life. I practice every day for at least two or three hours, doing back squats, clean and jerks, and snatches. (And if you don't know what any of those things are, don't worry—neither did I!)

Like many things, weightlifting takes time and patience, and sometimes that can be difficult. Luckily, my family is always right there encouraging me, even when I complain about how sore I am (which is often). My dad always has ice packs and pep talks ready for



A WEIGHTLIFTER'S GUIDE TO STANDING

ONE SCRIPTURE CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE—EVEN IN WEIGHTLIFTING COMPETITIONS.

me when I get home from practice. And my mom always sacrifices so I can go to competitions.

A few years ago, I went to one of those competitions in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. I was excited to compete against weightlifters from all over the country, but I was a little worried about being so far away from my family. To make it easier, my mom promised to text me scriptures and thoughtful messages every day.

The night before the competition, some kids threw a party. I thought it would be cool to go, so my roommate and I went to check it out. But right away I knew it wasn't my kind of party. There were teenagers drinking, smoking, saying bad words, and dancing inappropriately. I knew I shouldn't be there, but I was worried what my roommate might think. Or what the other competitors might think.

But then something popped into my head:

"Stand ye in holy places."

It was from my favorite scripture, and one my mom had sent me that morning: Doctrine and Covenants 87:8: "Wherefore, stand ye in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come; for behold, it cometh quickly, saith the Lord. Amen."

I don't know why my mom sent me that scripture that day, but it's one I've loved my entire life. I've had it memorized since I was eight, and again and again it has reminded me to have courage, be obedient, and stand for what I believe in.

"Stand ye in holy places."

"I'm gonna go," I said to my roommate. I explained about the scripture my mom had sent me that morning. "This is not a place I should be standing."

My roommate told me she didn't want to be there, either. She was uncomfortable too but hadn't wanted to leave by herself and be seen as a loser. She thanked me for saying something, and we left.

The next morning, we found out that soon after we left, the kids who were at the party were caught and eliminated from the competition for drinking and doing drugs.

If I hadn't been prompted to remember my mom's verse, I might've been disqualified from the competition too. I ended up winning first place, so I'm really grateful I got to compete. (I think I thank my mom every single day for texting me.)

Winning a weightlifting competition is a pretty obvious and immediate blessing from keeping the commandments. But Doctrine and Covenants 87:8 doesn't say, "Stand ye in holy places so you can win weightlifting competitions." And John 14:15 doesn't say, "If you want immediate blessings, keep my commandments." It says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." The Lord blesses us because He loves us. And we try to be holy and obedient because we trust and love the Lord. **NE**

The author lives in California, USA.

STRONG

By Eric B. Murdock
Church Magazines



I FIGURED THE
BEST WAY TO FIND
A TESTIMONY WAS
TO READ THE BOOK
OF MORMON AND ASK
GOD IF IT IS TRUE.



I NEEDED TO KNOW

The summer before my freshman year of high school, my family moved from a small town in California, USA, to northern Virginia, right outside of Washington, D.C. As I walked through the high school doors on the first day, the hallways were jam-packed with students going every which way to get to their classes. Over 2,000 students were crammed into an old, overcrowded building, but I felt alone as I walked the halls. I didn't feel like I fit in, I struggled in my classes, and I began to think things would never improve. To make matters worse, as I attended church and seminary, and as I participated in gospel discussions at home, it also became obvious to me that I didn't have a testimony of my own.

Lying in bed one night, I thought that if the gospel really is the source of peace, hope, and joy, then I needed to know for myself if it was true. I figured the best way to do that was to read the Book of Mormon and accept Moroni's invitation to ask God with a sincere heart, with real intent and faith in Christ, if it is true (see Moroni 10:4–5).

As my freshman year came to an end, I began to seriously read the Book of Mormon for the first time in my life. Throughout the summer, I read and prayed every day. It took a while, but about a month or two into my sophomore year, I had read the Book of Mormon from cover to cover.

One night, I knelt by my bed and asked Heavenly Father if the Book of Mormon and the Church were true. I was sure I was going to get an answer, but if I was expecting some kind of miraculous spiritual manifestation, I was disappointed because nothing happened. I felt confused and frustrated. Why hadn't Heavenly Father answered my prayer? Despite my disappointment, I continued to study and pray.

One day, I explored the woods behind my house. It was fall, and some of the leaves had already turned red and gold. The air was cool, the sky was blue, and beams of sunlight shone through the trees. I found a big rock by a stream to sit on, and as I watched the water flow by, I opened my heart to God again.

Suddenly I had an impression, as if God were asking me, "Eric, what has happened in your life since you started reading the Book of Mormon and praying every day?"

Immediately, I thought of my friends. I had made friends

that summer who are still dear to me today. My anxiety about school had subsided, and my grades had improved. I realized that I was a lot happier and that I had strength beyond my own to face the challenges that had been so difficult the year before.

Then it happened.

I didn't hear a voice, but the Spirit filled my heart as these words came to my mind: "Of course, it's true!" An overwhelming feeling of peace, joy, and assurance came over me. I knew I had finally found my answer.

"It's true! It's true!" I said to myself over and over again as I walked home.

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) once said, "There is a power in the [Book of Mormon] which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book."¹

That day in the woods of northern Virginia, I came to know that President Benson's words are true. I realized what a difference the Book of Mormon had made in my life, and I also realized that because the Book of Mormon is true, then Joseph Smith is a prophet, we have a prophet today, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is God's kingdom once again established on the earth.

If you don't have a testimony, or if you feel that you're losing your testimony, don't give up! A testimony didn't come to me right away. You might have to wait too, and that's OK!

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said a testimony "is a heavenly bestowal when there is the right effort."² Testimonies grow gradually through experiences as we obey God's commandments, study, pray, learn, serve, and share what we know with others.

When I remember my special spiritual experience, a scripture always comes to mind: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your mind, which shall fill your soul with joy" (Doctrine and Covenants 11:13).

I am grateful for the undeniable influence of the Holy Ghost that told me, "Of course, it's true!"

I have been blessed ever since. **NE**

NOTES

1. Ezra Taft Benson, "The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion," Oct. 1986 general conference.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Testimony," Apr. 1998 general conference.

@LDSYOUTH



During the summer,

I was able to work with the missionaries, and had the opportunity to share my testimony. At first, it was hard. People asked a lot of questions, and I began to have doubts.

But then I prayed a lot, and the sister missionaries prayed with me. I also fasted. I asked Heavenly Father to help me feel the Spirit and to replace my doubts with something of which I was certain.

As I continued to bear my testimony, I saw my doubts change to understanding. I saw that the things I believe in are not just things that I know about; they are things that I know are true. The gospel does so much to bless me, and I can say with certainty that I know these blessings come from God. And I learned that even if other people don't accept my testimony, I can see the influence of my testimony on them.

For example, we met a lady who was very sad because she had lost a child. I had the opportunity to bear to her my testimony of eternal families and to speak about the temple. I told her how happy I am to have a temple in France so that I can have the blessing of being united for always with my family and my ancestors.

When we bear witness of the gospel to those around us, even if certain people don't accept it, we have done our part and they have their agency. But maybe we have planted a seed with them, and the seed will grow.

Trida T., 17, Paris, France



Paige J., 16, Utah, USA

I really like science and math. I also play the organ and piano and I like to draw with charcoal. I'm a Nordic ski jumper. I've been doing it since I was nine—so about seven years now. I used to train for freestyle skiing right next to a Nordic jump. I thought that the jump looked really fun. So, I asked my mom if I could try it. I really liked it from the day I started. Now I'm on the USA Nordic Women's Junior National Team. As soon as you jump, it's like flying!



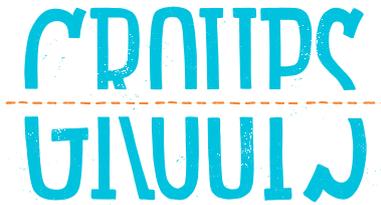
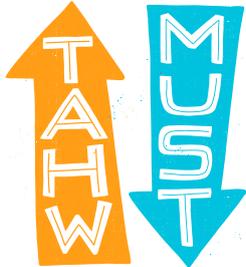
Keaton R., 14, Washington, USA

Hi, my name is Keaton. I like video games, and I am on a swim team. I'm also a black belt in taekwondo. I love The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and I'm glad I get to go to church each week to help pass the sacrament.

FUN STOP

Crack the Code

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



Brothers and sisters,
I brought my math
homework by mistake.
As it's all I've got,
 $2(\sqrt{16+8})=24$
 $3(\sqrt{4-1})=3$



SUMMER BIRD

Just a
Riddle

The universe doesn't have it, but the world does.
A father doesn't have it, but a mother does.
A building doesn't have it, but a home does.

WHAT IS IT?

Find the Right Answer Right Away!

Can you find a single word that links the two clues together? The word will have two different meanings but only one spelling.

Example: How your packages reach your doorstep.

ADDRESS

"The president is making a big speech to the nation tonight."

1. "That is one feather-soft pillow."

The opposite of up.

2. "Please don't leave the door open."

Nearby.

3. Leftover money after a purchase.

What we hope our goals will lead to each New Year.

4. "Hey, you're both wearing green!"

A campfire's humble beginnings.

5. What missionaries do right before entering the field.

Counting its cars is a favorite pastime.

6. A cue to start clapping.

"That wrapped present needs one more thing on top."

7. Skyscrapers can't be built very high without this.

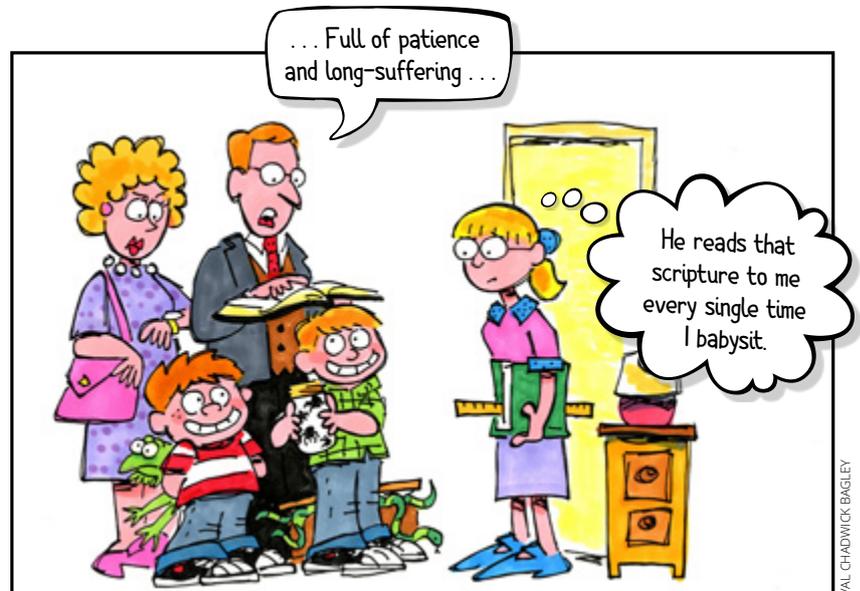
A tall bird that loves the water.

8. The first thing created during the Creation.

How a backpack feels after you dump out all your schoolbooks!

How many F's?

Can you correctly count the number of *f*'s in this sentence on your first try?



How can I overcome distractions and focus more on my relationship with Heavenly Father?

“Consider the scripture study we’ve been taught to incorporate into our daily lives. Or consider the personal prayers and the kneeling family prayers that are regular practices for faithful Latter-day Saints. Consider attendance at seminary for youth or institute classes for young adults. Though each of these practices may seem to be small and simple, over time they result in powerful spiritual uplift and growth.”

President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Small and Simple Things,” Apr. 2018 general conference.



Don't Miss Church

One of the best ways to strengthen our relationship with the Savior and Heavenly Father is to not

miss our Church meetings. There are so many worldly distractions, but when you go to church, you can leave all those outside and focus on Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. I think it's important to put away our cell phones, listen to the Spirit, and be able to learn about the Savior.

Owen P., 12, California, USA

Serve Others

I feel my Savior's love when I serve others, because “when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17). Rereading conference talks and watching Mormon

Messages also help me feel God's love for everyone, including me.

Grace W., 12, New York, USA

Repentance and Forgiveness

To get closer to our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, we should not only say our prayers, read our scriptures, and go to church; we have to love Them. If you do something wrong, don't just blame it on others. We must humble ourselves, repent, and ask Heavenly Father for forgiveness. Through repentance and forgiveness, we feel the miracle of God's love for us, and by feeling that, we become closer to our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

Sarger B., 14, Arkansas, USA

Choose Good Activities

We can focus more on our relationship with God by saying daily prayers and reading the scriptures. At school, it is important to not let bad things change the way you are, such as hearing bad words and listening to friends talk about inappropriate things. I walk away from those situations and don't let it get to me by thinking of other things that are good and trying to make sure I involve myself with good activities and good friends.

Trox H., 12, Idaho, USA



Count Your Blessings

Count your blessings.

Doing so helps you understand just how important and blessed you are. Look around for those you can help, and learn of the love and the blessings that they and you receive from Heavenly Father.

Abby J., 19, New York, USA

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



Other people seem so sure of their testimonies, but I'm not. Does that mean I don't have one?

"A testimony is a testimony, and it should be respected, whether it is small or large."¹

Because one of the purposes of this life is to build faith in Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, we are born without a sure knowledge of truth. We first hear the truth, and then we must desire to know for ourselves by acting on that truth (see John 7:17; Alma 32:28–34). We believe first; then knowledge can come if we seek it. So belief is nothing to scoff at.

A young man once said to Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles that he didn't *know* but *believed* the Church is true.

"I hugged that boy until his eyes bulged out," said Elder Holland. "I told him with all the fervor of my soul that *belief* is a precious word, an even more precious act, and he need never apologize for 'only believing.' . . . I told this boy that belief was always the first step toward conviction."²

We know spiritual truths by spiritual means (see 1 Corinthians 2:10–14). As we sincerely seek the truth and obey God's commandments, the Holy Ghost witnesses to us that the gospel is true. Through this process, you can gradually become more confident in knowing you do have a testimony. **NE**

NOTES

1. Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), "How Does the Spirit Speak to Us?" *New Era*, Feb. 2010, 3.
2. Jeffrey R. Holland, Apr. 2013 general conference.

Tell Us What You Think:

If Heavenly Father has so many children, how can He know me personally and care about me?

Send your answer and photo by February 15, 2019.

Go to 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.

FUN STOP ANSWERS (from pages 40–41): Find the Right Answer Right Away: 1. address 2. down 3. close 4. change 5. match 6. train 7. bow 8. crane 9. light
Crack the Code: Top row: what goes up must come down; jaywalking; forever family; middle: split into groups; a face in the crowd; speaking in church; bottom: pace back and forth; middle school; lucky break
Just a Riddle: The letter O How many Fs: 10. Some find only 9 because our brains have a hard time catching the "f" in "of," which makes a "v" sound.

SETTING REALISTIC GOALS You Can Accomplish

It's January! The time of new beginnings, fresh starts, and writing down long lists of goals you're going to try really hard to reach and then forget about or give up on by the middle of the year and promise yourself that you'll "try again next year." Sound familiar? Why is it that we want to change and become better, but sometimes, we just can't stick with our goals? Well, success is determined by how realistic our goals are and how much work we're willing to put in!

Here are a few tips on how to set realistic goals you can accomplish this year:

- * **Write your goals down.** Keep your goals somewhere you can see every day! Whether they are on a bulletin board in your room, in your locker at school, or even on your phone, keep them somewhere you will see them every day. The more you're reminded of the goals you've set, the more likely you are to keep working toward them.
- * **Be specific.** If you have "Learn something new" on your list of new year's resolutions, it's definitely a realistic goal, but it's not specific! What sort of thing do you want to learn? A new instrument? A new recipe? Maybe a new hobby altogether? Be specific about what you want to accomplish.
- * **Set short-term goals.** You can set a major goal for yourself, but in order to achieve that goal, you need to set some milestones to hit on the way. For example, you can say you want to run a marathon this year, but in order to work up to being able to run for 26 miles, you need to start small. Set a goal to run a few miles every week, and then slowly increase your distance each week until you've reached 26 miles. You didn't learn how to walk without first taking baby steps.
- * **Make time for your goals.** A lot of times, we want to work on our goals, but life gets so busy that it can be easy for them to get lost among school, jobs, friends, and family. But, if you set aside a specific time to work on your goals each day, each week, or however often you would like, you are more likely to stick with them.
- * **Don't do too much.** The beginning of the year is a time when everyone makes long lists of New Year's resolutions—sometimes so many that you can hardly remember everything that you've planned to do. If you start with only a couple goals, instead of throwing yourself headfirst into forty at a time, you will feel less overwhelmed and more confident in your efforts to reach your goals. And when you achieve one, you're more likely to achieve another! Small things lead to big things. **NE**



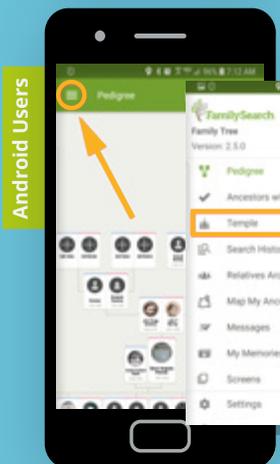
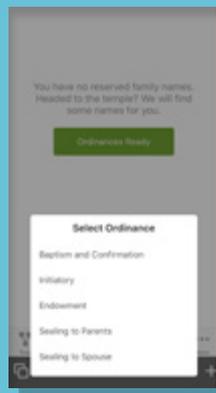
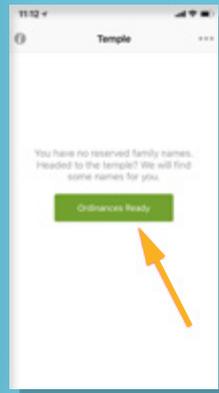
FAMILY TREE APP: Ordinances Ready

DOING TEMPLE work for your ancestors is a great way to bring your family history to life. Do you have temple work you can do for your ancestors? Well if you don't, here's a really, really easy way to find

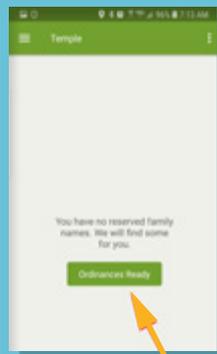
some family members you can do temple work for. All you need is a phone and an app.

1 Download the FamilySearch Family Tree App and sign in. You should be on your home screen.

2 Tap the **Temple icon** at the bottom.



Tap the menu bar in the upper-left corner. Then tap on **Temple**.



3 If you have some ancestors' work reserved, you'll see them listed here.

If you don't have anything reserved, you'll get some soon.

Either way you should see a green **Ordinances Ready** button.

Tap on the button and a white box labeled **Select Ordinance Type** comes up.

From there, pick which ordinance type you want.

Then, magically, a list of ancestors will pop up! All of these people need you to help them by completing ordinances in the temple.

Now you can choose to print cards for your relatives or write down the **Family Ordinance Request (FOR)** number for each ordinance your ancestor needs to have completed. You can bring either one to the temple.

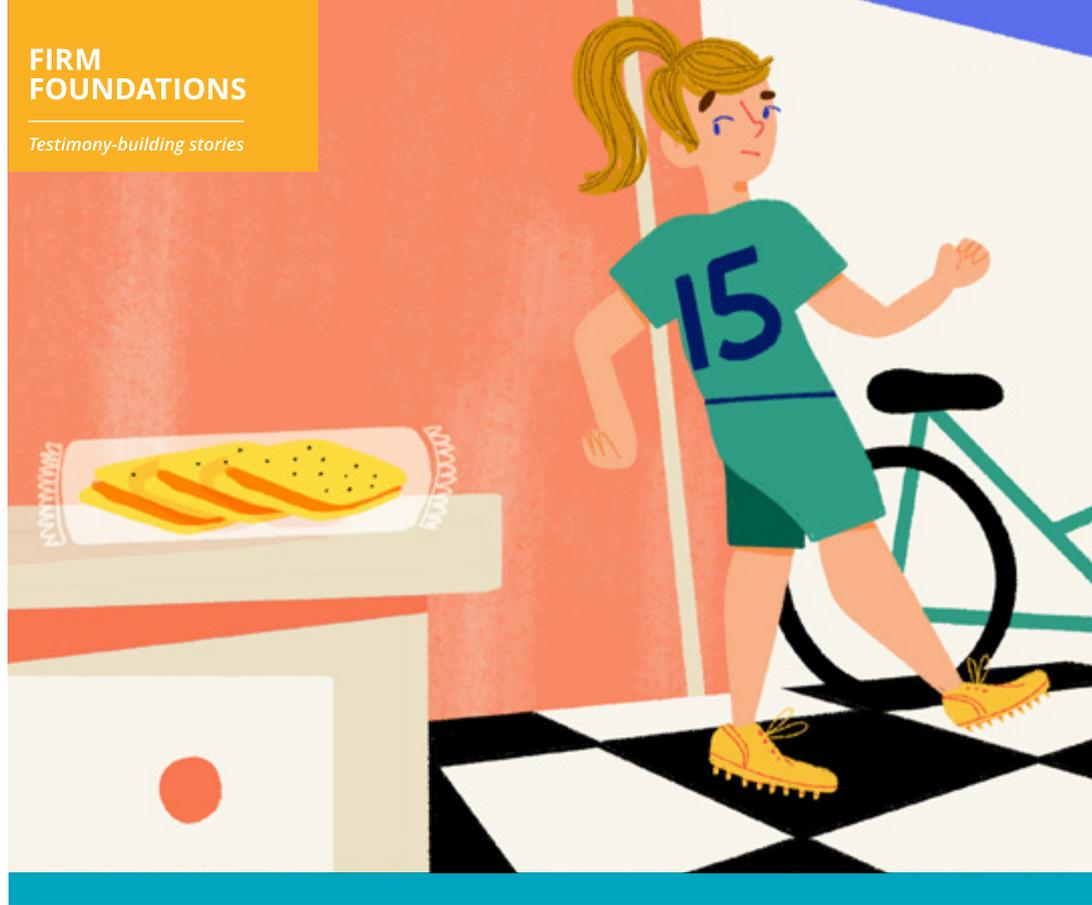
Really, really easy, right? Have fun at the temple!

THINGS TO KNOW:

The app will only reserve ordinances for people that are the same sex as you.

It might not give you new ordinances if you already have some ordinances reserved.

It will only give you a few people at a time, not all the people that need to have their work done. That means you can check back often for more people that need to have their temple work done. **NE**



“TAKE THE PEANUT BUTTER CRACKERS”

IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL DAY, so I decided to ride my bike to the ward barbecue. I wouldn't be able to stay long because I had cross-country practice. As I was getting ready to go, the idea of taking some peanut butter crackers crossed my mind. How silly, I thought, I'm going to a ward barbecue. I don't need to take any food.

As I pedaled to the barbecue, I again thought I should've packed some peanut butter crackers. Too late now. Soon I was at the park waiting for the food to be ready. I waited and waited and waited. By now my stomach was growling, and I was getting

hungrier by the minute. But I couldn't wait any longer; it was time for practice, and I had to leave. I wished I had those crackers.

When practice was over, I pedaled back to the barbecue, wanting desperately to eat. I made it to the park just as people were driving off. Please let there be food left! I scrambled trying to find leftovers. Hamburgers! Yes, there were some left! I slapped some meat on a bun and devoured my cold burger.

As I took another bite, I had a new thought: Heavenly Father cares about me. He was trying to send a message that would have helped me. It's miraculous, really, all the ways we are watched over. To have the Spirit's guidance is an amazing blessing, even if it's a simple thought like taking peanut butter crackers.

Name withheld, Washington, USA

“As you heed promptings from the Holy Ghost . . . you may be removed, without ever knowing, from spiritual and temporal danger.”

Elder Gary E. Stevenson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2017 general conference.

What Are Some Ways the Holy Ghost Speaks?

1. Through positive, peaceful feelings (see Romans 15:13).
2. By enlightening your understanding (see Doctrine and Covenants 6:14–15; Alma 19:6).
3. Through ideas that come to you (see Doctrine and Covenants 8:2–3).
4. By reminding you of things you've already heard (see John 14:26).

READING THE BOOK OF MORMON SAVED MY SCHOLARSHIP

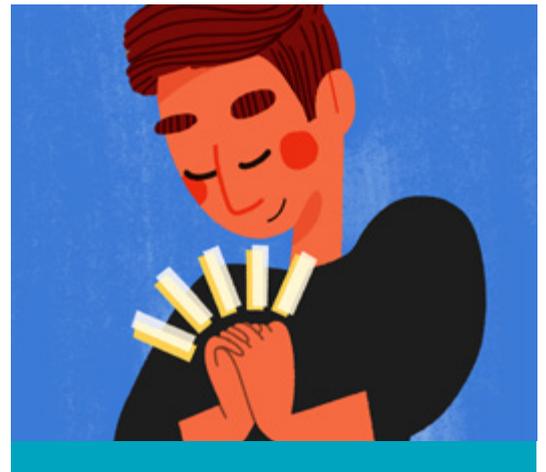
I KNEW my parents couldn't afford to pay for my college education, so I'd studied like crazy in high school. All that effort paid off—I got into the school of my choice and received a good scholarship.

In college I did my best to keep up, but sometimes it felt like I was slipping behind. When midterms rolled around, my grades hit me like a bucket of ice water. If I continued on this path, I would lose my scholarship by the end of the term. I panicked. What more could I do? I was already getting up before dawn and studying until the library closed.

In despair I turned to the Lord in prayer. The distinct answer was to read the Book of Mormon every day. What? How could reading more help when I couldn't even finish what was already on my schedule? But I trusted in the Spirit's promptings, so when I got up early to study, I read my Book of Mormon first and then turned to my college books. Miraculously, I got all of my reading done for that day.

Continuing this study pattern over the following weeks, I got all the way caught up on my schoolwork and even had time for a little bit of a social life. By the time final exams were finished, my grades were high enough that I was no longer in danger of losing my scholarship. My dreams of receiving a college education could still come true as long as I kept listening to God's promptings.

Jennifer G., Arizona, USA



HE WANTS TO HELP ME

I HAVE ALWAYS struggled to fit in. One night this particular struggle was hitting me really hard. It pushed me to the point of tears. When it came time for bed, I was feeling really drained and didn't want to think about this struggle anymore. I decided I wouldn't pray about it. I would just say my regular prayers and then go to sleep.

But as soon as I started praying, the Holy Ghost began to work on me, telling me that my Savior loved me, that He wanted to help me, and that I wasn't alone. I was actually having a conversation with my Heavenly Father through the Holy Ghost. I was able to express how much I hurt, and He listened.

The Spirit was so strong that I knew in that moment that Heavenly Father and my Savior would never really leave me alone. They would always be there for me. I felt strengthened and uplifted and knew that I would be able to get through this trial. I know that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ love me. Never again will I forget that. They are waiting to help us. All we have to do is reach out.

David M., Idaho, USA

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALYSSA GONZALEZ



Become More Christlike through the Sacrament

By Elder D. Todd Christofferson
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

From an October 2017 general conference address.

The symbolism of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is beautiful to contemplate. The bread and water represent the flesh and blood of Him who is the Bread of Life and the Living Water (see John 4:10), poignantly reminding us of the price He paid to redeem us. As the bread is broken, we remember the Savior's torn flesh. As we drink the water, we think of the blood He shed in Gethsemane and on the cross and its sanctifying power (see Moses 6:60).

But figuratively eating His flesh and drinking His blood has a further meaning, and that is to internalize the qualities and character of Christ. As we partake of the sacramental bread and water each week, we would do well to consider how fully and completely we must incorporate His character and the pattern of His sinless life into our life and being. Jesus could not have atoned for the sins of others unless He Himself was sinless. Since justice had no claim on Him, He could offer Himself in our place to satisfy justice and then extend mercy.

Partaking of the Savior's flesh and drinking His blood means to put out of our lives anything inconsistent with a Christlike character and to make His attributes our own. This is the larger meaning of repentance: not only a turning away from past sin but also "a turning of the heart and will to God" going forward (see Bible Dictionary, "Repentance"). God will show us our flaws and failings, but He will also help us turn weakness into strength (see Ether 12:27). If we sincerely ask, "What lack I yet?" (Matthew 19:20), He will not leave us to guess, but in love He will answer for the sake of our happiness. And He will give us hope. **NE**



Born January 24, 1945, in **American Fork, Utah.**

Moved from Utah to New Jersey when he was in high school.



He was called to be an Apostle in **April 2008.**



Elder **D. TODD CHRISTOFFERSON**



Called to serve in the Argentina North Mission. Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) was one of his mission presidents.



1964-66



When he was about 5 years old, he stole a candy bar from a grocery store. His mom took him back to the store to apologize and pay.

Married **Katherine Thelma Jacob** May 28, 1968, in the Salt Lake Temple.



Attended **Brigham Young University.**



Served as the Mexico South Area President.

When he was 13, he helped his mother by baking bread after she had surgery.



He continued to **bake bread** for his family until he left for college.



Has **5 children** and **16 grandchildren.**

When he was a youth, he asked for a Bible for Christmas.



Before his first time speaking in general conference, his daughter gave him a nice note that ended with "P.S. Don't trip."



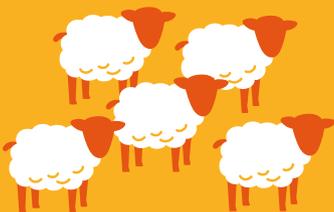
Earned his **law degree from Duke University** and worked as a lawyer.



Called in 1998 to the Presidency of the Seventy.



As a kid, he had a summer job picking pears and peaches.



He helped care for his family's flock of sheep when he was a boy. During a spring blizzard, he worked to save all the newborn lambs.

SUNDAY: WE HAVE SOME IDEAS

Starting this month, we'll have an extra hour to learn the gospel at home on Sunday. What will you do with that time? Maybe we can help.

In this issue, you can find articles to help you:

Put together an object lesson to share with your family (page 22).



Learn how the Savior grew in four different areas of His life (page 14).

Understand the meaning behind this year's Mutual theme scripture (page 12).



Get some advice on setting realistic goals (page 44).

Have a look through the rest of the issue for more ideas.