

GOD'S GUIDING HAND



The Lord will shape your life to His purposes if you will let Him. And great blessings will result.

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Of the Seventy

What will your life be like in, say, 10 years, 20 years? What kind of job or career will you have?

What Church callings will come to you? What will your family be like?

I can answer all of those questions for you with absolute certainty: I'm certain I don't know. But I'm equally certain that God *does* know. And if you trust in Him and place yourself in His hands, you may find Him taking you in unexpected directions, giving you wonderful experiences and opportunities.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

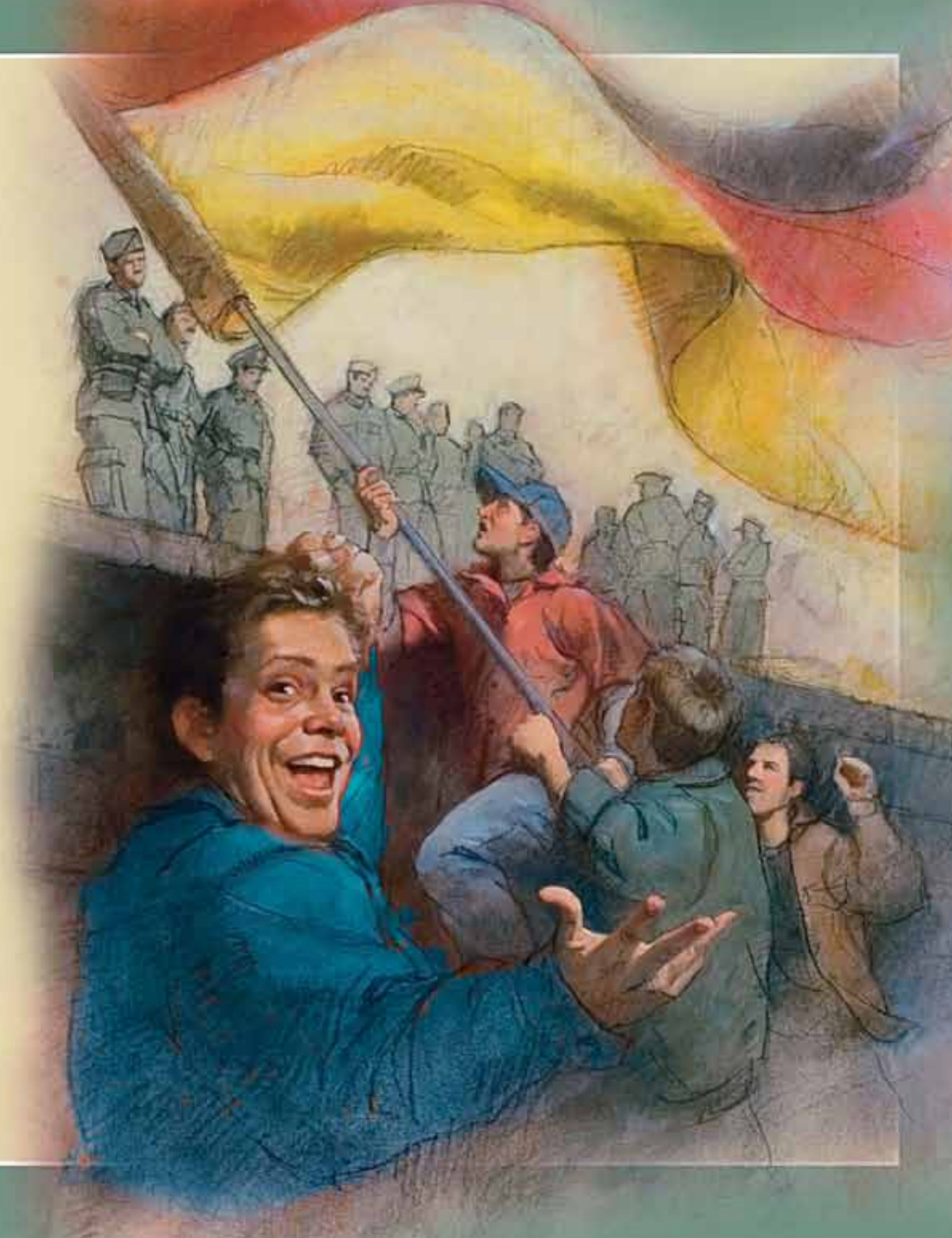
"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5–6).

The same God who directs the course of nations cares enough about you, one of His children, to bless you personally. I have witnessed and experienced both of these examples of the guiding hand of God.

Blessing Whole Nations

When I was growing up, Germany was a divided nation. The west, where I lived, was free and democratic and became prosperous. The east was ruled by a communist system that was allied with the Soviet Union. A border separated east and west, marked by walls, barbed wire, minefields, and towers manned by guards with machine guns. Trapped in the east, behind that border, were a number of faithful Latter-day Saints who longed for freedom to worship and for the blessings of the temple.

We members of the Church knew that someday—in fulfillment of prophecy—the gospel would be preached in every nation (see Matthew 24:14). But because the armies seemed so powerful and the governments so hard-hearted, we feared that only a major international conflict or other world calamity would bring the necessary changes to East Germany, Poland, and the other countries under Soviet domination.



The same God who speaks to prophets and who changes the course of nations is willing to speak to your heart through His Spirit. He will guide the course of your life and make much more of you than you could ever make of yourself.

The Lord knew better. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) challenged all Church members to pray that the borders would be opened. And slowly but surely miraculous things began to happen. The East German government allowed a temple to be built on its territory, and the Freiberg Germany Temple was dedicated in 1985. Then in 1988, following a request from Church leaders, the government agreed to allow missionaries into the country and missionaries from East Germany to serve out of the country. In November 1989 the East German government opened the Berlin Wall, and it was soon demolished. The government fell, and Germany became united under a democratic government.

Historians list many causes for these great events. But there is no doubt in my mind that behind it all, the Lord was guiding the destinies of these nations so that His purposes could be fulfilled.

Guiding a Life

That same God is interested in you personally and will guide and shape your life for your own blessing and for the blessing of others—if you will invite Him to do so. I know it because He has shaped my life and kept His promise that when I put Him first, He will bless me with all other things that I need. I have seen this happen many times in my life.

Our family were the only Latter-day Saints in our town of 60,000 people. We did our best to live the gospel. I felt the Spirit often, and I never really doubted that the Church was true. But while serving in the military, I felt a strong desire to know for myself that

the Book of Mormon is true. So I went to a private place and did just as the Book of Mormon counsels (see Moroni 10:4–5). I asked God. And I received a witness—a spiritual feeling of warmth, comfort, peace, and great happiness that I shall never forget.

After my military service, I pursued an education in military administration in the West German government. It was quite demanding, but I gained a broad background in such things as finance, real estate, legal affairs, and so forth. I also had a calling to serve in the district presidency. While my fellow students were busy studying on Sundays, I was fulfilling Church assignments and spending time with my family. It was hard, but the Lord's promises are true, and you can rely on them. I did as well as any of my fellow students.

After graduation, I worked for the government for eight years. I was guaranteed a lifetime job and a very good pension. It looked as if my life was comfortably laid out before me. Then the Church's Presiding Bishopric asked me if I would be willing to move to Frankfurt and work as the area representative for Europe. I would have to give



up my secure job and future pension. But when my wife and I prayed about it, we felt that it was the right thing to do. From then on, my life went in a different but very blessed direction.

My government training had prepared me for many of the things I dealt with in my new responsibility. And taking this job allowed me to serve later as a mission president, something I would never have been permitted to do if I were still working for the government.

I share these things with you with deep gratitude and not to boast but to show you that the Lord will shape your life to His purposes if you will let Him. And great blessings will result. I can promise you that not only will He bless you in such important things as your career, but if you turn to

Him in prayer, He will bless you in small, everyday challenges.

I have experienced this many times in my life.

Blessed from Day to Day

I remember when I was serving as a branch president and was working

on our annual tithing report. It was a beautiful winter day, and my wife was waiting to go for a walk with me. I was used to doing finances as a government officer, so this was no big task for me. But every time I tried to balance the figures, they did not add up right. I kept trying and trying, but nothing worked, and I was getting frustrated. I asked Heavenly Father to help.

After I got up from my knees, I couldn't see that anything had changed. But I felt prompted to review a specific portion of the donation receipt file again. In those days the receipts were glued together in pads, and this time I discovered that two receipts had stuck together and looked like one receipt. The problem was solved.

Your challenge may be as ordinary as one I had not long ago. I had bought a new high-speed modem for my computer, but when I hooked everything up according to the directions, it did not work. I went through the troubleshooting instructions, reconnected everything, and called the help desk of the manufacturer, but still it didn't work. The equipment was even tested at the store where I bought it, and they couldn't find anything wrong. So I took it back home. But this time I remembered to pray. That was the only thing I did that was different. This time the equipment worked, and it still works.

Now, some of these events affected whole nations. Some affected the whole course of my life. And some are quite small on the grand scale of things. But that is precisely my point. The same God who speaks to prophets and who changes the course of nations is willing to speak to your heart through His Spirit. He will guide the course of your life and make much more of you than you could ever make of yourself. And He will help you with the everyday challenges of your life if you will trust in Him and lean on Him.

He knows you, He loves you, and His promises are sure. **NE**

