

JULY 2014

THE

New Era

LEARNING ABOUT COVENANTS

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UNDERSTANDING SYMBOLISM

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"Truth Will Prevail"



Divine Covenants

MAKE STRONG CHRISTIANS

What is it about making and keeping covenants with God that gives us power?



By Elder D. Todd Christofferson

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

On August 15, 2007, Peru suffered a massive earthquake that all but destroyed the coastal cities of Pisco and Chincha. Like many other Church leaders and members, Wenceslao Conde, the president of the Balconcito Branch of the Church in Chincha, immediately set about helping others whose homes were damaged.

Four days after the earthquake, Elder Marcus B. Nash of the Seventy was in Chincha helping to coordinate the Church's relief efforts there and met President Conde. As they talked about the destruction that had occurred and what was being done to help the victims, President Conde's wife, Pamela, approached, carrying one of her small children. Elder Nash asked Sister Conde how her children were. With a smile, she replied that through the goodness of God they were all safe and well. He asked about the Condes' home.

"It's gone," she said simply.

"What about your belongings?" he inquired.

"Everything was buried in the rubble

of our home," Sister Conde replied.

"And yet," Elder Nash noted, "you are smiling as we talk."

"Yes," she said, "I have prayed and I am at peace. We have all we need. We have each other, we have our children, we are sealed in the temple, we have this marvelous Church, and we have the Lord. We can build again with the Lord's help."

The Power of Covenants

What is the source of such moral and spiritual power, and how do we obtain it? The source is God. Our access to that power is through our covenants with Him. A covenant is an agreement between God and man, an accord whose terms are set by God.¹ In these divine agreements, God binds Himself to sustain, sanctify, and exalt us in return for our commitment to serve Him and keep His commandments.

What is it about making and keeping covenants with God that gives us the power to smile through hardships, to convert tribulation into triumph, to "be anxiously

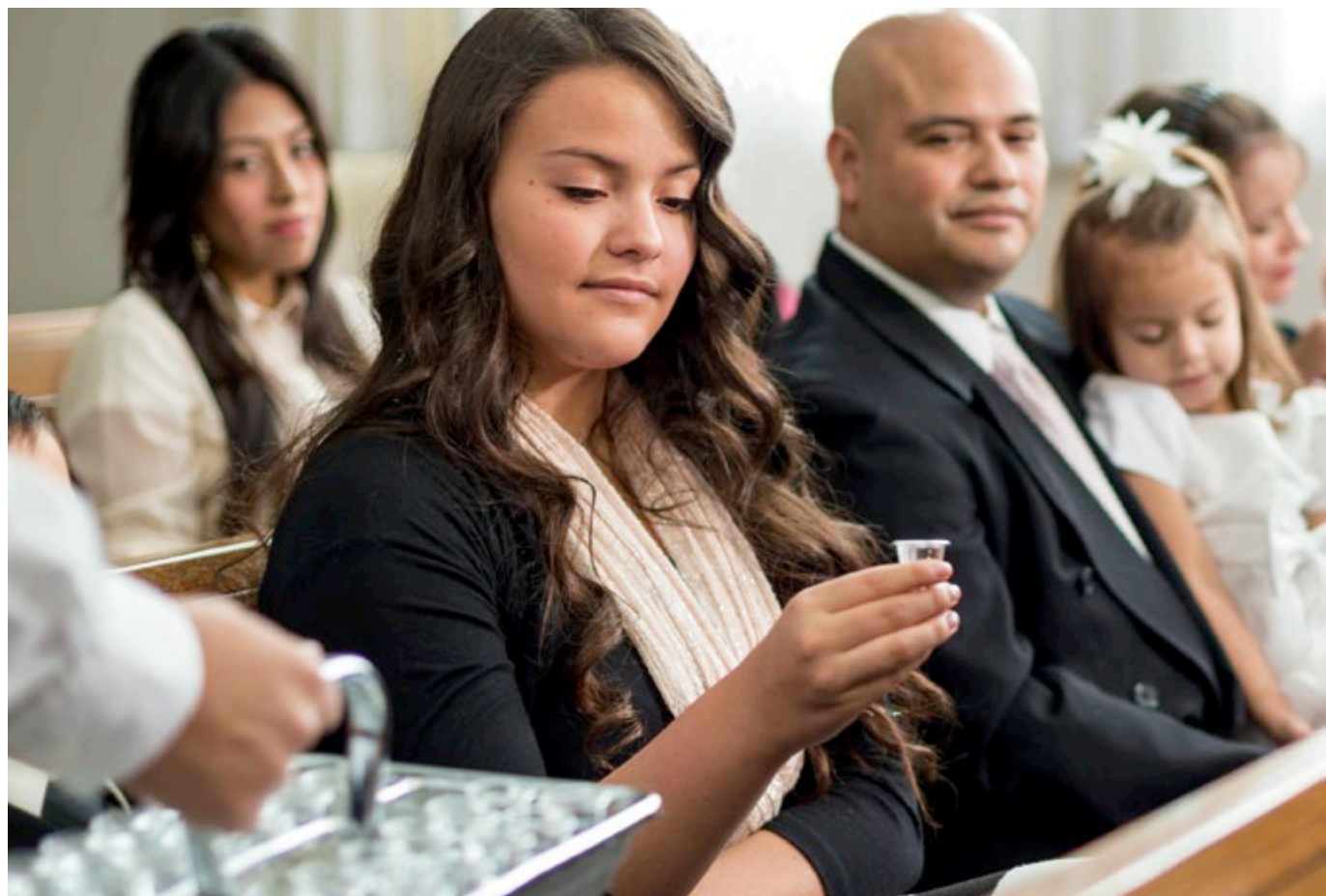
engaged in a good cause, . . . and bring to pass much righteousness” (D&C 58:27)?

Strengthened by Gifts and Blessings

First, as we walk in obedience to the principles and commandments of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we enjoy a continual flow of blessings promised by God in His covenant with us. Those blessings provide the resources we need to act rather than simply be acted upon as we go through life. For example, the Lord’s commandments in the Word of Wisdom regarding the care of our physical bodies bless us first and foremost with “wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures” (D&C 89:19). Furthermore, they lead to a generally more healthy life and freedom from destructive addictions. Obedience

gives us greater control over our lives, greater capacity to come and go, to work and create. Of course, age, accident, and illnesses inevitably take their toll, but even so, our obedience to this gospel law enhances our capacity to deal with these challenges.

In the covenant path we find a steady supply of gifts and help. “Charity never faileth” (1 Corinthians 13:8; Moroni 7:46), love begets love, compassion begets compassion, virtue begets virtue, commitment begets loyalty, and service begets joy. We are part of a covenant people, a community of Saints who encourage, sustain, and minister to one another. As Nephi explained, “And if it so be that the children of men keep the commandments of God he doth nourish them, and strengthen them” (1 Nephi 17:3).



Strengthened with Increased Faith

This brings us to a second way in which our covenants supply strength—they produce the faith necessary to persevere and to do all things that are expedient in the Lord. Our willingness to take upon us the name of Christ and keep His commandments requires a degree of faith, but as we honor our covenants, that faith expands. In the first place, the promised fruits of obedience become evident, which confirms our faith. Secondly, the Spirit communicates God’s pleasure, and we feel secure in His continued blessing and help. Thirdly, come what may, we can face life with hope and equanimity, knowing that we will succeed in the end because we have God’s promise to us individually, by name, and we know He cannot lie (see Enos 1:6; Ether 3:12).

Early Church leaders in this dispensation confirmed that adhering to the covenant path provides the reassurance we need in times of trial: “It was [the knowledge that their course in life conformed to the will of God] that enabled the ancient saints to endure all their afflictions and persecutions, and to take . . . not only the spoiling of their goods, and the wasting of their substance, joyfully, but also to suffer death in its most horrid forms; knowing (not merely believing) that when this earthly house of their tabernacle was dissolved, they had a building of God, a[n] house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2 Cor. 5:1).”²

They further pointed out that in offering whatever sacrifice God may require of us, we obtain the witness of the Spirit that our course is right and pleasing to God.³ With that knowledge, our faith becomes unbounded, having the assurance that God will in due time turn every affliction to our gain. (See D&C 97:8–9.)



Strengthened through the “Power of Godliness”

We have considered, first, the empowering blessings and, second, the endowment of faith that God grants to those who keep their covenants with Him. A final aspect of strength through covenants that I will mention is the bestowal of divine power. Our covenant commitment to Him permits our Heavenly Father to let His divine influence, “the power of godliness” (D&C 84:20), flow into our lives. He can do that because by our participation in priesthood ordinances, we exercise our agency and elect to receive it. Our participation in those ordinances also demonstrates that we are prepared to accept the additional responsibility that comes with added light and spiritual power.

In all the ordinances, especially those of the temple, we are endowed with power from on high (see D&C 109:22). This “power of godliness” comes in the person and by the influence of the Holy Ghost. The gift of the Holy Ghost is part of the new and everlasting covenant. It is an essential part of our baptism, the baptism of the Spirit. It is the messenger of grace by which the blood of Christ is applied to take away our sins and sanctify us (see 2 Nephi 31:17). It is the gift by which Adam was “quickened in the inner man”

(Moses 6:65). It was by the Holy Ghost that the ancient Apostles endured all that they endured and by their priesthood keys carried the gospel to the known world of their day.

When we have entered into divine covenants, the Holy Ghost is our comforter, our guide, and our companion. The fruits of the Holy Spirit are “the peaceable things of immortal glory; the truth of all things; that which quickeneth all things, which maketh alive all things; that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment” (Moses 6:61). The gifts of the Holy Spirit are testimony, faith,



knowledge, wisdom, revelations, miracles, healing, and charity, to name but a few (see D&C 46:13–26).

It is the Holy Ghost who bears witness of your words when you teach and testify. It is the Holy Ghost who, as you speak in hostile venues, puts into your heart what you should say and fulfills the Lord’s promise that “you shall not be confounded before men” (D&C 100:5). It is the Holy Ghost who reveals how you may clear the next seemingly insurmountable hurdle. It is by the Holy Ghost in you that others may feel the pure love of Christ and receive strength to press forward. It is also the Holy Ghost, in His character as the Holy Spirit of Promise, that confirms the validity and efficacy of your covenants and seals God’s promises upon you (see D&C 88:4–5; 109:14–15).

Heavenly Father Will Be with You

Divine covenants make strong Christians. I urge each one to qualify for and receive all the priesthood ordinances you can and then faithfully keep the promises you have made by covenant. In times of distress, let your covenants be paramount and let your obedience be exact. Then you can ask in faith, nothing wavering, according to your need, and God will answer. He will sustain you as you work and watch. In His own time and way He will stretch forth His hand to you, saying, “Here am I.” **NE**

From the April 2009 general conference address “The Power of Covenants.”

NOTES

1. See Guide to the Scriptures, “Covenant”; scriptures.lds.org.
2. *Lectures on Faith* (1985), 67.
3. See *Lectures on Faith*, 69–71.



WHAT DO YOU SEE?

When we study and ponder the symbols in gospel ordinances, our thoughts center on Jesus Christ.

By David A. Edwards

Church Magazines

Because symbols are all around us, we often don't think about them very much. But paying closer attention to gospel symbols can be a key to greater understanding.

The scriptures use words like *type*, *shadow*, *emblem*, *token*, *sign*, *parable*, *remembrance*, *witness*, or *testimony* to describe something that is meant to point our thoughts toward something else (see Moses 6:63). For instance, when Jesus introduced the sacrament at the Last Supper, He gave His

disciples the broken bread they were to eat and said, "This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). Now, obviously the bread was not literally His body; as He said, it is meant to *remind* us of His body—and *much more*. That's what makes symbols so powerful—they communicate without language and trigger a number of related thoughts all at once, adding depth and meaning.

Of course, ordinances are not

merely symbolic gestures; they carry real power to bless us through the authority of the priesthood. But they also contain symbols that teach us about the Savior and about our covenants. Even the act of submitting to and receiving a priesthood ordinance is an outward sign of a person's faith and humility. Here are many of the symbols connected with the ordinances of baptism, confirmation, and the sacrament, as well as some of the ideas associated with them.

BAPTISM



Raised right hand: reaching up toward heaven, witnessing to heaven; also a token of an oath (see Genesis 14:22; Daniel 12:7)

Immersion: the death, burial, and Resurrection of Christ (see Romans 6:3–4); our spiritual rebirth in Christ (“born of water” [John 3:5])

Water: washing, cleansing, purification from sin

White clothes: purity (“there can no man be saved except his garments are washed white . . . [and] purified . . . through the blood of [Christ]” [Alma 5:21]); equality (whether rich or poor, all wear the same clothing at baptism, for “all are alike unto God” [2 Nephi 26:33])

CONFIRMATION

Laying on of hands: physical touch by those representing God, transferring blessings from God to others

Receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost: called “baptism of fire” (see 2 Nephi 31:13); cleansing and spiritual rebirth in Christ



SACRAMENT

Eating bread: remembering the body of Jesus Christ (see Matthew 26:26–29), the bread of life (“he that cometh to me shall never hunger” [John 6:35], “he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever” [John 6:58])

Kneeling to pray: humility, submitting to God’s will; a token of the everlasting covenant (see D&C 88:131)

Breaking bread: Christ’s bodily suffering on our behalf, His physical death, His Resurrection so that we might live again

Placing bread and water before the congregation: emblems of Christ’s sacrifice, which ended sacrifice by the shedding of blood (see Alma 34:13–14); we now bring a “sacrifice unto the Lord . . . of a broken heart and a contrite spirit” (D&C 59:8)

Drinking water (originally wine): the blood of Christ (shed in Gethsemane, during His sufferings at the hands of the soldiers, and on the cross), which “cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7) and “is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of [our] sins” (Moroni 10:33); blood as “the seat of life or vital energy of all flesh” (Guide to the Scriptures, “Blood”; scriptures.lds.org) and that which atones for sins through sacrifice (see Leviticus 17:11); living water (see John 4:14)



FOCUSED ON THE ATONEMENT

“Every ordinance of the gospel focuses in one way or another on the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, and surely that is why this particular ordinance [of the sacrament] with all its symbolism and imagery comes to us more readily and more repeatedly than any other in our life.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “This Do in Remembrance of Me,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 67.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

THINGS TO PONDER FOR SUNDAY

- How do the symbols in the ordinances of baptism, confirmation, and the sacrament help you remember the Savior and your covenants?
- What goes through your mind during the sacrament each week?

THINGS YOU MIGHT DO

- Write in your journal about something you thought or felt during the sacrament.
- In church, talk about a symbol in the sacrament and how it helps you remember the Savior.

REMEMBERING TO REMEMBER



I never knew how much my life could change by preparing for the sacrament all week long.

By Jenicca Hale

When we started talking about the sacrament in Sunday School, I thought I had a good understanding of it from earlier lessons in Primary and seminary and from completing my Personal Progress. But I found out I still had a lot to learn.

My teacher began the lesson by asking a simple question: “How do you keep your covenant to always remember the Savior?” I began to think about how I live each day and if I really always remember my Savior. Was I keeping my baptismal covenant the very best I could?

In class we talked about different things that would help us always remember Jesus Christ. Some of the things included having consistent daily prayer and scripture study, praying for the Spirit, singing hymns, taking time to ponder, writing in a journal, going to the temple, and keeping items around home that remind you of Jesus Christ, such as pictures of Him and of the temple. At the end of the class, we were asked to apply the things we’d discussed and to prepare all week long to take the sacrament the next Sunday.

During the week, I tried more diligently to focus on Jesus Christ. I studied scriptures about the sacrament, and I tried to allow myself quiet time to think about what I’d learned. Before then, I used to listen to popular music during most of my free time, but I decided to take a break and ponder sometimes or listen to hymns instead. I prayed for the Spirit to help me remember my covenant and tried to remember to act as the Savior would. I even took the advice to write in my journal, and at the end of each day I took time to reflect on what I’d done well and what I needed to improve. All week I looked forward to when I could take the sacrament again.

On Sunday, I prepared to go to church in a more reverent manner. I woke up early so I wouldn’t be in a rush to get ready right before I had to leave.

By living the principles from our lesson, I learned more about the sacrament and my baptismal covenant. It increased my testimony of the Savior and of His Atonement. I found that when I strive to remember Jesus Christ, I am much happier. It’s easier for me to deal with trials, because I know that He can help me through anything. I’m grateful for the sacrament and for the opportunity I had to make it a bigger part of my everyday life. **NE**

Jenicca Hale lives in Utah, USA.



SUNDAY LESSONS

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This Month's Topic:
**Ordinances and
Covenants**

YOUTH VOICES:

WHAT DOES

IT MEAN TO

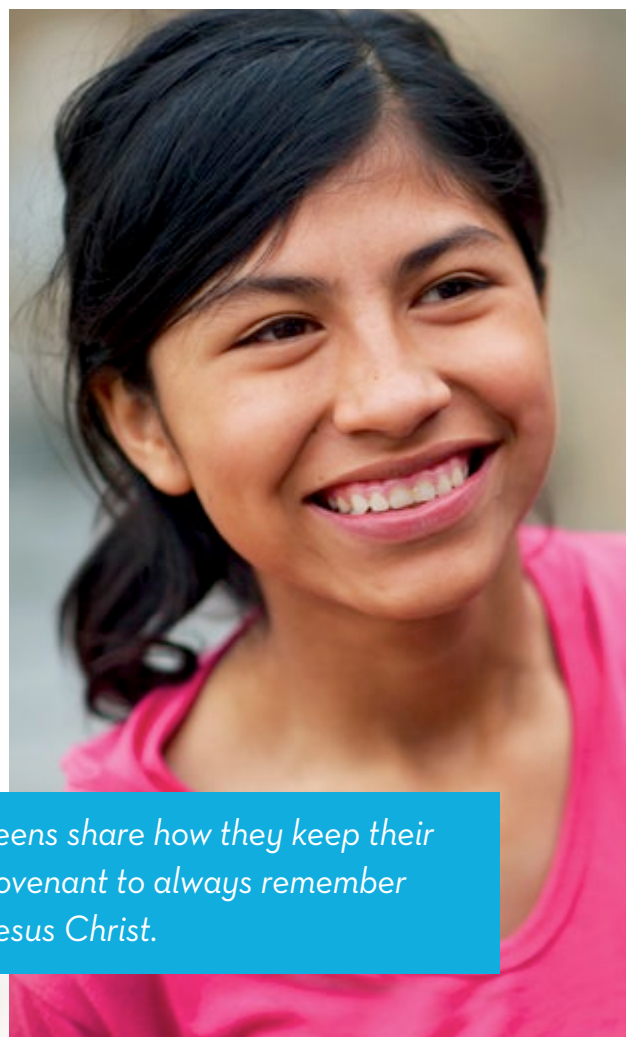
“REMEMBER”?

Every week when you take the sacrament, you promise to always remember the Savior. In the October 2013 general conference, Elder Terence M. Vinson of the Seventy shared this story: “Our son Ben, when he was 16 and speaking in stake conference, asked the question, ‘How would you feel if someone promised you something every week and never kept the promise?’ He continued, ‘Do we take seriously the promise we make when we partake of the sacrament and covenant to keep His commandments and always remember Him?’” (“Drawing Closer to God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 104).

“Remembering the Savior” doesn’t mean that you have to think about Him every minute of every day. What it *does* mean is that you think about His example and teachings in the choices you make and always try to do His will and keep His commandments—to live as He would. Here’s what some young men and young women do to try to remember the Savior each day.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHURCH PUBLISHING SERVICES



Teens share how they keep their covenant to always remember Jesus Christ.



What I do to remember the Savior in my everyday life is just to stop and take a moment to remember that everything around us is from Him and that all our gifts and blessings are from Him. When you look around and think about everything He's given us, it's overwhelming, because nobody on earth can do that much for us.

Olivia A., 15, Arizona, USA



My mom reminds us almost every day to try to be like Jesus and to remember Him in all that we do. It makes you think about it as you're going through the day. For example, if you're tempted to do something you know is bad, then you know to stop or not even do it in the first place.

Riley Z., 15, California, USA



I try to remember the Lord by watching my thoughts as I go through the day and making sure I'm thinking of the right things. I also like to surround myself with people who are trying to think of the Lord and are trying to keep their standards.

Parker J., 15, Nevada, USA

I try to think about things the way Jesus would. If somebody is having a hard time with something, I try to notice it so I can help the person. It's also good to start out by reading the scriptures every day. When I do that I usually have a good day. Things can still go wrong, but I remember the bigger picture, and it makes it easier for me to get through them because I know what my ultimate goal is.

Claire L., 16, Utah, USA



A way that works for me to keep Jesus Christ and the gospel in my life is starting out my day with something that brings in the Spirit, such as reading scriptures and praying. If I start off with it, it will really affect my decisions throughout the day. It will guide what my thoughts are going to be.

Sam A., 15, Colorado, USA

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Things to Ponder for Sunday

- What can I do to keep my covenant to remember the Savior?
- How can remembering Jesus Christ help me make good choices?
- How can lifting someone's burden help me remember the Savior?
- What blessings have I received by remembering the Savior?

Things You Might Do

- Read on page 9 how one young woman made a goal to focus more on Jesus Christ, and then come up with your own goals for how you can focus on Him.
- Visit [lds.org/go/rememberNE7](https://www.lds.org/go/rememberNE7) to share how you remember the Savior in your everyday life.

A Change of Heart

Heartfelt ♩ = 60-66

Words by Jan Pinborough
Music by Michael F. Moody

mp 1. A
(2. A)

rall.

ston - y heart is a cold, un- yield - ing plain, Wind - swept, for - lorn— no
griev - ing heart is a vast, a - ban - doned shore Where waves with - draw, then

gen - tle, warm - ing rain Un - til a whis - pered mes - sage from a - bove, Full
crash the rocks once more Un - til a voice a - bove the storm I hear: "Be

of Thy grace, fills me with love. Oh, change my heart. Cast off its
still, my child. Thy God is near." *mf* Oh, change my heart. Calm all my

rall.

stub - born pride, And melt the shell pro - tect - ing me in - side. Now ver - dant
anx - ious fears, And give me faith to see be - yond my tears. Now all the

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This song may be copied for incidental, noncommercial church or home use.
This notice must be included on each copy made.

grass grows soft by quiet streams, And peaceful visions fill my
 tem - pests sor-rowing cries grow still. My heart, at rest, now trusts Thy

dreams.
 will.

1.

2. A

Oh, change my heart, and make it more like Thine. Fill it with

rall.

faith, with hope, with love di - vine. Oh, take my heart, and write on it Thy name. Grant

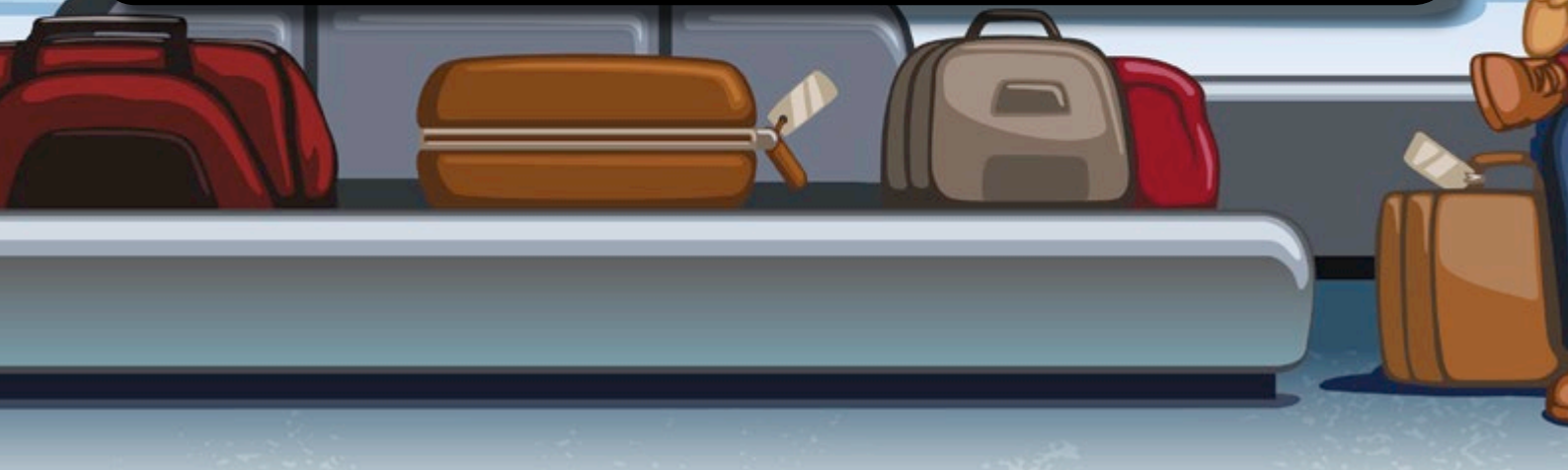
me a might-y change, Oh Lord, I pray. Oh Lord, I pray.

p
rall.
slowly

MORMONS *Do* BELIEVE IN GOD



At an airport far from home, I had a chance to share the gospel with a stranger.



By Brenda Hernandez Ruiz

I was traveling from Mexico to Montana, USA, and had a layover in Denver, Colorado. I walked around the airport, looking through huge windows at planes landing and taking off. I was nervous because I had never flown before. The airport seemed really big.

I looked at my ticket and realized I had two hours before my flight would depart. I decided to find a place to sit down and read until I boarded the plane. I felt scared as I looked for a place to sit. Almost every seat was taken. I decided to sit next to an older lady who seemed to be alone. She was the only one who didn't seem scary to me.

An hour or so passed before I decided to talk to her. I introduced myself; she seemed really nice and eager to

talk to me about her grandchild's accomplishments. She asked me a little bit about myself, and I told her all about my life in Mexico. Then I had a sudden urge to share the gospel with her. She asked me about my religion, and I told her that I was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

She said she had never heard of it.

I smiled and said, "We are also known as Mormons."

She immediately changed her attitude. Her facial expressions and the way she talked to me changed. She didn't seem to know what to say. I had a feeling that our conversation had come to an end, but I tried to keep talking to her. I asked her about her religion. She said without hesitation, "I am Catholic."



She then said, “I don’t understand. You are such a nice girl. You seem decent. Why, then, would you want to be a Mormon?”

I was shocked by this comment, and I didn’t know how to respond. I offered a silent prayer, asking Heavenly Father to help me explain what being a Latter-day Saint meant to me. I told her that I loved being a member of the Church, and because of the teachings of the gospel, I was able to be a better person and see things with perspective.

She looked surprised and said, “Mormons don’t believe in God.”

I tried not to laugh at this comment; instead I smiled and realized that this was my chance to share the truth with her. I explained some of our basic beliefs. I taught her

about the plan of salvation and the importance of families. She still didn’t seem convinced, so I decided to bear my testimony to her. There in a huge airport, I was blessed with the courage to share my testimony about Joseph Smith, about the living prophet and apostles, and about the love I feel toward the gospel and the Book of Mormon.

I looked at the clock. It was time for me to catch my plane.

That afternoon strengthened my testimony in a way that I had never experienced before. I was happy that I shared my testimony with her and grateful that I was able to help change her mind about members of our Church. I can now be more confident when someone asks me about the Church. **NE**

Brenda Hernandez Ruiz lives in Chihuahua, Mexico.



ABANDONED SEEDS

IN

ROCKY PLACES

*The truck driver drove away angry. Who would
take the time to separate tiny seeds from
gravel and tar?*



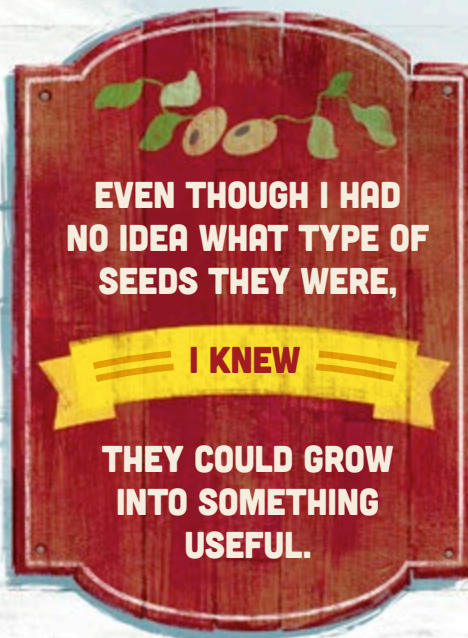
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Kevin R. Duncan
Of the Seventy

One day when I was 14 years old, a loud sound from the street caught my attention. I hurried to investigate and found a truck with huge sacks of seeds lumbering up the road. One of the sacks had tumbled off the truck and burst open.

The recently paved street was covered with tar and fresh gravel. This caused an enormous mess as thousands of seeds mixed with the road material. After the driver stopped and examined the situation, he expressed his frustration and drove away angry. He didn't think the seeds were worth the hassle of picking them up out of the tar and gravel.

For me, though, those discarded seeds were a treasure I couldn't pass up. I lived on a farm. Even though I had no idea what type of seeds they were, I knew they could grow into something useful. So I grabbed a five-gallon bucket and scooped up as many as I could, gravel and all.

I ran home to show my family my newfound treasure. Though we'd never planted string beans before, my dad recognized the seeds for what they were. He walked me to a back corner of our farm. "This is your area now," he said. "Plant those seeds and help them grow."



WORKING THE FARM

I was excited! I'd never had my own area of the farm to work before. That year my little corner was better watered and better weeded than any other part of our entire farm. While the rest of my farm chores still felt like work, taking care of my own corner with the string beans each day felt like fun.

The plants grew and grew. We ended up with so many string beans that we had enough to freeze and eat all year long.

The best part was that I used only a tiny portion of the seeds from my bucket. I had enough seeds in there to keep me going for years. Every year I planted more string beans and every year our family enjoyed a good harvest.

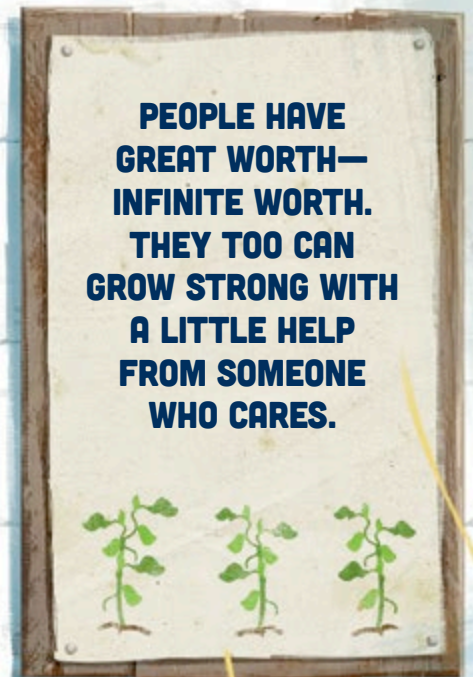
OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS

When I was about to leave on my mission, I looked at my bucket of

seeds. The seeds were still mixed in with tar and gravel, but they were still as valuable as ever.

Every seed still had potential. It didn't matter if the seeds were surrounded by tar and gravel or if they were grimy on the outside. The harvest was the same with these seeds as with any other string bean seed. They only needed somebody to see their worth.

Looking down into my bucket, I realized that those seeds were like Heavenly Father's children. Sometimes people "fall off the truck" into rough places and nobody seems to want them. But we all have the same divine potential, no matter our circumstances. We all need to recognize that potential in others and help nurture it along.



SHARPEN YOUR SICKLE



The scriptures teach us to thrust in our sickle with all our might (see D&C 4:4). I used a sickle constantly on our farm. For me, I learned it wasn't enough to only swing a sickle hard. The sickle also had to be sharp in order to cut. If it was dull, I'd spend a lot of effort swinging it without much success.

On the farm, we kept a file on hand to sharpen our sickle every day. In missionary work and indeed in all areas of life, we need to keep our spiritual sickles sharp so that we can achieve our own best potential. Reading scriptures daily, praying, and keeping all other commandments help us stay sharp and useful.

A GREAT HARVEST

Many years later I was reading in Jacob 5 about the allegory of the tame and wild olive trees when I remembered this experience from my youth. In the allegory, the master had a place in “the nethermost part of the vineyard” (Jacob 5:19) that was poorer than the rest.

His servant wondered why they would even want to spend time in that part of the vineyard (see Jacob 5:21), yet the master of the vineyard saw its potential and chose to labor there. These efforts ultimately yielded a great harvest.


Back when I was 14, my corner of the farm also happened to be the poorest on

our property. And yet this corner still yielded a great harvest as a result of the time and effort I spent there working with the abandoned seeds.

The Lord has given each of us a corner of His vineyard to tend, and we are all responsible for our corner. Whether we are full-time missionaries or brand new Beehives, we each have something to take care of. We must learn to recognize the potential in our own corner

of the vineyard, no matter where we might be. We need to help it grow.

We also need to see the worth in those children of God who, at first glance, might seem to be less desirable or who have already been rejected by others. Just like my bucket of castaway seeds, such people have great worth—infinite worth. They too can grow strong with a little help from someone who cares. **NE**

An illustration of a young boy with brown hair, wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt and dark blue pants, kneeling in a vineyard. He is reaching into a grey bucket filled with green leaves. In the background, there are several green vine plants supported by stakes, and a red wooden sign with white text is mounted on a post. The scene is set in a hilly, vineyard landscape under a bright sky.

**WE MUST LEARN TO RECOGNIZE
THE POTENTIAL IN OUR OWN
CORNER OF THE VINEYARD,
NO MATTER WHERE WE MIGHT
BE. WE NEED TO HELP IT GROW.**

THINGS AREN'T ALWAYS WHAT THEY SEEM

Make sure your fun and adventure don't take
you down a dangerous path.

(See Helaman 3:29.)



**DON'T
GET**

MIXED UP

By David Dickson

Church Magazines

Sometimes when you see all the problems in the world, it might be tempting to pack up your stuff and move deep into the wilderness. But that really isn't the best answer—and not merely because it's tough to eke out a living picking berries and watching wildlife.

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, “We cannot avoid the world. A cloistered existence is not the answer. In a positive sense, our contribution to the world is part of our challenge and is essential if we are to develop our talents” (“Lessons from the Old Testament: In the World but Not of the World,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2006, 54).

Part of that contribution is reaching out to and serving others. We need to build friendships and share our talents to help make the world a brighter place. But how do we do that without becoming tainted by worldly values?

Object lesson time! And one that's fit for a family home evening lesson.

Dazzle your family with science while showing how we don't have to mingle with worldly values.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- small glass jar
- bottle of vegetable oil
- container of clear water
- container of water dyed by food coloring

FHE
Object Lesson

1

THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD

Pour the clear water into your empty jar until the jar is one-third full. Tell your family that the water represents the things of this world. You might want to read the following scripture—or one of your choice: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15).

Talk with your family about the scripture, asking questions such as, “How can we avoid loving the things of the world more than the things of God?” There's nothing wrong with loving nature, for example, but that doesn't mean we should skip church to go hiking.

2

Next, explain that the vegetable oil represents us and pour it into the jar until the jar is two-thirds full.

Most people have seen what happens when you combine oil and water (though they likely haven't seen what you'll do next). Still, it never seems to get old. It's mesmerizing to watch oil float on the water. Discuss this phenomenon for a few minutes, talking about questions such as “How can we separate ourselves from the things of this world?” or “How do we resist temptation?”

Once you've spent some time discussing, you're ready for the *really* cool part.

3

STAYING AFLOAT

Bring out the colored water. This can be any color you want, though a darker hue such as blue or green will be more striking visually. Tell your family that the colored water represents worldly values such as selfishness or jealousy. Slowly pour the colored water into the jar.

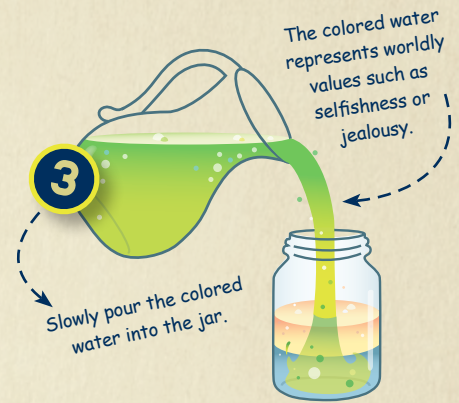
Watching colored water slip down through oil is beyond awesome. It slithers to the bottom of the jar yet doesn't react with the oil. Once it reaches the water, the whole bottom of the jar darkens while the oil remains pure.

Consider asking a family member to read the following quote from President Thomas S. Monson:

"The Savior of mankind described Himself as being in the world but not of the world. We also can be in the world but not of the world as we reject false concepts and false teachings and remain true to that which God has commanded" ("Priesthood Power," *Ensign*, May 2011, 67).

As long as we stay close to the gospel and live the commandments, we can reject false teachings and worldly values! They won't affect us, just like the colored water didn't affect the oil.

But what happens if we start loving the things of this world more than we love God?



4

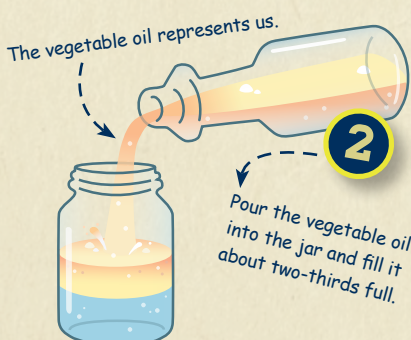
STARTING FRESH

Explain to your family that we all fall short of perfection (see Romans 3:23). Stir the contents of the jar with a spoon or put a lid on tight and tip it upside down several times. It doesn't take long before the whole jar becomes one big murky mess.

Now set the jar aside while you discuss how when we turn our hearts to the things of this world, we become tangled up in worldly cares and the worldly influence begins to affect us.

Explain that even though we make mistakes, we can always repent (consider reading a scripture on repentance) and turn our hearts back to God. Though repentance can sometimes be difficult and painful, as soon as we turn our hearts back to God and choose to serve Him, we start to pull away from worldly influences—just like the oil and water begin to separate again once you've chosen to stop shaking them together.

Before closing the lesson with your testimony, consider talking about how no matter what worldly attitudes might storm around us, even if they trip us up temporarily, we can always choose to rise above them and be clean before God. **NE**





SERVING FOR THE

By Rasem Maluff

In 2011, I made one of the most important decisions in my life. It has brought me the greatest treasures I have ever had. I decided to serve a mission, but it was not an easy decision.

The Lord gave me the opportunity to enjoy soccer during my childhood and my youth. I represented Paraguay in international tournaments, traveling with my country's national youth soccer team, Libertad, to countries in Europe, Asia, and South America.

Fortunately, my parents always coupled my sporting activities with a proper education and a spiritual upbringing. My mother's faith and testimony definitely were the seeds from which my own faith and testimony grew. Because of her faithfulness, I participated in seminary despite my busy sports schedule.

Although I had heard about full-time missions ever since I was a child, I could not make up my mind about serving a mission. That changed when my father accepted a call to serve in the bishopric of our ward. This was a difficult decision for my father, since he was deeply involved in my sport-ing career. He was always at my soccer practice and matches, and we spent a lot of time together. For this reason, accepting a call to serve in the bishopric would mean giving up time supporting my career.

During the sacrament meeting when my father was sustained, a powerful thought came into my mind, telling me that the sacrifices of others would be in vain if I was not willing to sacrifice important things for the right reasons. During the

testimonies, someone spoke about the idea that if we are obedient, our families can be eternal. That thought touched my heart, and I decided that I would do whatever was in my power to be with my family forever. During the classes that Sunday, the importance of obeying the com-mandments was brought up numer-ous times. So strongly did I feel the Spirit prompting me to serve the Lord that during family home evening, I informed my family of my decision to serve a mission.

.....
 Nothing else has given me
 such great joy and peace or
 brought me so many miracles
 as has my missionary service.



YOUR DAY FOR A MISSION

To watch a video about the New Zealand rugby player Sidney Going, visit lds.org/go/GoingNE7.

RIGHT REASONS

My decision meant that I would have to interrupt my college education as well as resolve the five-year contract that I had with my soccer club. From the start, the Lord opened doors and touched hearts so the contract could be resolved.

After I submitted my missionary papers, I listened to the April 2011 general conference, in which Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared the missionary experience of Sidney Going, who had been a professional rugby player and a member of New Zealand's national team. The fact that Brother Going served a mission and later returned and continued his professional career taught me a lesson. Throughout my mission and until this very day, listening to that

talk time and time again has blessed me and brought peace to my heart. The countless testimonies that family, ward, and stake members shared with me at different times not only strengthened my decision to serve but also sustained me during the difficult moments on my mission.

An additional source of satisfaction in my life was that my decision to enter the mission field helped my three closest friends also decide to serve a mission. They later served as zone leaders, as an assistant to the mission president, and even as a branch president. We now have our eyes set on the course that will allow us to return to Heavenly Father's presence.

I am not the same person I was three years ago. My greatest desire is

to do the Lord's will. The Lord blessed me "an hundredfold" (Matthew 19:29). I have a living and real testimony of the divinity of Heavenly Father, His Beloved Son and His Atonement, the purifying power of the Holy Spirit of God, and the marvelous work and wonder of these latter days, when the gospel has been restored to the earth through the Prophet Joseph Smith (see Isaiah 29:14).

My heart overflows with love and gratitude for this sacred time and for knowing and loving so many brothers and sisters in the Uruguay Montevideo Mission. Few blessings are as great as serving among them. Nothing else has given me such great joy and peace or brought me so many miracles as has my missionary service. **NE**

Rasem Maluff lives in Paraguay.

An illustration featuring a large, round clock face with a grey rim and a white dial. The clock is positioned on top of a pink platform scale. A yellow measuring tape is coiled around the top left of the clock. The background consists of a light blue wall with a pattern of white and purple squares. The clock's hands are black, and there is a small red dot on the minute hand. The title 'MY FRIEND'S Secret STRUGGLE' is centered over the clock face. 'MY' and 'FRIEND'S' are in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. 'Secret' is in a blue, cursive script font. 'STRUGGLE' is in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font.

MY FRIEND'S *Secret* STRUGGLE

*When I realized my friend had an
eating disorder, I wanted to help
but didn't know what to do.*

By Janelle Bagley

We live in a world of image, a world of perfection. The media tell women to lose more weight, wear higher heels, and exploit ourselves to get ahead. In this world, some women cry, hurt, and even hate themselves for who they cannot be. The world's view of women has become distorted, undoubtedly by Satan's influence. So many women and young women of this world have forgotten their true and great worth, unable to find the light that our Heavenly Father has placed in each of us. I believe that every woman has a strong, beautiful light inside of her that can change lives, including her own. And we can help one another see that light.

That's what I was able to do with a friend, someone whom I considered to be the most beautiful, confident, and intelligent young woman I knew. We'd been friends for years, but it wasn't until high school that I discovered she had an eating

disorder. One day during a psychology class, we had an entire lesson on eating disorders—why and how people become consumed by them. During this lesson my friend was unusually quiet and looked uncomfortable. That's when I first began to suspect her “internal dispute,” as we later referred to it.

After that class, I began to notice that my friend's normal behaviors were not so normal—things like her lack of appetite, her comments about how she looked fat, or the constant facade of perfection she was trying to keep up. I became really scared for her and decided to fast and pray for her—I didn't know what else to do.

Eventually, the Spirit told me I needed to talk to her with great love. I did the best I could and fasted and prayed that I would know what to say to her. When I finally talked with her about my suspicion of an eating disorder, we both cried as she admitted to having one. She told me she knew she was struggling and didn't know how to help herself—or if she

HELP FOR EATING DISORDERS

Eating disorders can be difficult to overcome, but resources are available to help. Talk to parents and local Church leaders to find support in your community. That may include regular visits with medical professionals and also the bishop, who can provide great help.

even wanted to change. I was so surprised that she didn't deny having an eating disorder. The Spirit was definitely with us during that conversation. With the assistance of parents and counselors, we found help for her. And through those efforts, she's now healthy again.

Helping her rediscover her worth was one of the best things I've ever had the opportunity to do. I knew she has great worth. She is an extremely special person—she just forgot how much worth she has. I wanted her to see herself the way Christ sees her, and along the way she showed me that I needed to do the same for myself. **NE**

Janelle Bagley lives in California, USA.

WARNING SIGNS

If you're concerned that you or a loved one might be struggling with an eating disorder, look for some of these signs:

- Abuse of laxatives, diuretics, enemas, diet pills, or other related medications
- A change in weight not related to a medical condition
- Severe dieting, binge eating, or preoccupation with food
- Intense fear of being “fat”
- Evidence of forced vomiting
- Distorted body image, preoccupation with body shape and size
- Obsessive or excessive exercise
- Depressed mood or anxiety

By Lynn Carol Maynes, LDS Family Services

Additional Stories

Read the stories of two young women who struggled with and recovered from an eating disorder:

Emma's story: lds.org/go/EmmaNE7.

Katie's story: lds.org/go/KatieNE7.



"Truth Will Prevail"

In July 2013, Jesse B., 19, of Hampshire, England, was practicing for the first British Pageant with hundreds of Church members near the Preston England Temple. While he was excited for the pageant to begin, Jesse's attention was divided between learning his part and thinking about a mailbox nearly 200 miles away where his mission call would soon be delivered.

It wasn't long before Jesse's family texted him a picture of his missionary envelope, and he learned that his dad would bring it to him a few days later. During an afternoon rehearsal, Jesse's dad walked in, call in hand. Rehearsal stopped and Jesse opened his mission call in front of the whole cast. When he read the words, "You are assigned to labor in the Korea Seoul Mission," he was ecstatic.

Jesse knew the truth of the gospel, so he was willing to spend two years in Korea sharing it. "I wouldn't serve a mission without the compass of truth," he said. **"Truth is truth. It isn't necessarily the easy way, but it's the right way."**

That's a message he'd heard a lot about in preparing for the pageant, which tells the story of the early Saints in the British Isles. In the opening scene, two of the first missionaries to go to Britain see a banner that reads, "Truth will prevail," and this becomes their missionary motto. That motto resonated with Jesse too, and it's a message he's anxious to share as a missionary.

Like these missionaries and like Jesse, the other youth who performed in the British Pageant also know that "truth will prevail," and they want to help others know it too. Truth can bring peace, joy, and hope to everyone, and because these teens know that, they're learning how to share the gospel with others.



*A motto for missionaries in
the 1830s rings true for
youth in England today.*

By Rachel Nielsen

Making the Effort

Rebecca B., 15, of Leicestershire, England, played the role of Mary Alice Cannon, a young woman who was converted to the gospel and traveled to America with her family in the early history of the Church. During her time acting in the pageant, Rebecca had many chances to share the gospel. After one performance, Rebecca saw a young woman who was standing alone and decided to talk with her. "I discovered that she was not a Church member and that she came to the pageant because her friend was in it," Rebecca said. Rebecca talked with her more and found out that she was attending some Church activities.

"A couple days later, I was able to get a Book of Mormon for her," Rebecca said. "I wrote a note in it and then gave it to her friend to give to her. That was the first Book of Mormon I've given away, and the experience has helped me know that Heavenly Father will prepare a way for all of His children to receive the truth of the gospel someday."



WHAT YOUTH LEARNED
AT THE BRITISH
PAGEANT ABOUT
**SHARING THE
GOSPEL**



Do it! It takes courage,
but your confidence in
sharing the gospel will
increase as you do it.



Learn about sharing
the gospel from others.
Look to their example
for encouragement.



Be willing to
make sacrifices to
share—it's worth it!



Remember that truth is
truth, and the truth
can bring peace, joy,
and hope to those you
share it with.

Helping Others Come

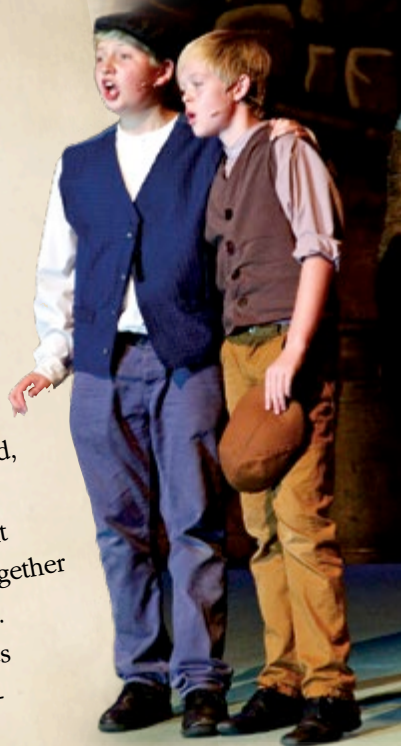
In 2011, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gave approval for the first-ever British Pageant. During an audition for a role in the pageant, Matt P., 12, from Lincolnshire, England, met a man who had faith in these servants of the Lord. Because of his testimony of the Apostles, the man told Matt,

“I know this pageant is the work of God.”

The man then explained that because of that knowledge, he wanted members and nonmembers from South Wales to attend the pageant and learn more about the restored gospel, so he booked and paid for three buses to take them.

“At that time, five months before the pageant,” Matt explained, “no one knew how the pageant would turn out.” The cast was made up of people who aren’t professional actors, and it took a true leap of faith to believe that the cast could put together a professional production with just a few weeks of practice. However, the man Matt talked with knew that the messages of truth in the pageant would touch the audience’s hearts—and he wanted others to have a chance to attend.

“His faith, above all other spiritual experiences at the pageant, touched me the most,” said Matt. “I never learned his name, but if I could, I would like to tell him thank you.” It was a moment that showed how you can find many ways to help others receive messages of the gospel—messages of truth.



Sacrificing to Share

Will R., 15, of Cheshire, England, first heard about the British Pageant from ward friends and decided to audition because it sounded fun. When he got the part of David Ashton, a young man who learned the truth by reading the Book of Mormon, he knew that he would have to make a sacrifice if he accepted the role.

Participating meant that Will would have to give up his summer vacation. Instead of doing his normal summer activities, he’d have to attend weeks of long rehearsals. But Will knew he would be blessed if he accepted the part, because if he did, he’d be sharing his testimony through acting, singing, and dancing all summer long.

In the end, the sacrifice he made to share the gospel “was worth it.” Will explained that because of his sacrifice, he not only “learned so much and made new friends,” but he also grew spiritually.

“Being in the pageant has increased my testimony,” he said.

“As I met and heard the testimonies of other youth, their examples strengthened my own testimony.” Will felt the truth in his own life, and it strengthened him—which will better help him share it with others too.



Recognizing the Purpose

For Ben H., 18, of North Lanarkshire, Scotland, the pageant was a great opportunity to share his faith and love of the restored gospel. Ben enjoyed his time performing, but the best lesson he learned was the importance of the gospel principles taught in the pageant. "The most important thing I learned was that the purpose of the production was to invite all to come unto Christ," Ben said. While mingling with the audience at the end of a performance, Ben met a young man his age who had received a prompting during the pageant to serve a mission. The young man hugged Ben and thanked him for the performance. "He and I were both crying, and I was touched. I knew that was the reason I was there participating in the pageant."

And even though he enjoyed his time on stage, Ben recognizes that the work doesn't stop at the end of a performance or a pageant. "It doesn't end when the production ends, because the production wasn't the important thing. The important thing was that I was learning to be a missionary" and that others were learning about gospel truth.

Seeking to Share

Jesse, Rebecca, Matt, Will, and Ben each came to know the power of sharing the truth, and now they're learning to share it with others. You may not be able to participate in a Church history pageant, but you can still receive the blessings of sharing the gospel like the members of the British Pageant. You just have to contribute what you can. As Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, "Heed the promptings of the Spirit. Supplicate the Lord in mighty prayer. Become engaged in doing what you can in sharing the great message of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ" ("Put Your Trust in the Lord," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 45). If you're nervous at first, don't worry. You can rely on the wisdom the early missionaries learned in the British Isles: Truth *will* prevail. **NE**

Rachel Nielsen lives in Utah, USA.

Editor's note: For tips on simple ways to share the gospel, visit lds.org/go/shareNE7.



Download the Music

Interested in hearing music from the British Pageant? Download it at mormon.org.uk/pageant.



The British Pageant

BY THE NUMBERS

10

performances

around

20,000

people attended

150

choir members

50

backstage crew members

300+

cast members

1

tent that was 148 feet (45 m) long, 98 feet (30 m) wide, and 56 feet (17 m) high

60+

-foot (18-m) stage to perform on—
one of the largest in the UK



By Randall L. Ridd

Second Counselor, Young
Men General Presidency

WORK

Who Needs It?

Work may not always be fun, but you may be surprised at how good it can make you feel.

As a young man, I enjoyed playing and having a good time as much as anybody. And when I turned 16, I loved going out on dates and hanging out with my friends. I enjoyed those activities a lot more than work.

But, like many of you, I did have a job. My father worked in the construction business, building homes, and he frequently enlisted my three brothers and me to help him. The work was hot and demanding; there were times when I really didn't want to be working. But we had schedules to keep and projects to complete, so we worked hard each day until the job was done. Although I didn't realize it at the time, working with my family taught me a number of lessons.

Satisfaction Comes from a Job Well Done

Building homes takes a lot of time, effort, and precision. One area where I thought we didn't need to be as exacting was in digging the footings for a house. My father thought differently.

To lay the foundation for a home, you first have to dig and pour the footings. Footings are pads of concrete that are wider than the foundation. Once the footings are poured and cured, you pour the foundation on top of the footings. Then you backfill dirt over them.

I often wondered if it really mattered that the footings were perfectly square. After all, with dirt covering them, no one would ever see them, and it wouldn't weaken the support structure

of the home. But my father still wanted the footings square and flat, measured correctly and carefully, and he did this with every home he built.

Looking back, I realize that my father treated everything he did in his work with the same care, even for things the owner would never notice. His careful attention to detail meant that people could trust him to do good work, and he had the satisfaction of knowing that his work was the best quality and that the owners would appreciate it.

There may be times when no one but you and the Lord will know how well you did the work you needed to do. Rest assured that the Lord *does* know your effort. As you do your best, you will feel good about yourself, knowing that you have



developed integrity, dependability, and useful skills.

You will learn through your experience the value of the Lord's law of the harvest: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7; see also D&C 130:20–21).

Attitude Affects Everything

Digging footings meant long, hot hours, and I have to admit, I didn't always have a good attitude about it. Whenever my mother caught me complaining about having to work, she would say, "Watch out. You're going to lose your blessing, and you have to work anyway!" (See D&C 58:28–29.) She was right. Complaining never took away the job; it just took away the satisfaction and many of the blessings of doing it.

I found that when I chose to listen to my mother and to do the work with a cheerful heart, the time passed much faster, the work itself was done better, and I was a whole lot happier than I had been when I was complaining. Attitude affects everything.

The Most Important Work Is God's Work

Serving a mission was a defining experience for me. I came to realize that no other work is more important than our Heavenly Father's work, which is to bless the lives of us, His children: "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

As you engage in Heavenly Father's work to serve His children, you will

find, as Alma did, great joy in being "an instrument in the hands of God to bring some soul to repentance; and this is [your] joy" (Alma 29:9).

An Invitation

So who needs work? We all do! It's the mother of self-reliance, achievement, and joy in this life. As you cheerfully engage in work, all those around you will reap a rich harvest because of the seeds you sow.

As you go about your week, I invite you to think about the lessons I learned and then try this experiment: the next time you are given a job to do, give it your best effort, have a cheerful attitude, and see what happens. You just might be surprised at how happy and good it makes you feel. **NE**

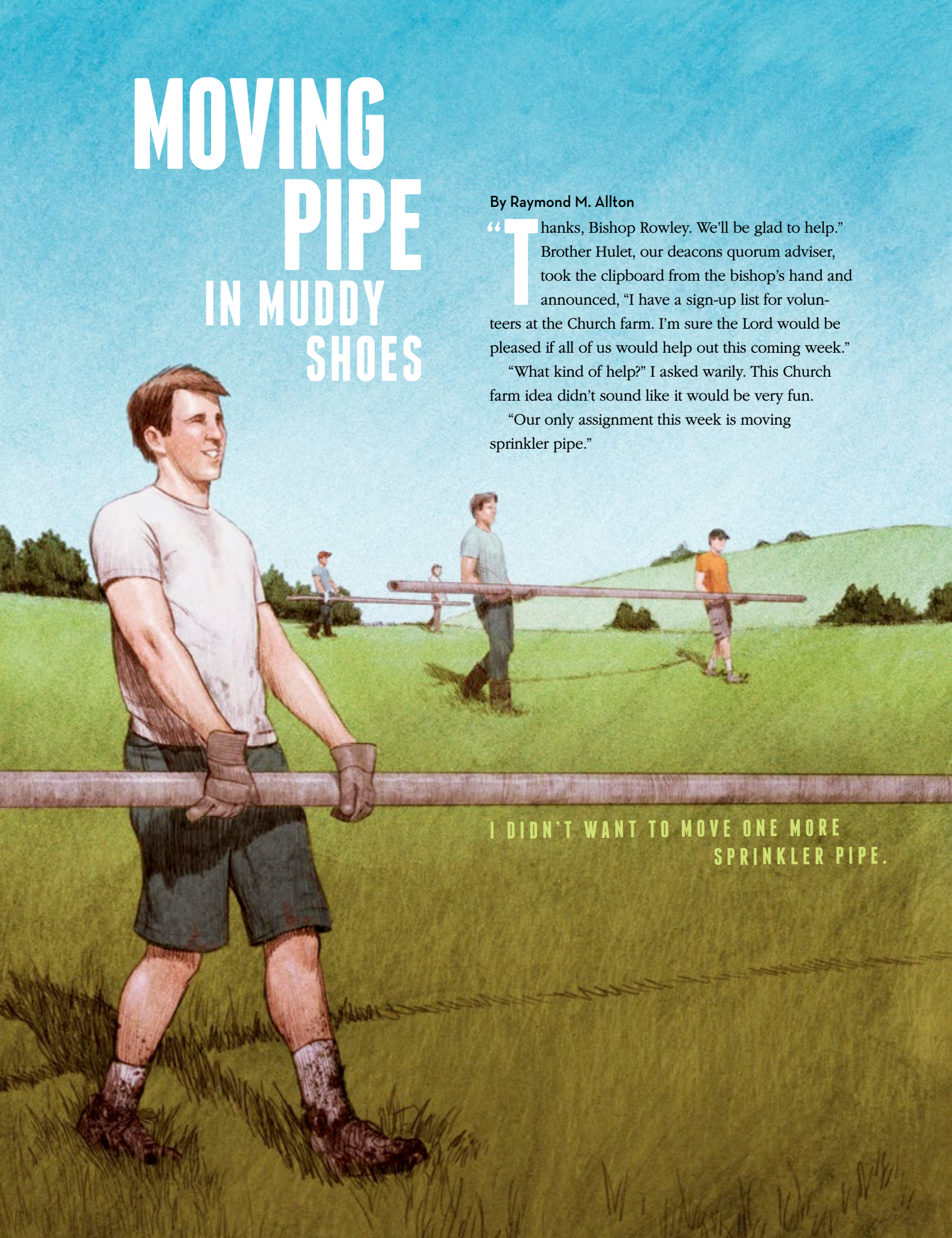
MOVING PIPE IN MUDDY SHOES

By Raymond M. Allton

“Thanks, Bishop Rowley. We’ll be glad to help.” Brother Hulet, our deacons quorum adviser, took the clipboard from the bishop’s hand and announced, “I have a sign-up list for volunteers at the Church farm. I’m sure the Lord would be pleased if all of us would help out this coming week.”

“What kind of help?” I asked warily. This Church farm idea didn’t sound like it would be very fun.

“Our only assignment this week is moving sprinkler pipe.”



I DIDN'T WANT TO MOVE ONE MORE
SPRINKLER PIPE.

Moving pipe! The words filled me with dread. My thoughts turned to a few months earlier when mom had insisted that I get a summer job. In our small town, that meant pretty much one thing—moving pipe. So all summer, my cousin Scott and I were moving pipes.

On the first day of our summer job, we stood gazing across a vast landscape of green alfalfa. The 40-foot-long (12 m) pipes were linked together in a straight line that seemed to stretch out for miles. After a short training, Scott and I disconnected our first pipe. Scott lifted his end up, and cold water splashed all over my tennis shoes. We hefted the pipe through sticky mud and reconnected it at the next riser. As we walked back for the next pipe, my sloshing shoes became heavier as mud clung to them in ever-thickening layers. Eventually, the mud, water, and our own perspiration drenched our clothes and spirits.

My thoughts returned to volunteering at the Church farm. “Well, I—I don’t think I can come,” I stammered. “I have to go to my own job every morning.”

“That’s no problem,” assured Brother Hulet. “We always go to the Church farm in the afternoons.” Brother Hulet passed around the sign-up list. “When each one of you was ordained to the priesthood, you were given the power to act in the name of God. And when we serve Him by serving others, we are acting in His name. Besides, with all of us helping, the work won’t seem hard at all.”

The list was passed to me. I couldn’t believe that, so far, everyone had signed up to go every day this week. Didn’t they know how miserable this was going to be? I felt a great weight of righteous peer pressure exerted on me. Grudgingly, I signed up and passed it on.

Monday afternoon, I sat in my room recuperating from the morning’s work when I heard Brother Hulet honking his horn outside. I hesitated for a moment before changing back into my smelly, damp work clothes.

We soon pulled into the Church farm. Everyone but me raced toward the field. I lagged behind, head down, kicking rocks, when I was surprised by a hand on my shoulder. “Thanks for coming with us,” Brother Hulet encouraged.

“I know you worked hard this morning.” We walked together in silence for a few moments. Then he ran ahead to organize the group.

I watched him and thought about what he had said to me. I had worked hard that morning. I was tired and smelly, and I wanted to go home. But what about Brother Hulet? He had worked hard that morning too. So had all the guys, for that matter. So why did they seem happy to be here?

I caught up to the others, and we began our work. At first, I tried to cheer myself up by thinking of the noble sacrifice I was making. But soon my self-absorbed thoughts ended, and I noticed how quickly we were moving with everyone helping. We laughed and talked, and suddenly I realized I was actually having fun! In a few short hours we had completed our assignment.

As we rode home, I realized that what I thought was going to be an unbearable sacrifice seemed small. In fact, with everyone helping, it seemed like no sacrifice at all.

Brother Hulet stopped his station wagon in front of my house and looked back at me. “Thanks for your help today. Your hard work made it easy for the rest of us.” He smiled and winked.

I grinned back. “Thanks, but all of us helping together was what made it easy.” I climbed out of the car and closed the door.

Brother Hulet put the car in gear and began to pull away. “See you tomorrow, then?” he called through the open window.

“Sure. See you tomorrow,” I said. **NE**

Raymond M. Allton lives in Utah, USA.



OUTSMART

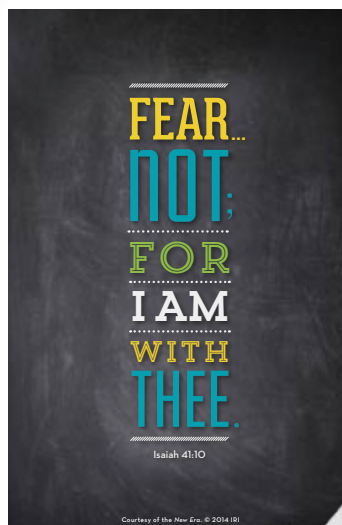
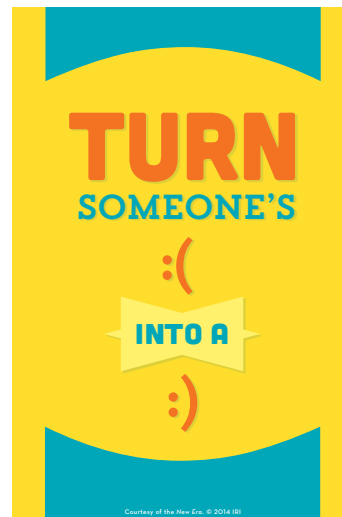
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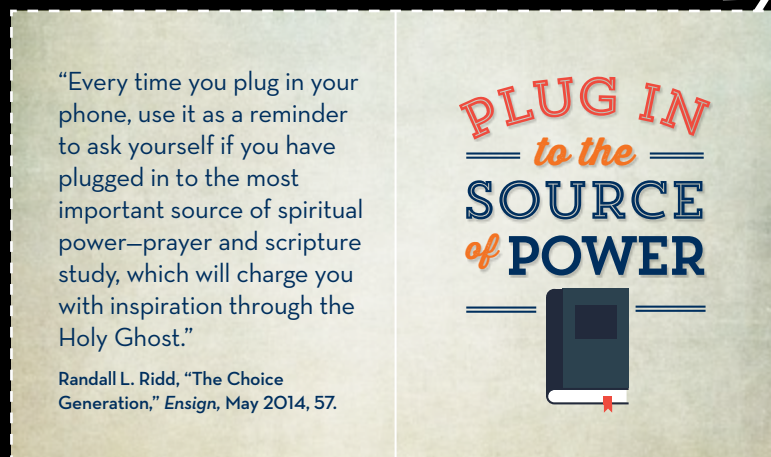




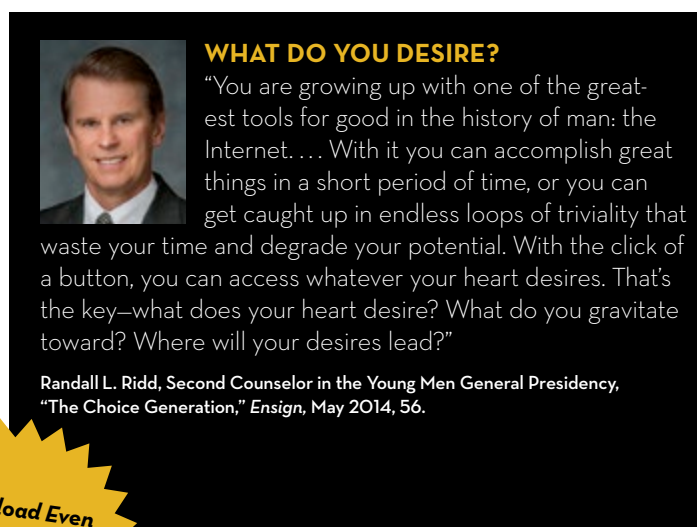
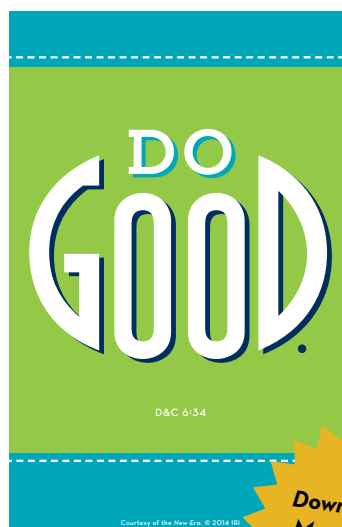
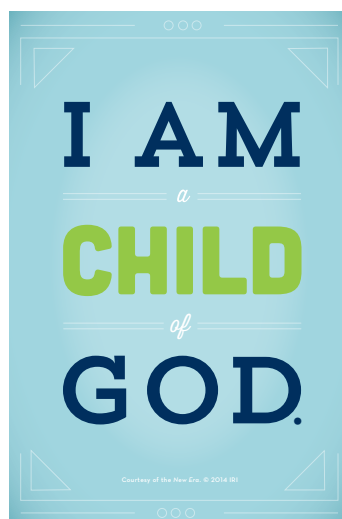
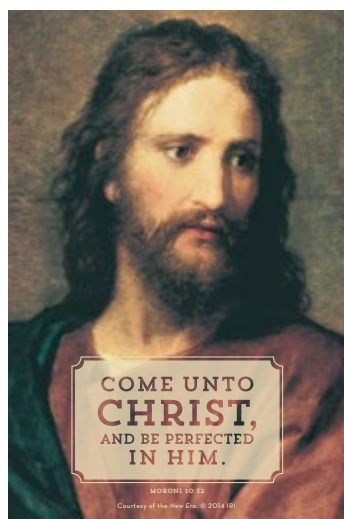
Use these wallpapers to help you:

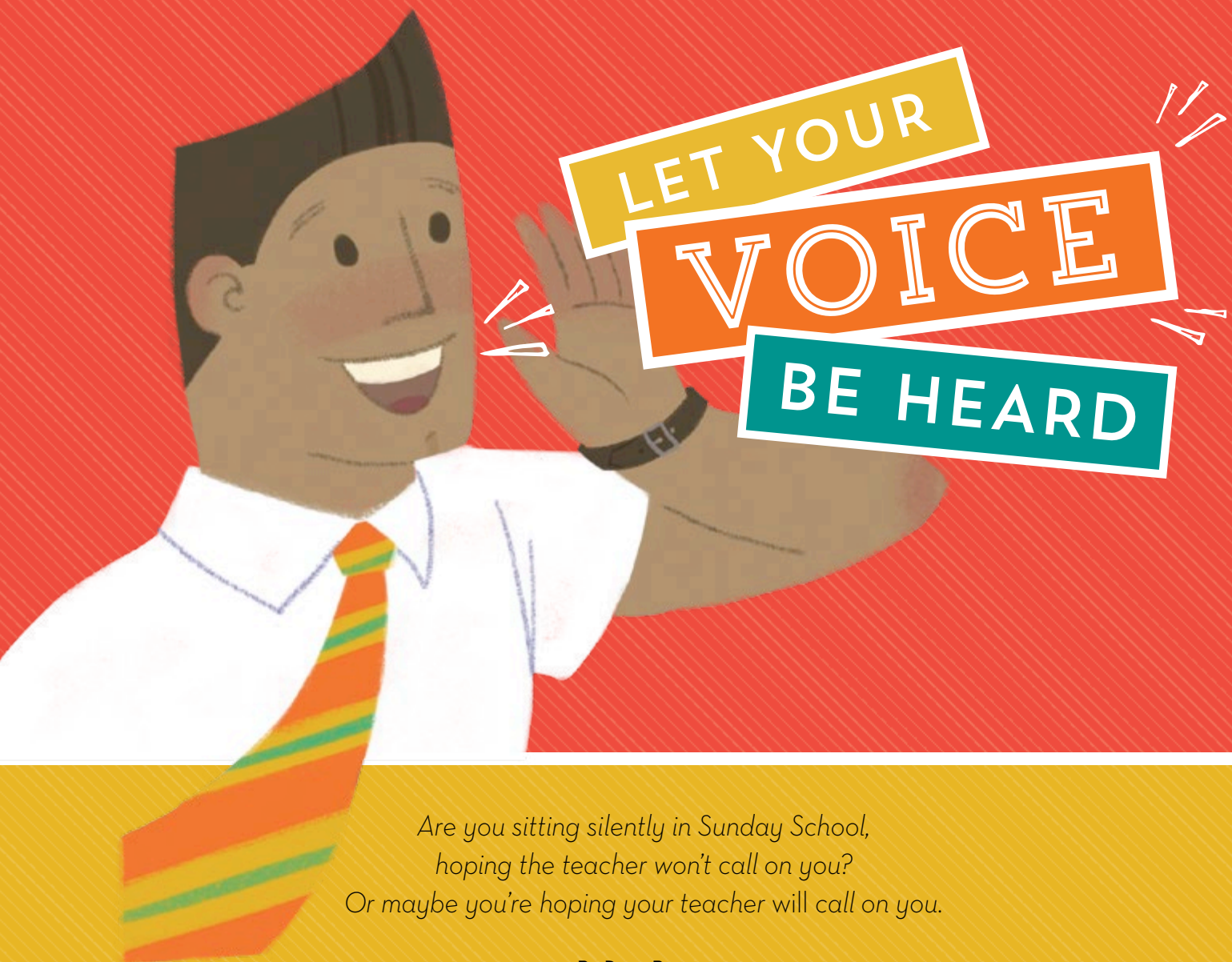
- Make time for good things, like service and family history.
- Be wise in how much time you spend surfing the web or gaming.
- Choose media that matches standards in *For the Strength of Youth*.
- Be an influence for good.

Cut out tag at right, fold around your charging cord, and glue the ends together to create a tag as a daily reminder to plug in to spiritual power!



Fold →





*Are you sitting silently in Sunday School,
hoping the teacher won't call on you?
Or maybe you're hoping your teacher will call on you.*

By Ryan Brown

Sacrament meeting is over and you're having fun talking in the hall with your friends—until your dad walks by and, in that voice that says you'd better obey, reminds you that class starts in one minute. You're sad to stop talking, but you and your friends make it to class just before it starts. When the teacher asks you to take a moment to think about the Savior, it gets really quiet. Then he asks for class members to share their thoughts. You'd felt fine talking to your friends in the hall, but this is different. Now you have to talk about spiritual things. And talking isn't so easy anymore.

Do you ever feel like this? If commenting in Sunday School, priesthood meetings, or Young Women groups can seem scary, think about why you're nervous to share and what you can do in that situation. Here are some good places to start.



WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO SHARE?

It might seem like there's a lot of pressure to speak up in class, especially during moments of awkward silence. Then it's a relief when others finally share their thoughts—you won't have to talk, and, even more important, you also gained insight from the comments. Now think about this: Just as you were glad to hear from the others, they probably want to hear from *you* too.

Maybe, though, there are other reasons why you're not commenting. Is it because you're having a bad day and don't want to talk, or is it because you're unsure of what to say? On days like these, remember that talking about something often helps you think about things in different ways than if you just listen. You'll also be less likely to become distracted with other things and can pay better attention to the lesson if you're thinking about what you can share or add to the discussion.



WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY OR I'M WORRIED MY STORIES/THOUGHTS AREN'T “GOOD ENOUGH”?

Don't fall into Satan's trap of thinking that you're not “smart” enough or “spiritual” enough to talk about the gospel or share your testimony. Every sincere testimony has the power to touch someone's heart. If you feel like your testimony isn't very strong or is still just starting to grow, consider the advice of Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “We gain or strengthen a testimony by bearing it. Someone even suggested that some testimonies are better gained on the feet bearing them than on the knees praying for them” (“Testimony,” *Ensign*, May 2008, 27).

If you feel like you should say something but don't want to raise your hand (you're secretly hoping the teacher will call on you so you can share the idea without



WHAT IF MY TEACHER TALKS SO MUCH THAT I NEVER HAVE A CHANCE TO COMMENT?

It can be difficult to speak up in a class where the teacher dominates the conversation. You could approach your teacher after class and kindly let him or her know you'd like to participate more but that you can't seem to find a good time to comment. Another way to let the teacher know you want to be more involved is to ask before class if he or she needs any help sharing a portion of the lesson or reading something.

Sometimes a teacher may feel inspired to talk longer or testify more rather than ask the class questions. Instead of getting frustrated when the teacher isn't leaving time for you to talk, listen carefully to what he or she is saying and think about how you can apply it in your life.



seeming too eager about it), try to set that worry aside. If the Spirit is prompting you to share something, it's probably because you have a perspective or experience that someone else really needs to hear.

Remember, too, that when you contribute in your lessons by bearing testimony of what the teacher is teaching, you add a “second witness” to the message, regardless of how eloquent you are (see Matthew 18:16 and 2 Corinthians 13:1).



WHAT IF ONE PERSON ANSWERS EVERY QUESTION?

In every class there will be people who talk more than others or who seem to share every time the teacher asks a question. Don't fall into the trap of making fun of them or thinking, “I wish they'd stop talking.” Enjoy the opportunity to learn from the perspective of others and to grow from their experiences. Some people think through things best when they're speaking out loud, so be patient and loving as they strive to learn the gospel too.

And remember that they may comment only because nobody else is—so if you raise your hand first, they may be grateful to not answer every question.

And if you're the teacher and notice that only one person seems to be answering the questions, you could ask specific people to share their thoughts on a topic rather than asking the question to the whole class.



SHOULD I SHARE EXPERIENCES THAT ARE PERSONAL?

Personal stories or experiences can add insight about a gospel principle and can help others understand what's being discussed in class. Just be careful in what you share, because some stories are too personal or sacred to share, some involve other people who may not want the story shared, and some can be embarrassing for others to hear because they haven't experienced the same things you have. But sometimes you may have had an experience so that you *could* share it with others in the future (see President Henry B. Eyring, “O Remember, Remember,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 66; [lds.org/go/storyNE7](https://www.lds.org/go/storyNE7)).

Seek the promptings and guidance of the Spirit to judge the situation and to decide what to share or not. You never know when your experience is exactly what someone else needs to hear.

BORED IN CLASS?

Strive to be like President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), who was once asked, “What do you do when you find yourself in a boring sacrament meeting?” His response: “I don't know. I've never been in one” (see Donald L. Hallstrom, “Converted to His Gospel through His Church,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 15).

Here are some ideas to help you stay more focused in class:

- Take notes. It really does make a difference.
- Some people learn better while doodling. If that sounds like you, consider sketching an example of what the teacher is talking about. Just make sure your focus stays on the class discussion and not on the details of the drawing itself—the doodle is supposed to be a learning tool, not a world-famous piece of art.
- Invite your friends or classmates to reverently race to see who can most quickly find the scripture references that your teacher uses.
- Think of questions you have about what the teacher is saying or about other topics that are closely related. Ask your questions and write down the answers in a notebook. **NE**

Ryan Brown lives in Utah, USA.





Why did God create us?

When I talk to **my friends** about the Church, they **say** they're **not interested** because it has **too many rules**. What can I tell them?

Our attitude toward any “rule” has a lot to do with what we’re used to. If your friends were used to never brushing their teeth and you told them that you brush every day because you had been taught to, they might find this to be an oppressive rule. But you really don’t even think of it as a rule at all because it has simply become a habit, a way of life. While they might think never having to brush their teeth is a kind of freedom, you know the problems it leads to and how much better it feels to have clean, healthy teeth.

So it is with the Church’s “rules.” Your friends may think the standards we follow are restrictive, but you know that the Lord and His servants have given them to us to help us live a better life and return to Heavenly Father. Also, obedience to God’s commandments always brings blessings, not the least of which is the companionship of the Holy Ghost. You can try describing these benefits and blessings to your friends, and you can tell them that the only way to really know if the “rules” are from God is to try them out (see John 7:17). **NE**

It is important to understand that God did not “create” us in the sense of causing us to come into being out of nothing. Some basic part of us existed even before our spirit birth: “Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be” (D&C 93:29). Because we know this, we also know that Heavenly Father’s motivation in creating us was not random or arbitrary but deeply purposeful. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 210; see also Moses 1:39). Because Heavenly Father wanted us to have the chance to progress and become like Him, He created our spirits, and He provided a plan of salvation and happiness that necessarily includes this earthly experience. Perhaps, then, the simplest and best answer to this question is also the answer to why God does just about anything: because He loves us. **NE**



Keeping Covenants

You'll be studying about ordinances and covenants this month in your Sunday lessons (see lds.org/youth/learn). As you study and discuss covenants, you might ponder these questions: What are the blessings I've been promised for keeping covenants? When have I made covenants, and what are they? What power do these covenants hold, and where does it come from?

To find some answers to these questions and learn more about covenants, see the recent general conference and general women's meeting at conference.lds.org.

Give yourself an easy reminder to prepare for your Sunday lessons on covenants. Just place these cards in your scriptures, locker, or bedroom. You can also download or share them online at lds.org/go/cardsNE7.

BACKGROUND TEXTURE BY ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK



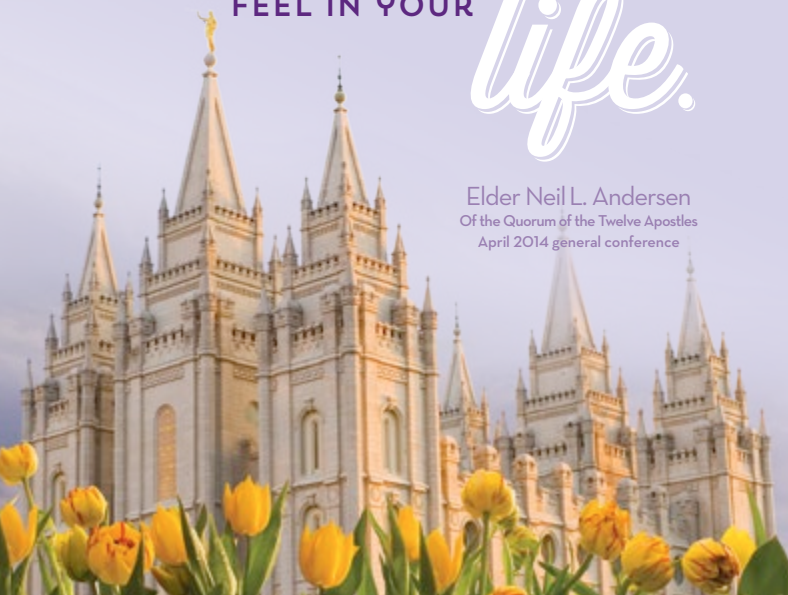
KEEPING COVENANTS PROTECTS US, PREPARES US, AND EMPOWERS US.

Rosemary M. Wixom

Primary general president
March 2014 General Women's Meeting

THE WAY
YOU FEEL IN THE
temple
IS A PATTERN FOR
HOW YOU WANT TO
FEEL IN YOUR
life.

Elder Neil L. Andersen
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
April 2014 general conference



*Regardless of our
individual circumstances,
we can all enjoy the full*

BLESSINGS
OF
PRIESTHOOD POWER
through keeping the
COVENANTS

*we have made at baptism
and in the temple.*

Bonnie L. Oscarson

Young Women general president
March 2014 General Women's Meeting



KEVIN BECKSTROM



Don't get the punch line? Read the story in President Dieter F. Uchtdorf's talk at [lds.org/go/breadNE7](https://www.lds.org/go/breadNE7).

VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY



RICK + RYAN GOLDSBERRY

“My friend feels
like Heavenly Father has
abandoned her.
She doesn’t feel
the Spirit.
How can I help her?”

Feeling alone sometimes is a part of mortality. Even prophets and apostles have experienced this pain. For example, Nephi wrote, “Why should my heart weep and my soul linger in the valley of sorrow, . . . and my strength slacken, because of mine afflictions?” (2 Nephi 4:26; see also verses 27–35).

The Savior had similar feelings in the Garden of Gethsemane. “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me” (Matthew 26:38). Then when He found them sleeping He said, “What, could ye not watch with me one hour?” (Matthew 26:40).

Because we are all beloved sons and daughters of God, He wants everyone to know of His love. The Savior set the example and taught us that we must reach out and help others. Remember, for example, His counsel to Peter: “But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32).

Following this counsel, how can we help? Consider sharing your testimony, along with uplifting thoughts and music. Listen to your friend, and be there for her. Encourage your friend to strengthen her testimony and to live worthy of the Spirit. Most important, love her and pray for her. **NE**

Help Her Invite the Spirit



I would challenge her to read her scriptures every day for at least 15 minutes, and I would ask her

to write down important things in a notebook. By actively trying to get closer to Heavenly Father, she will be more receptive to the Spirit and more inclined to receive revelation.

Jackson C., 17, Utah, USA

Keep Doing Good Things

We all go through rough times sooner or later in our lives; it's all about staying strong and knowing our Heavenly Father loves us. I recommend that your friend go on with her life, doing things in a good way. Little by little she will notice that the Spirit is with her. You have to be quiet and humble to recognize His voice. Encourage her to go to church and stay active in the gospel.

Jaqueline G., 19, Mexico

Pray for Her



You can help her by making her smile. You can pray for her. You can do some activities with her that invite the

Holy Ghost, so she can feel His comfort and can know that our Heavenly Father has never abandoned her. Remind her that our Heavenly Father is always there for us.

Rudy M., 17, Mexico

Read the Scriptures

Read a scripture with her. I've had that feeling before, and D&C 122 always helps me when I'm in a negative mood. I can always feel the Spirit after I read and ponder this scripture. Heavenly Father is always there, but sometimes the problems and the noise of the world keep us from hearing His voice or feeling His Spirit. These kinds of feelings are not easy to handle, and it's good to have a friend you can count on.

Flor Avalos C., 19, Mexico

Be There for Her



Be there for your friend and show Christlike characteristics. Let her know that she is loved and welcome at church.

Find time to pray with your friend. As prompted by the Holy Ghost, share your own personal experiences where you felt the Spirit strongly.

Madison B., 15, Pennsylvania, USA

Share Your Testimony

Let her know you love her, and share your testimony with her. Make sure she understands that if we want to have the comfort, peace, and inspiration that the Holy Ghost brings, then we must invite His presence through our thoughts, words, and actions. Heavenly Father is always there for us and will answer our prayers in His own time and way.

Rylee T., 18, Idaho, USA

Offer a Hand

Encourage her to keep going to church. Offer to pray with her about it. Read the scriptures together in a peaceful place. The scriptures will help. Be a listener. Spend time together, and don't abandon her.

Alanna W., 14, Texas, USA

Let the Spirit Lead



I had a similar experience with one of my friends. We were talking on the phone and I felt prompted to

bear my testimony to her about what I saw in her and that I knew she was a daughter of God. Let the Spirit lead you in bearing your testimony to her, and tell her that you and Heavenly Father love her and will always be there for her.

Cerena F., 15, Utah, USA



YOU ARE NEVER ALONE

"Your responsibility to endure is uniquely yours. But you are never

alone. I testify that the lifting power of the Lord can be yours if you will 'come unto Christ' and 'be perfected in him'" [Moroni 10:32].

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Endure and Be Lifted Up," *Ensign*, May 1997, 72.

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

UPCOMING QUESTION

"How do I get more **motivated** to do **Personal Progress?**"

Send your answer and photo by August 15, 2014.

Go to newera.lds.org, click "Submit Your Work," enter your LDS Account, and then select "New Era."

You can also write to us at newera@ldschurch.org or

New Era, Q&A, Personal Progress
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



CONFERENCE CONNECTION

As we heard at conference, showing love and kindness is one of the best ways to bless others. Find ideas for showing love daily at lds.org/go/loveNE7.



“Every day of our lives we are given opportunities to show love and kindness to those around us.”

President Thomas S. Monson

“We must be sure to sincerely love those we want to help in righteousness so they can begin to develop confidence in God’s love.”

Elder Richard G. Scott
of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles



“The unselfish give of themselves. These may be small gifts of charity that have a grand impact for good: a smile, a handshake, a hug, time spent in listening, a soft word of encouragement, or a gesture of caring. All these acts of kindness can change hearts and lives.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second
Counselor in the First Presidency

SCOUTS TO THE RESCUE

A troop of Latter-day Saint Boy Scouts from Georgia, USA, were on their way to a high-adventure campout when they came across a family in need of some extra muscle. A mother, father, and their five kids had been out on a hike when the mom had fallen and broken her leg only five minutes before the Scouts showed up.

The family was a mile and a half away from their car. They were also outside cell phone range. The only solution was

to carry the mother back to the car. The Scouts immediately put their own plans on hold to help the family. One of the Scouts had a cot in his car, so two Scouts made the three-mile round-trip run to bring the cot back to the injured mother. The troop members took turns carrying the injured woman over rough terrain for an hour and a half.

The young men don’t believe it was merely chance that they showed up at the right place at the right time. “I know we were supposed to



be there,” says Alex J., one of those involved in the rescue. “God put us in that place at that time so we could help her.”



WE'VE GOT MAIL

THE LESSON THAT STUCK

The story "The Lesson That Stuck" (Mar. 2014) made me realize how we sometimes value belongings more than people. It also made me remember the times I got upset with someone for messing up one of my things. My belongings are nothing compared to the precious soul I was angry at.

The day after reading the article, I walked into the kitchen to see my brother cleaning out the bread pans I use for my small bread business. He was using a scrub brush that was ruining the nonstick coating. I was about to yell at him until I realized two things. First, it was an honest mistake. My brother didn't know he was doing anything wrong. And, second, my brother was doing something nice for me.

I had paid only \$1.90 for that pan, and I was about to blow up! I remembered the article and almost laughed when I realized how silly my reaction was. Thank you for publishing that story and for all the other inspiring messages you send us.

Spencer E., North Carolina, USA



What articles inspired you this month? Email us at newera@ldschurch.org.

WATERS RISING

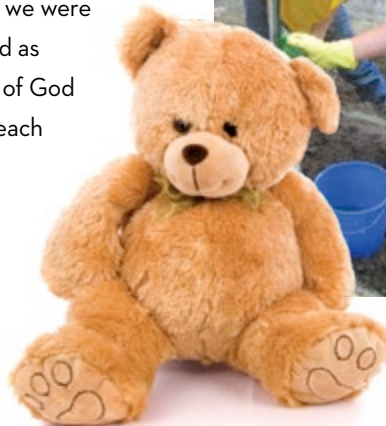
When heavy rains in southern Germany caused flooding so severe that many homes were underwater up to their rooftops, the Latter-day Saint youth in the area knew exactly what to do: they rolled up their sleeves and got to work. There certainly was plenty of work to go around.

Some youth helped directly with the aftermath of the flood. They swept away mud and helped clean out homes and gardens. Others worked to sort and distribute toys that had been donated for children affected by the flood.

The youth worked side-by-side with members of other faiths throughout the cleanup. "I felt the Spirit's presence as we were serving," says Nathaniel S.,



a young man who participated. "I know the reason the Spirit was there was because we were all unified as children of God helping each other."



MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURE

Joseph Smith—History 1:17 "When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*"

This verse reminds me that the Savior's gospel was restored. He is the reason we have this Church!

Robel G., 12, Washington, USA



UP AGAINST THE CLIFFS

One weekend I visited a seaside resort in the south of England. While there, I wanted to get to a place called Fairlight Glen farther up the coast. As I started to walk up the coast, I saw a sign saying, “Do not walk along this section of the beach.” No other information was given, and I didn’t know why the instruction was placed there. I ignored the sign and continued up the coast to Fairlight Glen.

As I walked I noticed that the tide was coming in. On one side of me were very steep, almost vertical cliffs, and on the other side the sea was closing in. I realized that I could be

trapped by the incoming tide. I panicked and started to run! The pebbles on the beach made it very difficult to run, and as I put my weight down, my feet would sink in and cause me to feel as if I were getting nowhere. Realizing that I might not make it to Fairlight Glen in time, I looked at the cliff face and considered climbing at a point that didn’t look as steep as the rest. But as I held on to the cliff face, the soft chalk rock gave way and there was no grip or support to climb up. Continuing to panic, I ran along the beach until I eventually reached Fairlight Glen, where there was easy access up the cliff face.

I’ve thought about how much that event applies to our lives in the Church today. God has put certain rules in place, and sometimes we don’t know why. However, God’s commandments can be a blessing and a protection for us because they prevent us from getting involved in sin or spiritual and physical danger.

I now appreciate the wisdom of that sign near the coast. Although it was a restriction, it was also a protection from being trapped by incoming tides. Had I followed its wise advice, I wouldn’t have put my life in danger that day. I know the same is true for us when we choose

to keep the commandments, because they are there to bless and protect us and keep us safe.

Mike C., Gloucestershire, England

Editor's note: Read more on the blessing and protection of obedience at lds.org/go/obeyNE7.

BAPTISM FOR MY GRANDFATHER

I'm grateful that our youth leaders planned a visit to the temple. As we were preparing for this trip to Apia, Samoa, we were happy for this rare opportunity. We joyfully went into the temple to do baptisms for the dead—for those who are in the spirit world waiting for us to find our family history and do work for them.

During baptisms, I saw a young man in our group baptized for Faataga Agavale, my grandfather. I felt tears of joy in my eyes, and I knew his spirit was there. I was very happy we were able to do work for him in the temple.

Saini A., Samoa

VITAL INFORMATION FROM A FRIEND

As a teenager, I didn't like going to church, so I didn't know much about the Bible or about God, nor did I want to. When I was 17, a friend of mine told me she was a Mormon. I had no idea what a Mormon was. I told my friend, "If I want to know anything about that Church, I'll find out on my own."

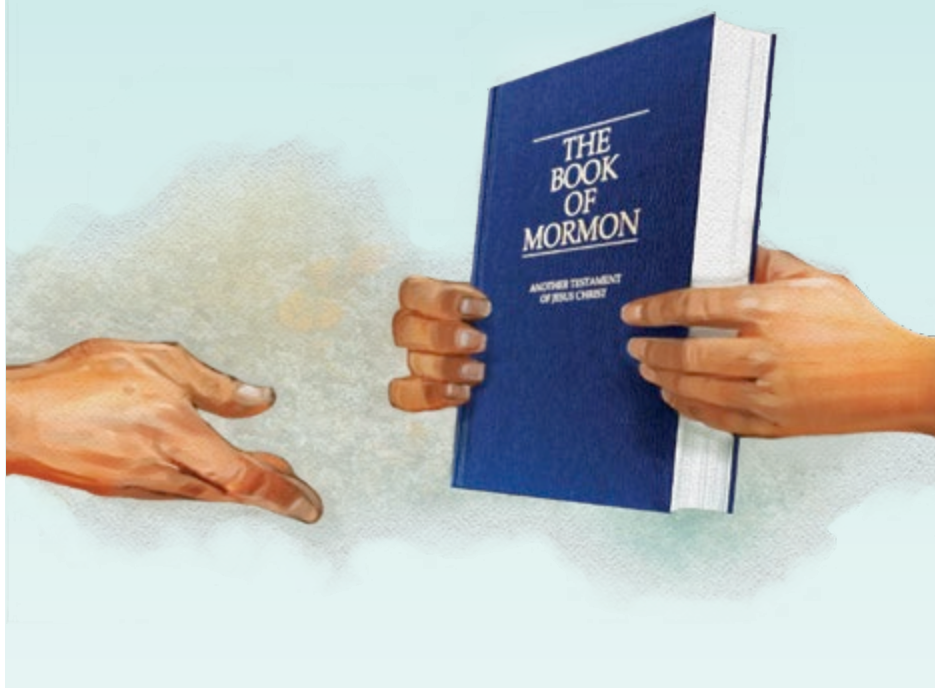
Seeing that I wasn't too concerned about religion, she gave me a Book of Mormon and asked me to read it and pray about it. She didn't pressure me. Later that night as I opened the book, I noticed her testimony written in the front. As I read it, I felt that I should learn more about the Book of Mormon. So I started reading 1 Nephi. I could not put the book down. I needed to know more.

In a family home evening, her family taught me about the gospel of Jesus Christ. Everything seemed to make sense. Soon I was taught by the missionaries and baptized and confirmed a member of the Lord's true Church. The gospel helped me know who I am, where I came from, and where I could go if I am faithful.

As I look back, I can see how the Holy Ghost helped me want to learn more. As I learned more, my attitude about church and God changed. For the first time in my life, I wanted to do what He wanted me to do.

The Book of Mormon changed my life, and I'm thankful for my friend who shared it with me. A true friend shares vital information such as this.

Michael P., Ohio, USA





By Elder M. Russell Ballard

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

HOW TO RELY ON THE PROTECTIVE POWER OF PRAYER

There are numerous teachings about the importance of prayer found throughout the scriptures, but one specifically ties prayer to power, especially the power to resist temptation: “Pray always, that you may come off conqueror; yea, that you may conquer Satan, and that you may escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work” (D&C 10:5).

What a wonderful promise! In this spiritual warfare that rages over individual souls, that is what we want more than anything else—to conquer Satan and to escape the hands of evil men and women who carry out his work. I cannot stress too highly the protective power that comes into our

lives through earnest, humble, consistent, yearning prayer.

I know you believe that; but in the hectic, pressure-filled schedules you face, I also know how easy it is to let prayer slip. Some of you hit the snooze button on your alarm clocks, thinking you can eke out just another minute or two of sleep, then jerk awake realizing that you are going to be late for school. On such mornings prayer gets pushed aside, perhaps with a feeble promise to yourself that you will do better tomorrow. Put the alarm clock where you can’t reach it from bed; that will solve this problem. Sometimes you return home late at night, exhausted and eager to collapse into bed. You may go through the motions of prayer in a superficial manner, but that is not the kind of prayer that helps us conquer Satan.

I know many of you live where the television or stereo may be on day and night. People talk loudly enough that even in your bedroom you can hear them clearly. There is laughter, noise, interruptions. You need to find a time and place where you can be alone with the Lord and pour out your heart to Him, that you might add strength and power to your spiritual lives. Every honest and sincere prayer strengthens you.

Perhaps there are some of you who have slipped into patterns of behavior that you know in your heart are displeasing to the Lord.

You feel unworthy and ashamed to approach your Father in Heaven. “I’ll repent first,” you say to yourselves, “and then I’ll begin saying my prayers again.” I tell you with all soberness that those thoughts are not from the Lord but come from the evil one. Nephi said it very clearly: “The evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray” (2 Nephi 32:8).

It is when we are lost in the mists of darkness and cannot find our way that we most desperately need the influence of the Lord. Nowhere in all of the scriptural injunctions on prayer do we find the suggestion that we must first be perfect in order to communicate with God.

A further word of caution. I often hear people say, “I told the Lord” this or “I told the Lord” that. Be careful not to “tell” Him but, rather, humbly seek and ask your Heavenly Father for guidance and direction. Prayer should be yearning and filled with gratitude.

My young friends, one of the most important ways to protect yourselves is to make sure that prayer—earnest, sincere, consistent prayer—is part of your daily lives. **NE**

From a Church Educational System fireside given on March 3, 2002.



Share Your Experiences

Share your experiences with prayer and read the experiences of other youth at lds.org/go/prayerNE7.

YOU *need the*
STRENGTH
that comes
FROM TRUSTING
THE LORD'S
prophets.

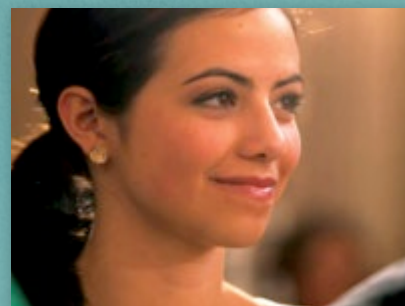
Elder Neil L. Andersen
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
April 2014 general conference

WHAT'S ONLINE



BULLYING—STOP IT!

How far can the effects of bullying reach? You may be surprised. See the *Mormon Messages* video “Bullying—Stop It!” at lds.org/go/bullyNE7. This powerful video will make you think twice about the messages you text and post.



ORDINANCES, COVENANTS, AND YOU

Baptism, sacrament, temple endowment—all of these are important ordinances along your covenant path. See how they're part of a young woman's life in the music video “Standing in Holy Places” at lds.org/go/templeNE7. Watching it may be the perfect addition to your preparation for this month's Sunday lessons.

WHAT'S YOUR NEXT ORDINANCE?

As you talk about ordinances and covenants in your *Come, Follow Me* lessons, don't forget about Presiding Bishop Gary E. Stevenson's talk from general conference, when he invited you to think about what you're doing with “your four minutes” here on earth: “My young friends, wherever you are in your ‘four-minute performance,’ I urge you to ponder, ‘What do I need to do next to ensure my medal?’” Read his talk at lds.org/go/minutesNE7 and make your plan today!



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