

Choosing the  
**STRAIT AND NARROW**  
over the **BROAD WAY**



*There were two paths in front of me, and I knew  
there was only one way to know which one to take.*



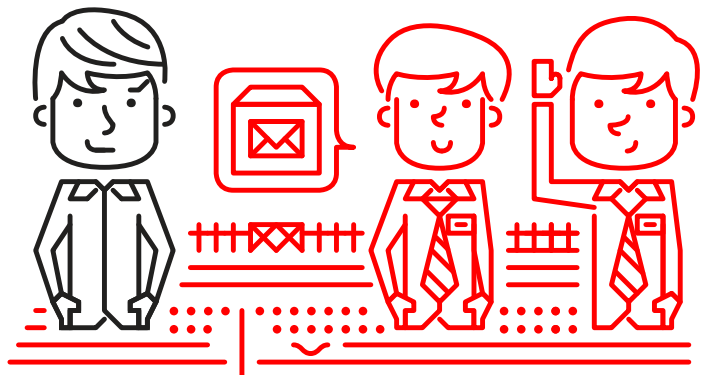
By Elder  
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Of the Seventy

I grew up in Nagano, Japan, with my parents. Religion was a part of everything that my family did. My father knelt before the Buddhist altar every morning and night. I didn't think of Buddhism as a religion—it was our way of life. It would have been easy for me to remain Buddhist for the rest of my life, but God has proved to me many times that the easy or popular way is not always the best way.

### Textbook or Holy Book?

As a teenage boy, I struggled a lot with my identity. I wondered why I was on this earth and who I was supposed to become. When I was about 13, the principal of my school gave every student a copy of the New Testament with English and Japanese side-by-side. "It isn't for religious purposes," he said. "It is a very good translation, so use it to study English." When I opened it up though, it gave scripture references for when you feel lonely, need answers to your questions, or are struggling. I could relate to all of those situations!

I read about Jesus Christ. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). "Take up [your] cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). The words resonated with me even though I didn't fully understand them. I wondered who Jesus Christ is and what it means to have Him as a Savior. I wondered if I was the only one feeling such a connection to what was supposed to be a textbook.

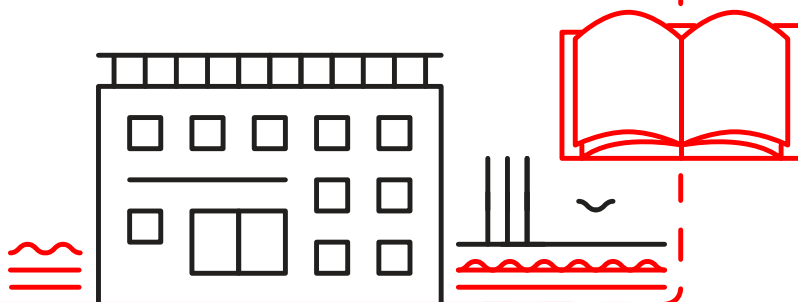


### Run Away or Stay and Listen?

A few years later I met some missionaries for the first time. My parents had warned me about the young Christians who were going around preaching. As I was walking home, a tall American missionary with a kind smile stopped me. I didn't know what to do. I was afraid he would talk about his church. If he had, I might have run the other way! All he asked was how to find the post office. I told him and then walked home.

As I walked away, I felt something. If I see the missionaries again, I thought, I will talk to them.

Not long after that, I ran into a different set of missionaries. I was shocked that God would hear and answer the prayers of a boy like me, until I read about Joseph Smith. I had read in the New Testament to pray always, but God appearing to a man? It felt both radical and right. Rather than run away, I set up an appointment to have them teach me.





### Make Excuses or Discover the Truth?

A month into meeting with the missionaries, they invited me to be baptized. I didn't want to turn them down, but I was hesitant to leave the tradition of my parents and everyone around me. There were two paths before me, and I knew there was only one way to know which one to take—I had to pray like Joseph Smith. I asked Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, if the things the missionaries had been teaching me were true.

That was my turning point. From then on, I knew for myself that the restored gospel is true. No one could take that knowledge away from me. I knew which path to follow, and nothing could change that.

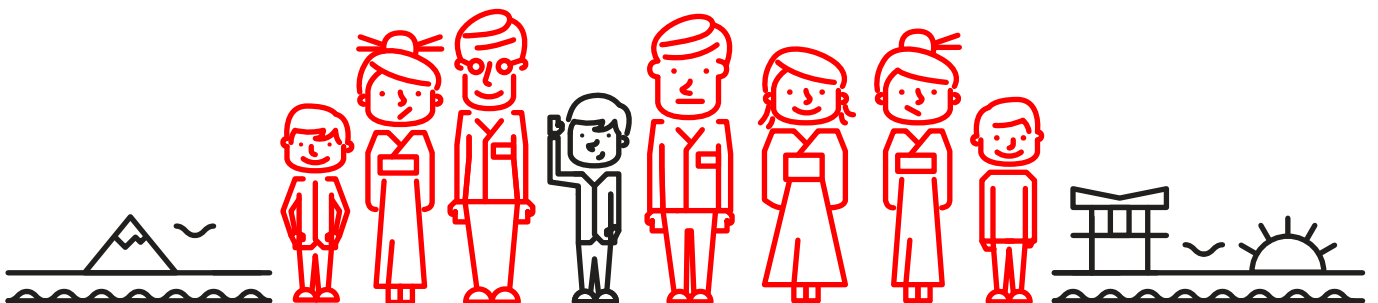
I had many questions when I was younger. I learned that I am a child of God, He loves me, He has a plan for me, and He wants to answer my prayers. This knowledge changed my entire perspective on life. I learned that who I am and what I do is significant.

### Blend In or Stand Out?

Before I learned that I was a child of God, I wanted to blend in with everyone. I was afraid of standing out. But after I learned that I am a child of God, I realized I can stand out; I can be different.

Praying and realizing that I am a son of God gave me the courage to explain my feelings to my parents, but they didn't quite understand. They thought I was rebellious and too immature to make the decision to be baptized. They were

embarrassed that their son was following this strange religion rather than their traditions. I knew who I was and what I wanted, but I also wanted to honor my parents and hoped they would honor my religion.



## Honor My Parents or Ignore Their Concerns?

I explained my situation to the sister missionaries. They had an idea—they could come talk to my parents so that they would feel better about this religion. I told them I was afraid my parents wouldn't want to talk to them. Then one of the sisters suggested that we fast together.

When I didn't eat breakfast, my mom was worried. "Why didn't you eat?" she asked. I explained that I was fasting, and that made her even more concerned.

"First you are going to this no-man's land of religion, and now you are not eating. I'm worried. I'm shocked! I'm going to call those missionaries."

She did call the sisters, and somehow they got themselves invited to our house for dinner!

We had a great time. The missionaries taught my parents the hymn "I Am a Child of God" (Hymns, no. 301), and we sang it together. My father loved that. After dinner with the sisters, neither of my parents was worried about me going to church. And I felt I was able to honor them by living the gospel because it really encompassed everything they had taught me. I thought if I loved them long enough and treated them kind enough, eventually they would understand. It took 35 years after my baptism, but my mother was baptized and went through the temple just a few years ago!

Knowing that I'm a child of God has impacted many of my life decisions. I also know that as we follow the Spirit and do what Heavenly Father asks of us, even when it seems hard, He will bless us. That is always the best choice. **NE**

