

JUNE 2015

THE

New Era

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THE MONTHLY YOUTH MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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By President
Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Second Counselor in
the First Presidency

LIVING *in a Fast-Paced* WORLD

If life and its rushed pace and many stresses have made it difficult for you to feel like rejoicing, then perhaps now is a good time to refocus on what matters most.

Have you ever been in an airplane and experienced turbulence? The most common cause of turbulence is a sudden change in air movement causing the aircraft to pitch, yaw, and roll. While planes are built to withstand far greater turbulence than anything you would encounter on a regular flight, it still may be disconcerting to passengers.

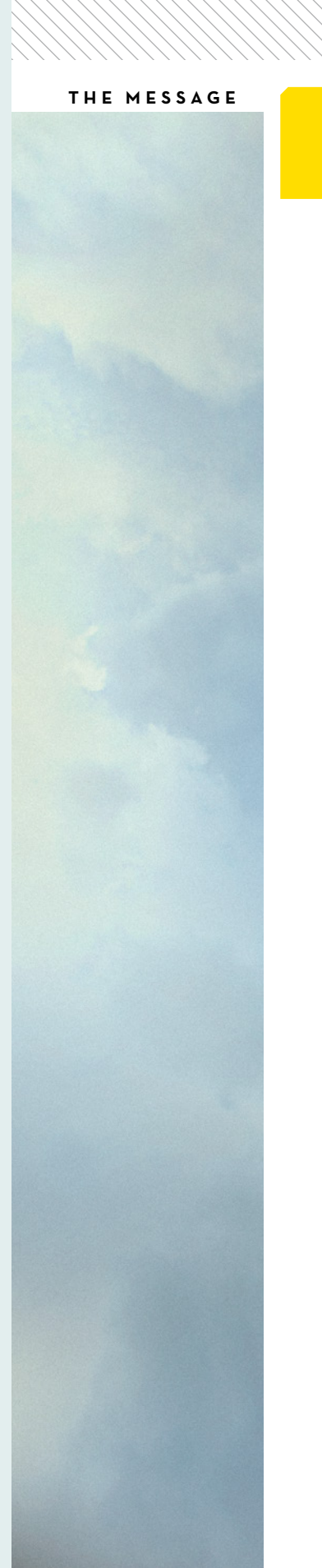
What do you suppose pilots do when they encounter turbulence? A student pilot may think that increasing speed is a good strategy because it will get them through the turbulence faster. But that may be the wrong thing to do. Professional pilots understand that there is an optimum turbulence penetration speed that will minimize the negative effects of turbulence. And most of the time that would mean to reduce your speed. The same principle applies also to speed bumps on a road.

Therefore, it is good advice to slow down a little, steady the course, and focus on the essentials when experiencing adverse conditions.

The Pace of Modern Life

One of the characteristics of modern life seems to be that we are moving at an ever-increasing rate, regardless of turbulence or obstacles.

Let's be honest; it's rather easy to be busy. We all can think up a list of tasks that will overwhelm our schedules. Some might even think that





Relationship with God

their self-worth depends on the length of their to-do list.

The wise resist the temptation to get caught up in the frantic rush

of everyday life. They follow the advice “There is more to life than increasing its speed.”¹ In short, they focus on the things that matter most.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, “We have to forego some good things in order to choose others that are better or best because they develop faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and strengthen our families.”²

The search for the best things inevitably leads to the foundational principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ—the simple and beautiful truths revealed to us by a caring, eternal, and all-knowing Father in Heaven.

How Can I Learn What Is Most Important?

I think most of us intuitively understand how important the fundamentals are. It is just that we sometimes get distracted by so many things that seem more enticing.

Printed material, wide-ranging media sources, electronic tools and gadgets—all helpful if used properly—can become hurtful diversions or heartless chambers of isolation.

Yet amidst the multitude of voices and choices, the humble Man of Galilee stands with hands outstretched, waiting. His is a simple message: “Come, follow me” (Luke 18:22). And He does not speak with a powerful megaphone but with a still, small voice (see 1 Kings 19:12). It is so easy for the basic gospel message to get lost amidst the deluge of information that hits us from all sides.

The holy scriptures and the spoken word of the living prophets give emphasis to the fundamental principles and

doctrines of the gospel. The reason we return to these foundational principles, to the pure doctrines, is because they are the gateway to truths of profound meaning.

The Basics: Four Key Relationships

As we turn to our Heavenly Father and seek His wisdom regarding the things that matter most, we learn over and over again the importance of four key relationships: with our God, with our families, with our fellowman, and with ourselves. As we evaluate our own lives with a willing mind, we will see where we have drifted from the more excellent way. The eyes of our understanding will be opened, and we will recognize what needs to be done to purify our heart and refocus our life.

First, our relationship with God is most sacred and vital. We are His spirit children. He is our Father. He desires our happiness. As we seek Him, as we learn of His Son, Jesus Christ, as we open our hearts to the influence of the Holy Spirit, our lives become more stable and secure. We experience greater peace, joy, and fulfillment as we give our best to live according to God’s eternal plan and keep His commandments.

We improve our relationship with our Heavenly Father by learning of Him, by communing with Him, by repenting of our sins, and by actively following Jesus Christ, for



Relationship with our families

“no man cometh unto the Father, but by [Christ]” (John 14:6). To strengthen our relationship with God, we need some meaningful time alone with Him. Quietly focusing on daily personal prayer and scripture study, always aiming to be worthy of a current temple recommend—these will be some wise investments of our time and efforts to draw closer to our Heavenly Father. Let us heed the invitation in Psalms: “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).



Relationship **with our fellowman**

things together, like family dinner and family home evening and by just having fun together. In family relationships *love* is really spelled *t-i-m-e*, time. Taking time for each other is the key for harmony at home. We talk with, rather than about, each other. We learn from each other, and we appreciate our differences as well as our commonalities. We establish a divine bond with each other as we approach God together through family prayer, gospel study, and Sunday worship.

The third key relationship we have is with our fellowman. We build this relationship one person at a time—by being sensitive to the needs of others, serving them, and giving of our time and talents. I was deeply impressed by one sister who was burdened with the challenges of age and illness but decided that although she couldn’t do much, she could listen. And so each week she watched for people who looked troubled or discouraged, and she spent

Our second key relationship is with our families. Since “no other success can compensate for failure”³ here, we must place high priority on our families. We build deep and loving family relationships by doing simple

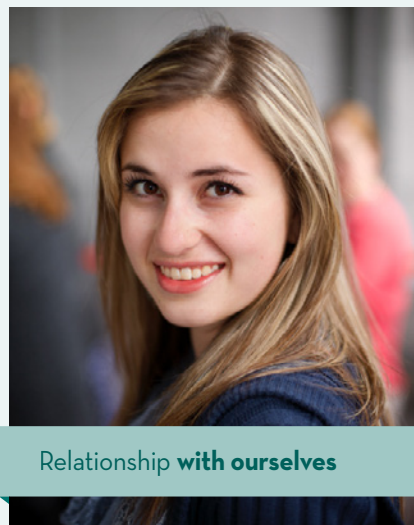
time with them, listening. What a blessing she was in the lives of so many people.

The fourth key relationship is with ourselves. It may seem odd to think of having a relationship with ourselves, but we do. Some people can’t get along with themselves. They criticize and belittle themselves all day long until they begin to hate themselves. May I suggest that you reduce the rush and take a little extra time to get to know yourself better. Walk in nature, watch a sunrise, enjoy God’s creations, ponder the truths of the restored gospel, and find out what they mean for you personally. Learn to see yourself as Heavenly Father sees you—as His precious daughter or son with divine potential.

Strength in Simplicity

Strength comes not from frantic activity but from being settled on a firm foundation of truth and light. It comes from placing our attention and efforts on the basics of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. It comes from paying attention to the divine things that matter most.

Let us simplify our lives a little. Let us make the changes necessary to refocus our lives on the sublime beauty of the simple, humble path of Christian discipleship—the path that leads always toward a life of meaning, gladness, and peace. **NE**



Relationship **with ourselves**

From a talk given in the October 2010 general conference.

NOTES

1. Mahatma Gandhi, in Larry Chang, *Wisdom for the Soul* (2006), 356.
2. Dallin H. Oaks, “Good, Better, Best,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 107.
3. J. E. McCulloch, *Home: The Savior of Civilization* (1924), 42; see also Conference Report, Apr. 1935, 116.

*I couldn't understand why I was
always in such a bad mood
until I started listening.*

By Natalie Harker


I decided to enroll in early-morning seminary, and I was eager to learn. Every morning I woke up at 5:00 a.m. to get ready for school, and then I drove to the seminary building. I was amazed at how much I enjoyed early-morning seminary.



A LITTLE off-key

For the
Strength
of Youth

MUSIC

A stylized illustration in shades of blue and white. It features a large, abstract shape on the left that resembles a musical instrument or a stylized letter 'M'. There are various musical symbols scattered throughout, including a treble clef, a question mark, and a starburst. The background has a subtle pattern of diagonal lines.

Halfway into my early-morning seminary experience, I grew tired of my usual music collection and decided to turn on the radio. I didn't listen to the radio often, so I turned the station to a popular one that I knew my friends listened to. The station streamed fast-paced, popular music that I recognized from school dances. I decided it couldn't be too bad, and I left it there for weeks. I wasn't really listening to the music—it was mostly just background music while I focused on driving and thought about school. If I ever heard a bad word, I immediately turned the volume down and waited until the song was over before turning the volume back up and listening to a different song.

A gradual change started happening in me. I found that I didn't want to go to Mutual activities and struggled to focus in church. I became increasingly irritated with my family. I didn't want to go home, and I argued with my parents over things that didn't really matter. I was frequently in a bad mood and I had no idea why.

One morning I was running late, and when I started my car, the radio blared with a popular song streaming through the speakers. I was getting tired of the song, so I started rummaging through my music collection, looking for music that I hadn't listened to in a while. I had trouble

finding something, and I kept thinking, "Just leave it, you're already going to be late!" Still, I kept looking and settled on the soundtrack of a fun animated movie I enjoyed.

My mood changed. For one week I left that soundtrack playing in my car, and my mood immediately took a turn for the better. I focused on church more, eager to feel the Spirit and become closer to my Heavenly Father. Then one day, as I drove to seminary, I thought about what could have been the cause of my sudden sour mood and what had fixed it. I offered a prayer in my heart for the answer so I could prevent it from happening again.

Then it hit me: even though I hadn't been listening to the messages of the lyrics, the songs played on the radio station I'd been listening to didn't have an uplifting spirit to them. Even when the message wasn't bad, the sound of the music was dark. The music, which I'd only left on for background music, had started affecting my spirit, without my even realizing it.

I'm not saying all popular music is bad, but I learned that day that it isn't just the lyrics we need to focus on when choosing good music but also the feel of the music as well. I started asking, "If I just listen to the sound of it, how does it make me feel?" I am so grateful to my Heavenly Father for teaching me this lesson. Music is a very powerful thing. Wholesome, spiritual music can bring us almost as close to our Heavenly Father as prayer does, but music that doesn't possess these qualities can drive us dangerously far away from Him. I love music, but I love my Heavenly Father more, and I'm grateful He has provided music that brings us closer to Him. **NE**

Natalie Harker lives in Utah, USA.



More Online

Learn more about the power of music through videos and articles at lds.org/go/music6NE. You can even access a music player with uplifting songs at lds.org/youth/music or on the youth app (see youth.lds.org).



Beyond THE NOTES

The words of our hymns can inspire, give hope, and teach powerful lessons.

By Margot Hovley

Music forms a big part of our Church meetings. Nearly every meeting begins and ends with a song—and for good reason. It sets a definite tone, and there’s no doubt that the hymns have a special power to help us worship. The mere sound of a hymn can calm us and invite the Spirit.

The words of our beloved hymns have a special influence too. Have you ever thought about studying the gospel by reading the hymns? Try it sometime. Open your hymnbook, and on any page you’ll find a message about our beliefs and feelings as Church members.

You can even go deeper by reading the scriptures listed below each hymn. You could even mark your scriptures by writing the associated hymn titles in the margin.

As you study the words of the hymns, you’ll learn truths, find comfort, and feel inspired. Listen to the words as you sing this week in church, and find the gospel lessons that are there for you. Then turn to the hymns anytime you need to clear your mind, be uplifted, get back on track, learn more about the gospel, and feel the Spirit.



Here are just a few examples of hymns with great meaning. Find the message you think goes with each hymn’s lyrics and write it on the line below.

- ▶ God guides our lives.
- ▶ Faith and obedience bring blessings.
- ▶ Christ’s sacrifice was for you.
- ▶ Trust in the Atonement.
- ▶ We can find peace in Jesus Christ.
- ▶ Prayer brings joy.
- ▶ Christ will come again to rule the earth.
- ▶ The Holy Ghost will comfort and guide us in our youth.



Share Your Favorite Hymns

Share the words to your favorite hymns with family, friends, on social media, or at lds.org/go/hymns6NE. It’s an easy way to share the gospel!

Margot Hovley lives in Utah, USA.

HYMN
114

COME UNTO HIM

*I kneel upon the grass and pray;
An answer comes without a voice.
It takes my burden all away
And makes my aching heart rejoice.*

PRAYER BRINGS JOY

(message)

HYMN
194

THERE IS A GREEN HILL FAR AWAY

*Oh, dearly, dearly has he loved!
And we must love him too,
and trust in his redeeming blood,
and try his works to do.*

(message)

HYMN
134

I BELIEVE IN CHRIST

*I believe in Christ; so come what may,
With him I'll stand in that great day
When on this earth he comes again
To rule among the sons of men.*

(message)

HYMN
96

DEAREST CHILDREN, GOD IS NEAR YOU

*Dearest children, God is near you,
Watching o'er you day and night,
And delights to own and bless you,
If you strive to do what's right.
He will bless you, He will bless you,
If you put your trust in him.*

(message)

FUN FACT

President Thomas S. Monson has quoted hymns 89 times (from 46 different hymns) in 68 of 102 general conferences where he's spoken (52 years, 1964–2015). President Monson has quoted more hymns than any other General Authority.

HYMN
236

LORD, ACCEPT INTO THY KINGDOM

*Let the Holy Ghost, descending,
Comfort, guide the path of youth,
Channel of all light and glory,
Key to vision, knowledge, truth.*

(message)

HYMN
193

I STAND ALL AMAZED

*I stand all amazed at the love Jesus
offers me,
Confused at the grace that so fully
he proffers me.
I tremble to know that for me he was
crucified,
That for me, a sinner, he suffered, he
bled and died.
Oh, it is wonderful that he should
care for me
Enough to die for me!*

(message)

HYMN
120

LEAN ON MY AMPLE ARM

*Lift up thy tearful eyes,
Sad heart, to me;
I am the sacrifice
Offered for thee.
In me thy pain shall cease,
In me is thy release,
In me thou shalt have peace
Eternally.*

(message)

HYMN
124

BE STILL, MY SOUL

*Be still, my soul: Thy God doth
undertake
To guide the future as he has the
past.
Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing
shake;
All now mysterious shall be bright
at last.*

(message)

Answers: Hymn 114: Prayer brings joy; hymn 194: Trust in the Atonement; hymn 193: Christ's sacrifice was for you; hymn 120: We can find peace in Jesus Christ; hymn 124: God guides our lives; hymn 236: The Holy Ghost will comfort and guide us in our youth; hymn 96: Faith and obedience bring blessings.

WRITING YOUR OWN LYRICS



Anyone can write song lyrics.
This tip makes it easy.

When you look closely at the lyrics to a hymn, you'll discover great beauty in these poems set to music. There's rhyme. There's meter. There's style and rhythm. There's deep meaning. And when poetry is set to music, it gains even deeper meaning.

If you've ever thought about writing poetry, you could write a hymn yourself. After all, stringing words together is something you've been doing ever since you learned to talk. If you like to write, you can do this!

Here are a couple of ideas you can try:

- Take your favorite hymn and ask yourself: "What if the composer had written another verse. What would it be?" Then write down your thoughts and see what you think.
- Write words for a completely new topic using the tune of an existing hymn.
- Write gospel-centered lyrics and ask a musician friend to put them to music.

Now that you have your hymn, it's a great way to share a gospel message with others. Consider sharing with your family, friends, or online. (Can we say music video, anyone?)¹ **NE**

NOTE

1. Keep in mind that some hymns are protected by copyright laws, so you'll need to be careful about which ones you post online. For example, see the note at the bottom of hymn 219, "Because I Have Been Given Much."

NEW LYRICS MAKE A MISSIONARY HYMN

Speaking of writing new lyrics to a hymn tune, composer Janice Kapp Perry did just that with the hymn "As Sisters in Zion" (*Hymns*, no. 309). The new hymn, "The Sisters of Zion," is a rousing missionary piece. Read the lyrics at lds.org/go/sisters6NE.

NOTEWORTHY

A white earbud is positioned at the bottom left, with its cord looping upwards and around the word 'NOTEWORTHY' in a large, elegant, calligraphic style. The cord forms a large loop that encircles the word, with the earbud itself acting as the starting point of the loop.

What goes in your ears stays
on your mind. Choose to keep
it upbeat and in harmony with
the Lord's standards.

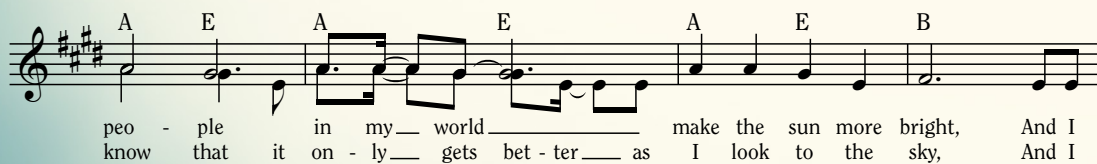
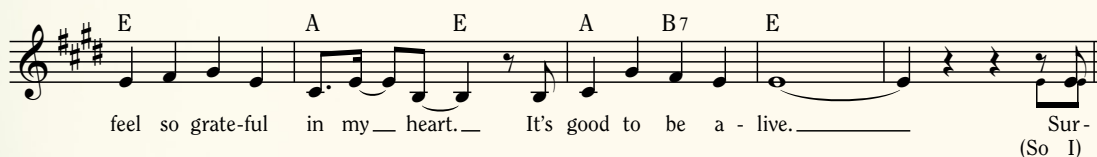
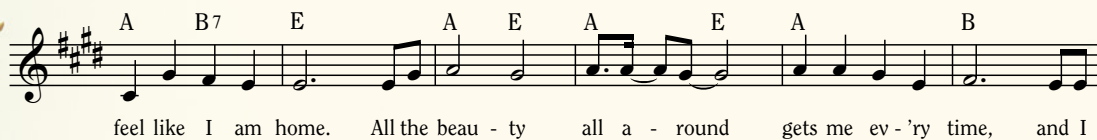
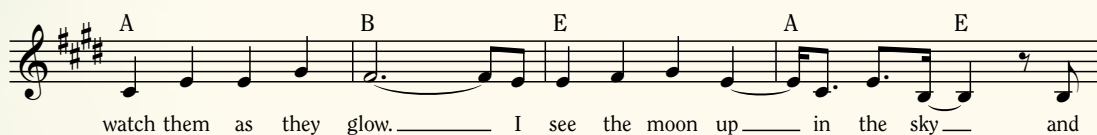
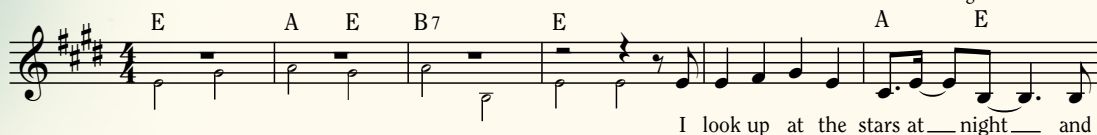
(See D&C 25:12.)



GOOD TO

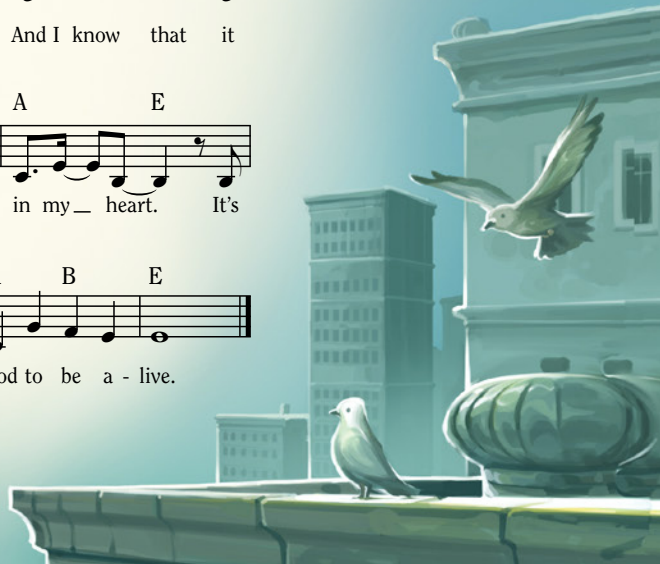
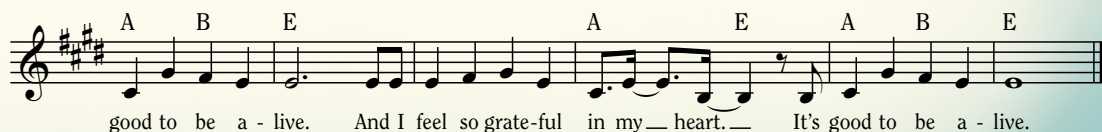
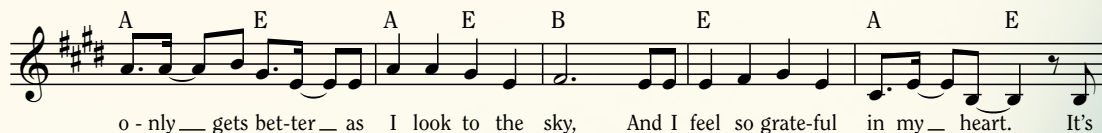
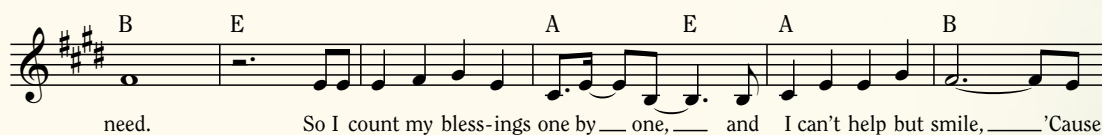
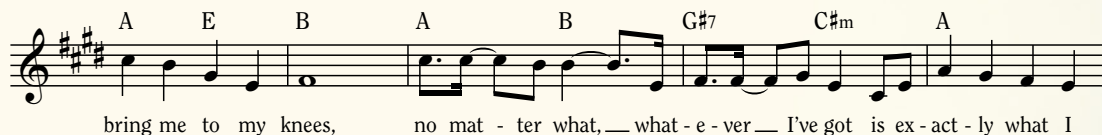
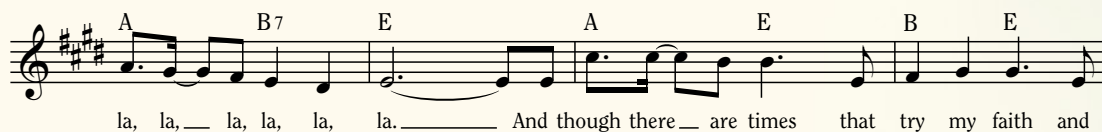
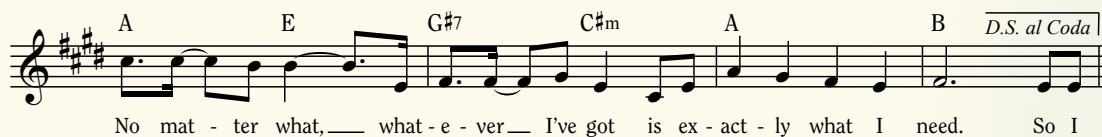
Cheerfully ♩ = 118-122

Words and music by
Regan Rindlisbacher



Download piano sheet
music and audio at
lds.org/go/alive6NE.

BE ALIVE



DON'T LET YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES DEFINE YOU. YOU WERE SENT HERE TO DO GREAT THINGS.

Where you live, what do people expect you to achieve and to become? Sometimes the people around you form expectations of you based on your past, on what other people in your family have done, or on stereotypes for your community—not on who *you* really are.

Several youth in Tennessee, USA, have learned this personally. In the neighborhood where they live, many people drop out of school, become trapped in drug problems, struggle to keep a job, and sometimes even end up in jail. Because of that, people there often expect all youth to do the same.



BREAKING EXP

Richard J., 17, says, “The world expects me to not graduate and to not go to church. They expect me to be a failure.” But Richard also says, “I know God wants me to live with Him one day.”

For Richard and the other youth in his ward, the gospel brings hope. It’s helping them rise above the low expectations of people around them and aim for something far greater—meeting the Lord’s expectations.

Overcoming What the World Expects

For example, Jenna B., 16, recognizes the pressure of expectations from movies, the Internet, and even her peers. “The world expects me to try to be like the model on the front of a magazine. They want young women to be cookie cutters of each other, be exactly the same, do exactly the same thing,” she says. “It’s kind of disappointing, because we’re



By Hillary Olsen

ECTATIONS



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF BRIAN HESLOP



unique people—and the Lord tells us all the time in the scriptures how amazing we are.”

Some youth face different but equally difficult challenges.

Exavier R., 15, has been raised by his mother. “I saw other people with fathers in their lives, but I never had one in my life.” While Exavier’s mother works to support their family, he helps take care of his two little sisters. He wakes up every morning and helps them get ready for the day. He takes them to school before heading to his own school. After school, he picks them up, takes them home, and helps them with whatever

they need. That takes a lot of strength and maturity, but people around Exavier “think I’m weak. I’ve seen a lot of bad things and been through a lot of hard things in my life, and people don’t know the real me,” he says.

Exavier and his mother joined the Church when he was 14. When he was baptized, his Young Men leaders became like fathers to him. “They guide me in the right direction and help me make the right decision,” he says. Most importantly, Exavier learned that he has a Heavenly Father who believes in him and expects him to do his best every day.

Understanding God’s Expectations

Because Heavenly Father knows you are amazing and can do amazing things, He has high expectations for you. In order to fulfill those expectations, you first have to understand what they are.

So what does He expect from you? Wilson M., 16, says, “God expects us to become more like Jesus Christ and live the gospel to the best of our ability.” Ariana G., 16, knows that “Heavenly Father wants us to be as good as we possibly can throughout our lives: compassionate, full of the Spirit, humble, loving—everything in the scriptures that He tells us to be.”

Those high expectations make Ariana feel special, but she admits that living up to them can be hard. “It’s difficult as you go throughout life and you make mistakes. It can make you feel inadequate. But the fact that He knows that we can do it and the fact that He expects it of us means it’s not impossible. It makes me feel stronger because He knows what I’m capable of even if I don’t.” Ariana’s sister, Natalia, 12, agrees, adding, “It makes me feel very grateful to know that God believes in me.”

Of course, there are things you can do to help you know what God has in store for you personally. Riley M., 16, says, “I find that the scriptures really help me to know what Heavenly Father expects of me. And having a patriarchal blessing helps, too. I also try to pray about it.”

Receiving God’s Help

Heavenly Father does believe in you. He knows what you’re capable of, and He hasn’t left you unaided as you try to live up to His expectations. He’s called prophets to teach the gospel in every dispensation. Making the principles and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ, such as faith, repentance, and baptism and confirmation, a part

of your life will bring you closer to the Lord and help you meet His expectations. As Sister Jean A. Stevens, former first counselor in the Primary general presidency, said, “The gospel ‘is not weight; it is wings.’ It carries us” (“Fear Not; I Am with Thee,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 83). That’s definitely what it’s done for Daniel Z., 16, and Darrius T., 16.

Life changed dramatically for Daniel when he was baptized. “Before I joined the Church, I wasn’t doing good things in my life. But when I got baptized, I felt the Spirit and knew that this was the right Church. I kept going to church, and that helped me. I

by staying in a good social environment. “I try to be at home with my family or at church with my friends a lot. They help me do good things.”

Choosing Your Path

Like Darrius, we can all choose to be strong every day. Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, “All of us can meet God’s high expectations, however great or small our capacity and talent may be. . . . It is a diligent, devoted effort on our part that calls for [His] empowering and enabling grace”



stopped doing bad things. I started getting good grades in school. I started to feel more respect for others,” he says. For Daniel, the changes he’s made in his life since his baptism are helping him grow up to be the man he knows the Lord wants him to be.

Darrius chooses to be strong every day. “God expects me to be a good person, a wonderful person. He expects me to do good things and be a leader to others.” It’s not easy to do those things—especially when people around you don’t always make good choices. Darrius stays strong

(“As Many as I Love, I Rebuke and Chasten,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 100).

Living up to the Lord’s expectations does take “diligent, devoted effort,” but it’s worth it. No matter what the world tells you you’re expected to do or be, remember that you are a child of God and that He wants you to live with Him again.

You *can* meet God’s expectations for you, because you were sent to this earth to do great things—and because God will help you do them. **NE**

Hillary Olsen lives in Utah, USA.

“It’s difficult as you go throughout life and you make mistakes. It can make you feel inadequate. But the fact that He knows that we can do it and the fact that He expects it of us means it’s not impossible.”

—Ariana G., 16

The Scripture Study **PUZZLE**

Like putting together a puzzle, each time you study the scriptures, you get a larger and larger view of God's truths.

By Cody Phillips

In September 2011, students at a university in Vietnam set a new world record by putting together the largest jigsaw puzzle in the world. It took 1,600 students 17 hours to put all 551,232 pieces in place.

They created a 48-foot by 76-foot (15 m by 23 m) puzzle showing a lotus flower with six leaves representing people, geography, history, culture, education, and economy. Think of it—more than half a million tiny pieces interlocking to form one giant picture. Each piece of that puzzle might seem unimportant and uninteresting by itself, but the puzzle is incomplete if just one piece is missing.

The scriptures are like a jigsaw puzzle: the more pieces you put together, the more you see the truths of God's plan. As your view of that plan grows, you'll see that the scriptures are interesting and relevant to your life.

Here are a few scripture-study suggestions to help you see the big picture—and the tiny details. As you put these pieces together, you'll see the amazing truths that await you in the scriptures.

DOCTRINE:

Large Pieces That Teach Eternal Truths

The scriptures teach the doctrines and principles of the gospel. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine" (2 Timothy 3:16). Since we can be saved only through Jesus Christ (see John 14:6), we need to learn about Him and His doctrine. That's why the Lord

asks us to "search the scriptures; for . . . they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).

PEOPLE:

Colorful Pieces That Teach Lessons


There are hundreds of people to read about in the scriptures. Which of them do you admire most? Maybe you look up to Ammon for his courageous obedience in the face of danger. Or maybe you think of Job and his unwavering faith and integrity.

Have you read about the donkey that talked to its master (see Numbers 22)? or the wicked king who was willing to give up his kingdom to be forgiven (see Alma 22)? or the woman who was known by her whole city as a virtuous person (see Ruth 1–4)?

There are also people in the scriptures who weren't so admirable. What can you learn from them and the poor choices they made?

Pay attention to people you read about in the scriptures, and ask yourself how you can follow their good examples and avoid their mistakes. The puzzle pieces of their





lives are some of the most interesting and colorful pieces of all. Their experiences are a memorable way to learn and remember the principles of the gospel!

SYMBOLISM: *Uncovering Hidden Pieces*

Sometimes the scriptures use symbols to teach gospel principles. You'll be missing some puzzle pieces if you don't see the symbolism. In addition to Church and seminary classes, study helps like the Guide to the Scriptures or seminary and institute manuals can help you find the missing pieces.

For example, the story of Abraham and Isaac (see Genesis 22) is inspiring, but it takes on a deeper meaning when you discover that it is symbolic of our Heavenly Father's sacrifice and of the Savior's atoning sacrifice for us (see Jacob 4:5).

THE HOLY GHOST: *Finding Pieces That Connect*

Some puzzle pieces look like they go together, but they don't quite fit. The Spirit can help you see which pieces really do go together. As you invite His help through



GOD SPEAKS TO US

“When we want to speak to God, we pray. And when we want Him to speak to us, we search the scriptures; for His words are spoken through His prophets. He will then teach us as we listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Holy Scriptures: The Power of God unto Our Salvation,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 26–27.

prayer and pondering, the Spirit will help you see how verses you have studied before connect to what you’re studying now as well as how those teachings connect to your life. Ideally, you’ll receive inspiration from the words in the scriptures but also from the Spirit as you ponder on the things you read.

APPLICATION: *Putting the Pieces Together*

You won’t see what picture the puzzle is forming if you don’t put the pieces together. Similarly, the doctrines,

principles, and commandments you learn from the scriptures will not help you very much unless you live what you learn (see John 7:17). As you try each day to live by the principles of the gospel taught in the scriptures, your faith and testimony will grow stronger, and scripture study will become an essential part of your life. **NE**

Cody Phillips lives in Utah, USA.





Two Shovels AND A Payback Plan

When our dog's barking left my family in the doghouse, Dad came up with a plan for dealing with our grumbling neighbors.

By Darryn Call

When I was 13, after eight years of living in a farmhouse with acres of land, my family moved into a suburban neighborhood. Our beautiful golden retriever, Tissue, didn't exactly like these new conditions. She barked the entire first night we were there. And our neighbors decided to pay us a visit.

Our parents weren't home at the time, so it was my sister who had the bad luck to answer the door. The neighbors blasted into us with their angry words. They said we'd better get our dog quiet if we knew what was good for us!

I didn't know what else to do, so I climbed into the doghouse with Tissue. I stayed there for hours with her head on my lap until she finally fell asleep.

When my parents came home, they were upset at what the neighbors had done. But after that night I never heard Mom and Dad complain about it again. So I figured they'd forgotten the whole thing. But I was wrong. A month later my dad asked me if I wanted to help him get even with the neighbors.

I nodded quickly in agreement. Payback! Dad sent me to the garage to grab two shovels. I had no idea what kind of payback he had in mind, but I walked next door with him willingly.

I should've known something was fishy right away. I saw our neighbor in his front yard struggling with a wheelbarrow and shovel. All by himself, he was trying to haul a huge pile of dirt to his backyard. With how

big that pile was and how slow he was going, it would take him forever to finish.

Without saying a word, Dad walked up to the mound, dug in his shovel, and started filling the wheelbarrow. Our neighbor stared at him in silent confusion. Following Dad's example, I pitched in and we quickly filled the wheelbarrow. We kept at it until the entire mound was gone.

I'm not sure exactly what the man thought about us helping. For me, though, I felt a healing in my soul as we served our neighbor.

That day my dad taught me a lesson he's taught me many times since: being kind is much better than getting even. **NE**

Darryn Call lives in Texas, USA.

FIND THE AMAZING IN YOUR LIFE

DON'T GET THROWN OFF BY THE CURVEBALLS THAT COME YOUR WAY.

By David Dickson

Church Magazines

Your alarm clock sounds shrilly in the dark. It's like a modern-day rooster, gleefully heralding the start of a day that's probably loaded with difficulties coming at you from all directions.

For example, you think there's still some of your favorite cereal left for breakfast? Think again! The welcome sight of that blessed box sitting on the shelf is only a mirage. Inside there's nothing more than cruel, cruel dust.

At least your favorite shirt is on the hanger, ready to go, right? Wrong again. You find it crumpled at the bottom of the laundry basket, laughing up at you.

Man. What's going to happen once you actually *leave* the house?

TACKLING THE DAY

Life can sometimes seem that way, can't it? That each day is full of trip lines poised to send us sprawling down in the mud?

The odd thing is, we tend to see most clearly what we have trained ourselves to look for. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles asked the following question: "Do you take time to discover each day how beautiful your life can be?"¹

Sure enough, that beauty is right there alongside everything else. And here's the neat part: once we've trained ourselves to seek the awesome things that happen in our lives every day, we'll notice them more and more.

It's kind of like learning how to read hidden messages . . .

Object lesson time!

MATERIALS

- Baking soda
- Small bowl
- White printing paper
- Grape juice
- Cotton swab or small paintbrush
- Cotton ball or paper towel



NOTES

1. Richard G. Scott, "Finding Joy in Life," *Ensign*, May 1996, 24.
2. Henry B. Eyring, "O Remember, Remember," *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 67.
3. Thomas S. Monson, "Finding Joy in the Journey," *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 86.

TOP SECRET PREPARATION

- 1) Hide some treats or a favorite game your family loves to play somewhere in your house.
- 2) Put two tablespoons of baking soda in a small bowl.



- 3) Mix in enough water to resemble thin pancake batter.



- 4) Dip a cotton swab or small paintbrush into the batter and use it to write a message on the bottom half of a piece of paper, telling the location of the treats/game you hid. Something like, "Look in the bottom of the coat closet."
- 5) Allow your message to dry completely, and then use your hand to brush any residual baking soda powder off the paper. Your message should be completely invisible. It's showtime.

BUSY DAYS AHEAD

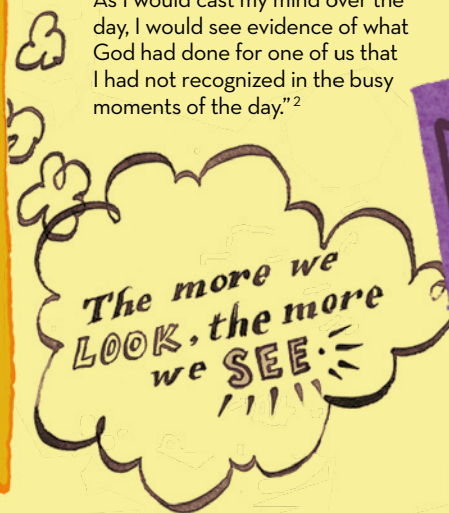
- 1) Bring a regular pen and your secretly prepared piece of paper. Explain to your family that any day can be full of unexpected challenges. Ask your family what some of these challenges might be.



- 2) Write answers on the top half of the paper, above your hidden message. You don't need to make a huge list. All you're doing here is getting the point across that days can indeed have stumbling blocks.

- 3) Then tell the following story from President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency: President Eyring began a habit of looking back through each day for evidence of God's hand in his family's life. Then he'd write his observations in a journal.

"As I kept at it," President Eyring says, "something began to happen. As I would cast my mind over the day, I would see evidence of what God had done for one of us that I had not recognized in the busy moments of the day."²



FHE
Object Lesson

LEARNING TO LOOK

- 1) Take some time discussing President Eyring's process. What's so powerful about looking for blessings, including those we might have missed when they happened? How could your own family find ways to look for blessings?
- 2) Now's the time to spring that secret message. Bring a cup of grape juice and a cotton ball into the room.

Before your big reveal, teach the following point: once we too know how to look for the good and the beautiful in our lives, we can see that it's been there all along.

- 3) Dip the cotton ball into the grape juice and wipe it across the hidden message on the lower half of the paper. The invisible words will leap off the page, leading to the "blessings" you've stashed away. (Seriously, it's way cool.)
- 4) Before you unleash your family on the treasure hunt, you might close with the following quote from President Thomas S. Monson: "Let us relish life as we live it, find joy in the journey, and share our love with friends and family."³

Looking for God's blessings in your life is a great way to "find joy in the journey."

And so is the ability to pass secret messages to your siblings whenever you want using this special technique. So, win-win!

Where EARTH and *Heaven* Meet

*Through photos and poems,
teens share what the
temple means to them.*





Mesa Arizona Temple, Lexi C., 15

After-day Saint youth revere the temple as the purest and most sacred of all buildings, a place of beauty where the Spirit speaks and where covenants are made for eternity.

Their love for the temple is evident in the heartfelt joy of their words and the vibrant emotion of the images that temples inspire them to create. Enjoy their poems and photos as you think of the love you also share for the house of the Lord.

Nauvoo Illinois Temple, Alex A., 17



The Gila Valley Arizona Temple, Katie G., 14



Denver Colorado Temple, Hayden C., 16



Salt Lake Temple, Nephi B., 16



Manti Utah Temple,
Lynn S., 18

KANSAS CITY MISSOURI TEMPLE

By Savannah M., 14, Missouri, USA

*Oh, how majestic it stands!
White spires pointing upward,
Nigh unto my Father,
The angel Moroni like a beacon
Drawing me closer to the Savior.
Joyful we are,
To have such a dwelling so blessed—
A dwelling of refuge,
Of peace, of salvation, of service—
A dwelling I fancy when I rest.*

*Only the home could ever compare
With the holiness of the temple
We now consecrate.
And through it my family
May live together
For time and eternity, so complete.*

*My heart, oh my heart!
May it ever lean to such beauty
And abide here,
For this tabernacle we have made
Is of the Messiah
For now into
Eternity.*

Editor's note:

*This poem was written about
the dedication of the Kansas City
Missouri Temple.*



Learn about Temples

To learn more about temples,
go to lds.org/go/temples6NE.



Kyiv Ukraine Temple, Christopher H., 19



Logan Utah Temple, Chantel L., 17



Kansas City Missouri Temple,
Dominique D., 13



Washington D.C. Temple, Jasmin J., 21

FOR SARINE

By Brittney M., 16, Hawaii, USA

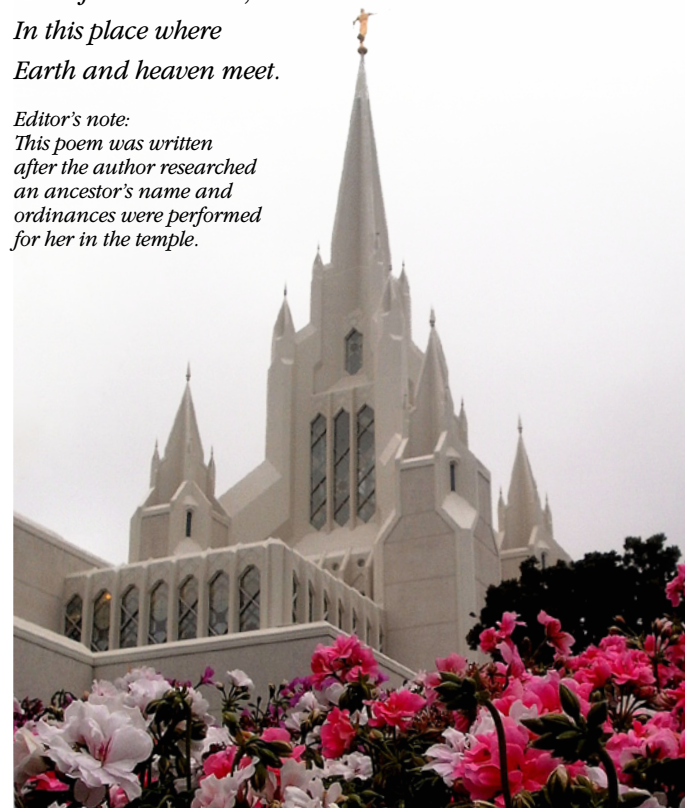
*I step into the font.
The warm water gently laps around me.
Sarine and I have not met,
But I know her; I feel her presence.*

*My mind and heart turn back
To the frustrations, the searching, the waiting,
To the jubilation of discovering.
It was all worth this moment for her.*

*A hand is raised, a prayer is said,
While she, behind the gate
Where she has been so long,
Still hopes.
Still prays.
Still waits.*

*My hands in hands of priesthood authority,
I am buried in the depths.
The water cascades around my face.
Finally, past the gate,
She smiles,
And I feel her elation,
In this place where
Earth and heaven meet.*

*Editor's note:
This poem was written
after the author researched
an ancestor's name and
ordinances were performed
for her in the temple.*



San Diego California Temple, Hannah M., 16



THIRTY THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT DAD

By Lisa Adachi Childs

Do you ever find it hard to imagine that your parents were teenagers? Well, believe it or not, Mom and Dad were once like you. And if you feel like you don't know Dad as well as you could, here are 30 questions to ask him. Some of his answers might surprise you! Get your family involved and ask these questions at dinner or during family home evening. You can even make up some of your own questions. It's a fun way to get to know your dad—and do family history too! (Check out last month's questions for Mom at lds.org/go/mom6NE.)

Lisa Adachi Childs lives in Utah, USA.

DAD'S NAME:

DAD'S BIRTHDATE:



1. What do you remember about the day I was born? Bonus points if you can remember the time of day!

2. Did your parents give you an allowance? How much was it?

3. Where was the first place you lived away from home? Do you have any crazy roommate stories?

4. If you had to go back to high school, what would you do differently?

5. What do/did you love most about your own dad?

6. What is the best Christmas or birthday gift you've ever received and given?

7. Name all the jobs you've had. Which was your favorite?

8. Which would you prefer: fishing by yourself or playing football with a big group?

9. Were you nervous about talking to girls as a teenager? Did you have friends who were girls?

10. Did you ever have a low point as a teenager? How did you get through it?

11. Tell me about a leader who impacted your life for good when you were a kid.

12. What was your favorite thing to do on the weekends?

13. Who were your friends from school and what did you do together for fun?

14. What was the first car you drove? Who taught you how to drive?

15. How did you decide whether to go to college? to go on a mission? to get married? which career to choose?

16. What was your reaction when you found out you would be a dad?

17. What do you appreciate most about your parents?

18. What is the most surprising thing you enjoy about being a father?

19. Tell me about your favorite family holiday traditions.

20. What is a food or dish that reminds you of a specific place or person?

21. Did you do any sports or clubs when you were a teen? If so, what are your favorite memories?

22. How did you decide on my name? Did you consider other names?

23. What is your favorite thing about your hometown?

24. Did you ever get really sick or have to go to the hospital? What happened?

25. What kinds of things did you collect as a kid?

26. What was the first concert you went to? How much did it cost?

27. If you could retire tomorrow, what would you do with your time?

28. What are your top five best memories?

29. What lessons would you like me to learn from your experiences growing up?

30. What is your favorite thing about being a husband?

PRESERVE THE STORIES

Did you realize that you're doing family history when you talk with your dad about his life? Don't let the stories he tells you fade. With his permission, record the stories he tells you in the "Memories" section of familysearch.org.



Sisters IN THE Gospel

Because I could see the blessings of the gospel in my life, I wanted to share it with my friend.



By Paola Sarahí Hernández Cruz

I love my friend Lupita like a sister. We met in sixth grade and were both in the school marching band.

The next school year we became even closer and really started relying on each other. She told me about the challenges she was having at home because her dad wasn't there and her mom couldn't give her the attention she needed. I knew she was sad that her parents weren't a big part of her life. She was lonely, but she always had me.

I feel blessed to have been born into a home where we had the gospel of Jesus Christ. It has brought into my life a peace that many of my friends don't have. Because I could see the blessings the gospel brought me, I wanted to share it with Lupita.

I talked to her about the Church and invited her to go with me to Mutual. She accepted and started coming to church and to ward activities with me and my family. I introduced her to the missionaries, who taught her the gospel and invited her to be baptized. She gained a testimony, and when she asked her

mother if she could be baptized, her mother said yes.

Her baptism day was very special because she made covenants with our Heavenly Father to remember Him and keep His commandments. I bore my testimony to her that day and told her that she was in the right place and that Heavenly Father must be proud of her. I love Lupita and am so happy that she is my friend and now my sister in the gospel. I know that her life will be happier because she and her future family will enjoy the blessings of the gospel.

Lupita has told me she is grateful I decided to share the gospel with her. She says that since she started attending church, her life has been much better and she has felt peaceful. I know that this is the Spirit confirming the truth to her. She also says that someday she will be married in the temple. I am grateful to my Heavenly Father because I found my friend and because of the joy I feel when I share the thing that is of most worth to me. **NE**

Paola Sarahí Hernández Cruz lives in Mexico State, Mexico.

BUT WHAT IF...?

Questions about Serving a Mission

As your time to serve a mission approaches, you may ask yourself, “Can I really do this?” Yes, you can! It may not be easy, but you will never regret it.

Preparing to serve a mission can be scary. There are lots of things you might worry about—money, knowledge, shyness—but no matter the concern, you can find the reassurance and courage you need. Here are some common questions and answers to help you overcome your fears and find the faith to go forward.

What if I don't know enough about the scriptures or the gospel?

Mission preparation should definitely include learning about the gospel, but you don't have to know everything before you go. For example, as a young man, Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was worried he wasn't prepared to serve a mission. He said, “I remember praying, ‘Heavenly Father, how can I serve a mission when I know so little?’

I believed in the Church, but I felt my spiritual knowledge was very limited. As I prayed, the feeling came: ‘You don't know everything, but you know enough!’”¹

Knowledge of the gospel will come as you faithfully work to learn gospel principles and study the scriptures, and you won't be alone. The Holy Ghost will guide you, and you'll have companions, missionary leaders, and your mission president to help you in your efforts. Remember what Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve of Apostles has taught: “The size of your faith or the degree of your knowledge is not the issue—it is the integrity you demonstrate toward the faith you do have and the truth you already know.”²

What if I'm not sure I have a testimony?

Gaining a testimony is a vital part of mission preparation. You may feel

that your testimony is weak, but it will grow as you make sincere efforts to build it. Just remember:

- *Find quiet moments to study and pray.* You need time when you can feel the inspiration of the Spirit.
- *Live the gospel.* See John 7:17 to find out why this will help your testimony grow.
- *Build a little at a time.* “[Your] spiritual journey is the process of a lifetime. We do not know everything in the beginning or even along the way. Our conversion comes step-by-step.”³

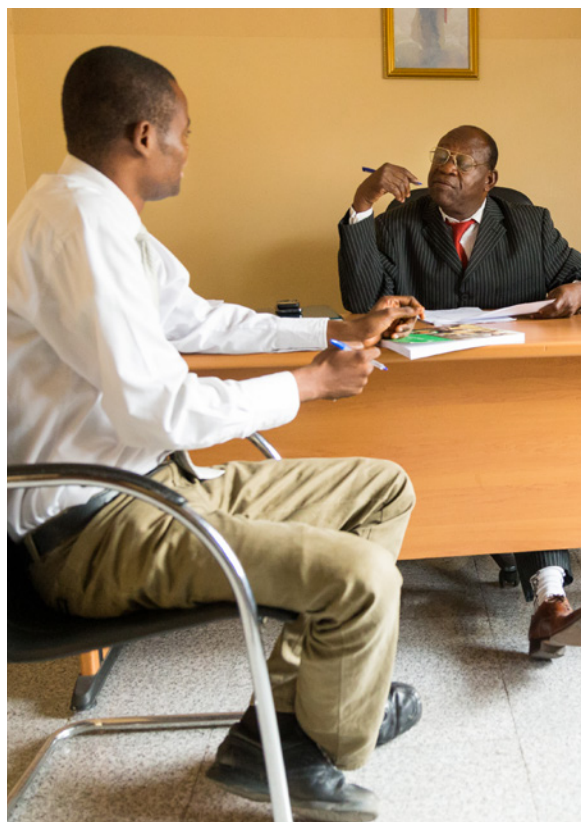
Also remember that your testimony may be stronger than you think. Elder Holland shared this story: “A 14-year-old boy recently said to me a little hesitantly, ‘Brother Holland, I can't say yet that I know the Church is true, but I believe it is.’ I hugged that boy until his eyes bulged out. I



told him . . . that *belief* is a precious word, an even more precious act, and he need never apologize for ‘only believing.’ I told him that Christ Himself said, ‘Be not afraid, only believe.’ . . . I told this boy that belief was always the first step toward conviction. . . . And I told him how very proud I was of him for the honesty of his quest.”⁴

What if I don't feel worthy?

If there is something wrong in your life, you can take care of it. Your bishop or branch president will help you know what you need to do to become clean through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “I urge you not to pray to know whether you should go [on a mission]; rather, ask the Lord to guide you in whatever may be necessary to become a worthy, empowered full-time missionary.”⁵





YOUNG WOMEN: *Making the Mission Decision*

As a young woman, you don't have the obligation to serve, but you do have the opportunity. As you decide whether or not to serve, you might have questions like:

- ▶ Will a mission be right for me? How will I know?
- ▶ Should I be preparing today for a full-time mission?
- ▶ What are the reasons I should consider serving?
- ▶ Would I even make a good missionary?

Find answers to these questions at lds.org/go/ywmission6NE.

Rebekah S. from Russia shares her experience: “Although I had repented, guilt and pain made me think that I could not serve a mission because my mistakes were too bad. However, my bishop and stake president helped me to realize the healing power of the Atonement in my life. I am so grateful for repentance. Being worthy is everything on a mission. You cannot teach by the Spirit if you are not worthy of it (see D&C 42:14). You have to have a peace in your heart to serve with all of your heart. It makes all the difference.”

How can I leave my family and friends?

It's hard to leave loved ones, especially knowing things will be different when you get back—for your friends, for your family, and especially for you. You might worry about how your family will manage financially without you or how they will react to your mission. But the Lord will take care of those you love and bless them for your service (see D&C 100:1). Although you'll miss them, the Lord needs you to help other families find the happiness of the gospel. Believe

that Heavenly Father wants what is best for you and your family, and remember, “Faith trusts that God has great things in store for each of us.”⁶ The Lord has amazing blessings waiting for you and your family as you find the faith to go forward.

What if I don't think I can pay for it?

The cost of a mission can seem like a big sacrifice, but the Lord knows what He wants you to do. President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has said, “I speak to that young man who doesn't have any idea how he can finance a mission. I do not know either. But I do know this: if you have faith and determine that you will go, there will be a way.”⁷

Loran C. from England had this experience: “I was just starting my mission papers when the bank told me I had major credit card debt. My bishop and I set up a budget plan for how much I'd pay toward my debt, my mission, my tithing, and my other expenses. It took a lot of sacrifice, and I thought I wouldn't be able to reach

my goal. However, I faithfully paid my tithing and the Lord stepped in. A gift from a stranger gave me the money I needed to pay off my debt and fulfill my mission goal.”

What if I’m shy about talking to people?

The idea of spending all day, every day talking to people you don’t know can be hard. Sam L. from California, USA, recalls: “For someone who doesn’t even like answering my door, the thought of knocking on a total stranger’s door to talk about the gospel seemed beyond the bounds of possibility.

“At a stake youth conference, we were asked to go out with missionaries and preach the gospel. Going with real missionaries? to real people? I was nervous, but then I remembered a scripture: ‘For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee’ (Isaiah 41:13). I prayed for that help, and

although I was still my awkward self, I felt empowered through the Holy Ghost and even gave out two copies of the Book of Mormon.”

What if it messes up my education or my career?

You may think that taking the time off for a mission when you are preparing for college or a career is risking your future, but the opposite is true. The Lord wants you to succeed, and He’ll help you. Nothing you give up will be worth as much as your missionary service.

A lot of young people have had to make similar decisions. William H. from Australia left a promising rugby career, not knowing if he would have any opportunities to play when he got home (see “Time-Out for a Mission,” *New Era*, June 2012, 20–22). Joseph B. from the Philippines walked into the office of the college secretary, prepared to give up a once-in-a-lifetime

chance for an education (see “For a Burnt Offering,” *New Era*, Sept. 2007, 40–42). Whether or not what you hoped for happens after your mission, no opportunity will be worth more than your service as a missionary.

No Regrets

Heavenly Father wants us to be happy, and He won’t ask us to do things that won’t bless and help us. If you faithfully do what the Lord asks of you, even when it’s hard, you’ll find the blessings that come are way better than anything the world has to offer. You’ll never regret serving a mission. **NE**

NOTES

1. Neil L. Andersen, “You Know Enough,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 13.
2. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Lord, I Believe,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 94.
3. Neil L. Andersen, “You Know Enough,” 13.
4. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Lord, I Believe,” 94–95.
5. Richard G. Scott, “Now Is the Time to Serve a Mission!” *Ensign*, May 2006, 90.
6. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Best Is Yet to Be,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2010, 27.
7. Boyd K. Packer, “Come, All Ye Sons of God,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1983, 71.



JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Things to Ponder for Sunday

- Why should young men serve missions?
- How am I preparing for a mission?

Things You Might Do

- Ask returned missionaries about their missions and how they prepared.
- Share your feelings about serving a mission at home, in church, or at lds.org/go/mission6NE.

HOW ARE MISSIONARIES CALLED?



*An Apostle
looks into each
missionary's eyes
and receives
revelation
about where to
assign him or her.*

YOUR PERSONAL INTERVIEW WITH AN APOSTLE

Elder M. Russell Ballard

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

In the early days of the Church, missionaries were interviewed by a General Authority before they went on their missions. These days you are interviewed to serve as missionaries by your bishops and stake presidents, and most of you will go through your entire lives without being interviewed by a General Authority. That is simply a reflection of the reality in a worldwide church of more than 15 million members. I know I speak for my brethren when I tell you that we wish it were possible for us to know all of you personally and to be able to tell you that we love you and that we support you.

Fortunately the Lord has provided ways for us to reach out to you. For example, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve assigns every missionary to his or her mission. Although this is done without a

traditional face-to-face interview, technology and revelation combine to provide an experience that is remarkably intimate and personal. Let me tell you how this happens.

Your photograph comes up on a computer screen, together with key information provided by your bishop and stake president. When your picture appears, we look into your eyes and review your answers to the missionary recommendation questions. For that brief moment, it seems as if you are present and responding to us directly.

As we look at your photograph, we trust that you have cleared in every way the “raised bar” required today to be a faithful, successful missionary. Then, by the power of the Spirit of the Lord and under the direction of President Thomas S. Monson, we assign you to one of the Church’s 406 worldwide missions.

No, it isn’t the same as a personal, face-to-face interview. But it’s close.

From an April 2015 general conference address.



YOUR INSPIRED ASSIGNMENT

Elder Ronald A. Rasband

Of the Presidency of the Seventy

I would like to relate to you an experience which I had with President Henry B. Eyring several years ago when he was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve. Elder Eyring was assigning missionaries to their fields of labor, and I was invited to observe.

First, we knelt together in prayer. I remember Elder Eyring using very sincere words, asking the Lord to bless him to know “perfectly” where the missionaries should be assigned. The word “perfectly” said much about the faith that Elder Eyring exhibited that day.

Then as each missionary’s picture appeared on a computer screen, to me it was as if the missionary were in the room with us. Elder Eyring would then greet the missionary with his kind and endearing voice: “Good morning, Elder Reier or Sister Yang. How are you today?”

After assigning a few missionaries, Elder Eyring turned to me as he pondered one particular missionary and said, “So, Brother Rasband, where do you think this missionary should go?” I was startled! I quietly suggested to Elder Eyring that I did not know and that I did not know

I could know! He looked at me directly and simply said, “Brother Rasband, pay closer attention and you too can know!” With that, I pulled my chair a little closer to Elder Eyring and the computer screen, and I did pay much closer attention!

A couple of other times as the process moved along, Elder Eyring would turn to me and say, “Well, Brother Rasband, where do you feel this missionary should go?” I would name a particular mission, and Elder Eyring would look at me thoughtfully and say, “No, that’s not it!” He would then continue to assign the missionaries where he had felt prompted.

As we were nearing the completion of that assignment meeting, a picture of a certain missionary appeared on the screen. I had the strongest prompting that the missionary we had before us was to be assigned to Japan. I did not know that Elder Eyring was going to ask me on this one, but amazingly he did. I rather tentatively and humbly said to him, “Japan?” Elder Eyring responded immediately, “Yes, let’s go there.” And up on the computer screen the missions of Japan appeared. I instantly knew that the missionary was to go to the Japan Sapporo Mission.

Elder Eyring did not ask me the exact name of the mission, but he did assign that missionary to the Japan Sapporo Mission.

At the end of the meeting Elder Eyring bore his witness to me of the love of the Savior, which He has for each missionary assigned to go out into the world and preach the restored gospel. He said that it is by the great love of the Savior that His servants know where these wonderful young men and women, senior missionaries, and senior couple missionaries are to serve. I had a further witness that morning that every missionary called in this Church, and assigned or reassigned to a particular mission, is called by revelation from the Lord God Almighty through one of these, His servants. **NE**

From an April 2010 general conference address.

SHARING THE GOSPEL LIKE JOHN THE BAPTIST

You can help prepare people for the Savior's Second Coming, just as John the Baptist did for the Savior's first coming.



By Ryan Carr
Church Magazines

Unlike John the Baptist, you won't serve a mission in the "wilderness of Judea" (Matthew 3:1). Your clothes won't be made of "camel's hair" (Matthew 3:4). You won't be eating "locusts and wild honey" (Matthew 3:4). But your purpose in sharing the gospel is the same as John the Baptist's: you prepare people for Jesus's coming by declaring, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2).

John the Baptist's mission was clear: to "come before the Messiah, to prepare the way of the Lord" (1 Nephi 10:7). But his mission was not easy. The last prophet before him was Malachi, over 400 years earlier. "Without a prophet, people in the land began to divide into parties and

groups, each claiming the right to interpret the scriptures and lead the people. The true understanding of Jehovah diminished among these groups."¹

Despite the challenges in John's day, multitudes came out into the wilderness to hear him preach, and he baptized many. Two of the future Apostles, John the Beloved and Andrew, became acquainted with Jesus through John (see John 1:40).

Sharing the gospel today is just as challenging. Modern life has provided many distractions. Worldly philosophies lead people astray. More and more people are failing to live up to high moral standards. Some see no need for religion.

In these circumstances, how can you succeed in sharing the gospel, as John the Baptist did? Here are a few lessons from his life that can help.

John knew what his mission was. He knew he had been called to help people come unto Christ (see Luke 1:16). When he saw the Savior, John testified, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Instead of encouraging people to follow himself, John helped them become disciples of Jesus Christ. Speaking of the Savior, John said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

John taught the basic principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He taught the people about justice, mercy, honesty, morality, fasting, prayer, repentance and confession of sins, baptism

by immersion, resurrection, and the Judgment (see Matthew 3; Luke 3). His teaching could be described as the Savior's was: "They were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority" (Mark 1:22).

John lived differently than the world. Jesus contrasted John with worldly teachers: John was not "a man clothed in soft raiment . . . gorgeously apparelled . . . in kings' courts" (Luke 7:25). He drank "neither wine nor strong drink" (Luke 1:15). John was "the voice of one

crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord" (Mark 1:3). Because he taught with the power of God, the people felt the Spirit and were converted.

John was dedicated. One scholar summarized John's qualities: "His singleness of purpose, his total dedication to his special calling, and his complete loyalty to the Son of God. These traits, coupled with his divine priesthood authority, fearless disposition, and personal righteousness, make him one of the greatest characters of the scriptures."²

As you study the life of John the Baptist, you see that he was more than just the one who had the unique blessing of being able to baptize Jesus Christ. You see that his life and mission were about preparing people for the Savior's coming, just as yours is. **NE**

NOTES

1. S. Kent Brown and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, "The Lost 500 Years: From Malachi to John the Baptist," *Ensign*, Dec. 2014, 56.
2. Robert J. Matthews, "John the Baptist: A Burning and a Shining Light," *Ensign*, Sept. 1972, 79.



WHY ARE YOU ON THE EARTH AT THIS TIME?

"You and I will rejoice in His coming and thank the Lord that He sent us to earth at this time to fulfill our sacred duty of helping prepare the world for His return."

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Preparing the World for the Second Coming," *Ensign*, May 2011, 52.

Doctrine and Covenants 18:15–16

Great and eternal happiness can be found in bringing souls unto Christ.



HOW GREAT SHALL BE YOUR JOY

“Few joys in life are sweeter and longer lasting than knowing that you have helped others take the restored gospel of Jesus Christ into their hearts.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “How Great Shall Be Your Joy,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2011, 4.

MANY SOULS UNTO ME

Every day, we interact with people we could share the gospel with. President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has said, “We need to exercise our faith that the Lord has prepared people around us to be taught. He knows who they are and when they are ready, and He can guide us to them by the power of the Holy Ghost and give us words to invite them to be taught” (“How Great Shall Be Your Joy,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2011, 4).

ONE SOUL

Heavenly Father loves and values each of His children. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said, “God sees you not only as a mortal being on a small planet who lives for a brief

season—He sees you as His child. He sees you as the being you are capable and designed to become. He wants you to know that you matter to Him” (“You Matter to Him,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 22). When we begin to see others more as Heavenly Father does, we’ll recognize how important it is to share the gospel with them. If you have a hard time seeing the potential in others, you can pray for that gift from Heavenly Father.

15 And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one “soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!

16 And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the “kingdom of my Father, how great will be your ^bjoy if you should bring many ^csouls unto me!

LABOR

In this sentence, the word *labor* means to work diligently. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “I am convinced that missionary work is not easy because *salvation is not a cheap experience*. . . . I believe [missionary work] is supposed to require some effort, something from the depths of our soul” (“Missionary Work and the Atonement,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2001, 15).



CRYING REPENTANCE

“Crying repentance simply means helping people return to God.”

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Preparing for Your Spiritual Destiny,” (Church Educational System fireside for young adults, Jan. 10, 2010), 7; speeches.byu.edu.

KINGDOM OF MY FATHER

The “kingdom of my Father” refers to exaltation in the celestial kingdom—the highest of the kingdoms of glory. Those who receive exaltation will dwell with their families, Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ forever. People who have received all the ordinances of salvation (whether in this life or the next), kept the commandments, repented of their sins, and endured to the end in faith will live eternally in this kingdom.

SAVE

The word *save* here means “except.”

Editor's note: This page is not meant to be a comprehensive explanation of the selected seminary scripture mastery verses, only a starting point for your own study.

TV and movies often give negative **messages** about marriage. **What** is the **truth** about **marriage**?

Media often carry many false messages about marriage. One is the idea that marriage somehow ends or dulls romance. As President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has said: “If you suppose that the full-blown rapture of young romantic love is the sum total of the possibilities which spring from the fountains of life, you have not yet lived to see the devotion and the comfort of longtime married love. . . . Mature love has a bliss not even imagined by newlyweds” (“The Plan of Happiness,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 26).

Another false message is that marriage is no longer popular or even needed. Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: “Much of the media and entertainment . . . does not reflect the priorities and values of the majority. . . . Marriage and family are still the aspiration and ideal of most people” (“Why Marriage and Family Matter—Everywhere in the World,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 41–42). And Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, “Marriage . . . is as much a part of the plan of happiness as the Fall and the Atonement” (“Why Marriage, Why Family,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 52). **NE**



Is it **OK** to use **digital scriptures** in church?

Using digital scriptures during classes in church is appropriate. Two possible reasons why there’s even any question about this are: (1) digital devices with scriptures on them also offer many other distractions, and (2) people who see someone (especially a young person) using a digital device may assume that the person is texting, using social media, or playing a game during church—something a lot of people wouldn’t want anyone to think of them. So, follow the counsel of your parents and leaders when using digital scriptures in class. Of course, avoid digital distractions (especially during the sacrament), and perhaps put your device in airplane mode during church. And if you’re worried about giving the wrong impression, consider using your digital scriptures only in situations and in ways that make it obvious that that’s what you’re doing and not something else. **NE**

“One of my friends
wants to try something
bad just once so
she can relate when
people talk about it.
How can I help her
understand that’s
not a good idea?”

One of the best things you can do is help your friend remember why we have commandments. Heavenly Father gives us commandments because He loves us and knows they will make us happy and help us become like Him.

In the New Testament, the Savior said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Help your friend realize that choosing the right shows love for Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and gratitude for His Atonement and gospel.

You can also remind her that doing bad things leads to bad consequences, even if it’s just once. We can’t experience sin and avoid its effects. Willfully disobeying the commandments is like stepping away from Heavenly Father and telling Him that He doesn’t matter as much as our friends or other people do.

Heavenly Father loves us, and He will bless us with the Spirit’s guidance when we keep His commandments. If we are obedient, the Spirit will teach us more than we could ever learn by experimenting with sin. **NE**



We Don’t Need to Experiment

I would teach your friend that “whatsoever is good cometh from God, and whatsoever is evil cometh from the devil” (Alma 5:40). I would also explain that every act has consequences and that we should not do anything that could harm us. We don’t need to experience evil. There is already so much evil around us, and it’s easy to see that many people live in misery because they don’t keep the commandments.

Vinicius S., 17, São Paulo, Brazil



Tell How You Overcome Temptation

Tell your friend that what’s really important is her standing before

the Lord. We must not give up our eternal salvation in exchange for a temporal experience. Also, you’ll be much more helpful to your friend if you can tell her how you overcame temptation.

Emily G., 19, Puerto Rico

We Have Divine Potential

You can kindly explain to your friend that while one bad choice might seem harmless, it can lead to more serious sins. You could also share this scripture: “I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance” (D&C 1:31). Remind your friend that

even one experience with sin can desensitize us to the voice of the Spirit. Most of all, let her know that you love her and that making right choices is part of her divine potential as a daughter of God.

Adriana F., 17, Arizona, USA

Just Once Will Hurt

All bad things, even if you do them just once, will drive away the Spirit. If the Spirit leaves, it will be easier for Satan to tempt you to do more bad things. Also, you will need to repent of all your sins no matter how many times you commit them, and repenting of serious sins can be a long and painful process.

Emily L., 14, Utah, USA



Stay Strong

Reassure her that you love her and want to help her choose the right. I know from personal experience that we don't need to make the same choices as someone to identify with that person. As we live the gospel, the Spirit will help us know how to relate to people. Remind your friend that she needs to stay strong so she can help others obey the commandments. Pray that you'll be able to help and serve her.

Vanina P., 19, Buenos Aires, Argentina

You Might Not Be Able to Stop

I would tell my friend to not even

think about it. It's not a good idea to do something bad one time because you might not be able to stop once you've started. Heavenly Father gave us commandments to help keep us safe and happy.

Douglas B., 13, California, USA

It Starts Small

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland once said that "a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step, so watch your step" ("Place No More for the Enemy of My Soul," *Ensign*, May 2010, 45). I would help my friend understand that Satan uses small temptations to start us down an evil path. When you try something bad even once, you are allowing Satan and his followers to start tempting you to do it again and again.

Similoni F., 18, Utah, USA



WHY NOT TRY IT?

"Years ago, one of our sons asked me why it wasn't a good idea to try alcohol or tobacco to see

what they were like. . . . I replied that if he wanted to try something out, he ought to go to a barnyard and eat a little manure. He recoiled in horror. 'Ooh, that's gross,' he reacted.

"I'm glad you think so," I said, 'but why don't you just try it out so you will know for yourself? While you're proposing to try one thing that you know is not good for you, why don't you apply that principle to some others?'"

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Sin and Suffering," *Ensign*, July 1992, 73-74.

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

UPCOMING QUESTION

"My parents **swear**, listen to **loud music**, and watch **inappropriate TV shows**. What can I do to **feel the Spirit at home**, especially on Sundays?"

Send your answer and photo by July 15, 2015.

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

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



Priesthood and Priesthood Keys

You'll be studying about the priesthood and priesthood keys in your Sunday classes this month. As you study and discuss this topic, you may ponder these questions: How do I receive the blessings of the priesthood in my life? What are the keys of the priesthood? How can we all serve effectively through the priesthood?

For some answers to these questions, read the scriptures listed in the Topical Guide under "Priesthood," "Priesthood, Keys of," and "Priesthood, Magnifying Callings within." You'll also find teachings on the priesthood in general conference talks at conference.lds.org.



Share these Cards

Give yourself an easy reminder to prepare for your Sunday lessons. Just place these cards in your scriptures, locker, or bedroom. You can also download or share them online at lds.org/go/cards6NE.

I revere the
PRIESTHOOD

I have witnessed its
POWER
time and time again.

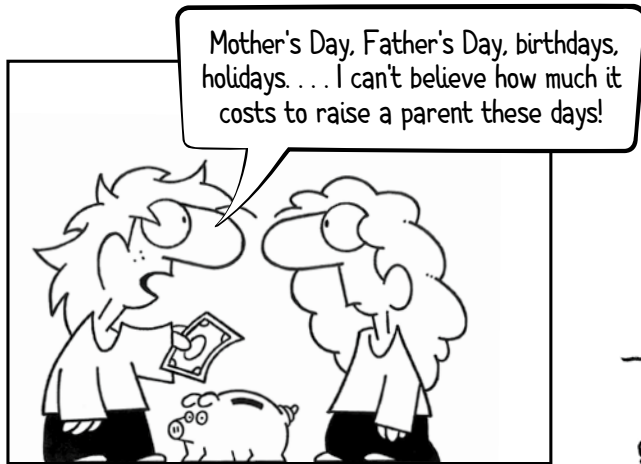
I have seen its
STRENGTH.

I have marveled at the
MIRACLES
it has wrought.

President Thomas S. Monson
April 2015 general conference

The **POWER**
TO SPEAK AND ACT
IN GOD'S NAME
REQUIRES REVELATION
and . . . to have it when we need it requires
PRAYING AND WORKING
IN FAITH for the companionship
of **THE**
HOLY GHOST.

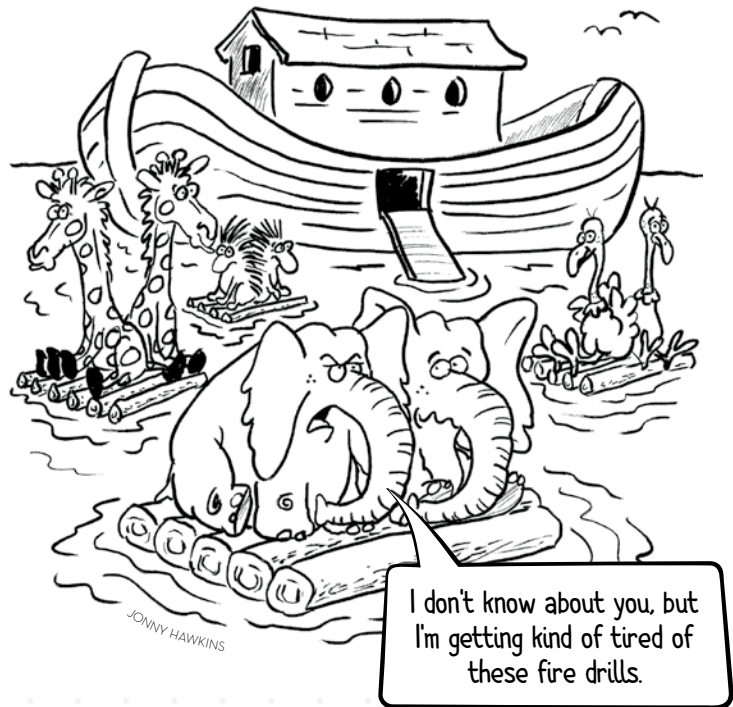
President Henry B. Eyring
First Counselor in the First Presidency
April 2015 general conference



RANDY GLASBERGEN



JON CLARK



JONNY HAWKINS



RYAN STOKER



OVERCOMING ZERO CONFIDENCE

One day I was walking through the mall when I noticed two guys, probably still in high school, heading in my direction and pointing to girls. They would look at them for a few seconds and then state a number between 1 and 10. I realized they were ranking them by their looks! I walked a little faster so they wouldn't have time to rank me, but when they walked by, they pointed to me and said, "Uh, zero." Then they were off. I felt something inside me go empty. I was so hurt. I couldn't believe that someone would actually do something like that. I hurried to my car so I wouldn't have to cry out in the open. Once inside my car, I cried for help in a

silent prayer asking, "Lord, how do I get past this?"

In that moment, a scripture came into my head—1 Samuel 16:7. "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." I was reminded that the Lord knows who I am. Zero is just a number those young men were using as a rude label.

I was comforted, and the emptiness I felt was filled with the love of God. Heavenly Father loves each of His children. There is not any scale big enough to measure the love He has for His children; it is worth so much more than the judgments of men.

Name Withheld, Utah, USA

A LETTER TO MY FRIEND

A few months back I was writing to a friend, and I felt a distinct prompting that I should bear my testimony. This prompting confused me, because my friend was an active member of the Church whom I looked up to. But despite my doubts, I followed through with my prompting.

I'm not certain what effect my testimony had on my friend, but I'm sure I did the right thing, because I know I listened to the Spirit. I have faith that Heavenly Father must have known there was some part of my testimony that my friend needed. As we listen to the Spirit, we can all receive revelation from Heavenly Father by the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Patrick C., Utah, USA

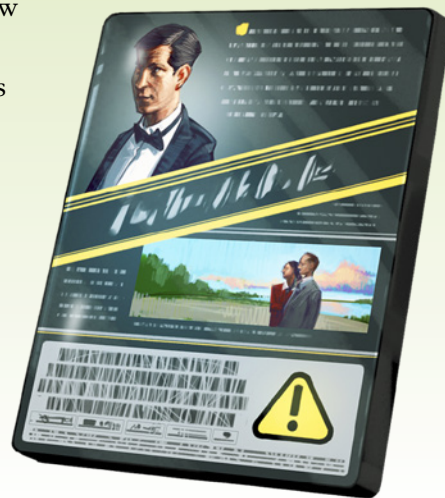
BEFORE THE MOVIE STARTED

One Saturday night I went to a friend's house to watch movies and hang out. Although my friend isn't a member of the Church, her standards are similar to mine. We were having a good time and we picked out a movie to watch. Then right as my friend put the disc into the player, I felt that I should check the back of the box to find out more about the movie. To my surprise, I found that it had inappropriate content. At first, I didn't know what I should do, but as I thought about it, I felt it would be wrong to watch it.

It wasn't easy, but I gathered my courage and told my friend, "I'm sorry, but I can't watch this movie" and told her how I don't watch movies with that kind of content. I was afraid that she would be annoyed, but she wasn't. She knew that I was LDS and respected my beliefs.

Later, as I thought about the experience, I was surprised at how close I had come to compromising my standards. I was able to see that Satan can make something seem so harmless even when it's not. The next day I was thinking about the experience while the sacrament was being passed. I thanked my Heavenly Father for helping me make the right decision and for the gift of the Holy Ghost to help us get through those situations. I'm glad that I chose the right because if I'd made the wrong choice, I would have felt bad after viewing the content in that movie and not listening to the Spirit when I knew what the right choice was. I'm grateful to have the gospel in my life and to know that if we are worthy, the Holy Ghost will always be there for us when we need Him.

Katelyn B., Florida, USA





By Robert D. Hales

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

HOW TO WAIT ON THE LORD

The purpose of our life on earth is to grow, develop, and be strengthened through our own experiences. How do we do this? The scriptures give us an answer in one simple phrase: we “wait upon the Lord” (Psalm 37:9; 123:2; Isaiah 8:17; 40:31; 2 Nephi 18:17).

What does it mean to wait upon the Lord? In the scriptures, the word wait means **to hope, to anticipate, and to trust**. To hope and trust in the Lord requires faith, patience, humility, meekness, long-suffering, keeping the commandments, and enduring to the end.

To wait upon the Lord means **planting the seed of faith and nourishing it** (see Alma 32:41).

It means **praying as the Savior did**—to God, our Heavenly Father—saying: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done” (Matthew 6:10; Luke 11:2). It is a prayer we offer with our whole souls in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Waiting upon the Lord means **pondering in our hearts and “receiv[ing] the Holy Ghost”** so that we can know “all things what [we] should do” (2 Nephi 32:5).

As we follow the promptings of the Spirit, we discover that “tribulation worketh patience” (Romans 5:3) and we learn to “continue in patience until [we] are perfected” (D&C 67:13).

Waiting upon the Lord means to **“stand fast”** (Alma 45:17) and **“press forward” in faith, “having a perfect brightness of hope”** (2 Nephi 31:20).

It means **“relying alone upon the merits of Christ”** (Moroni 6:4) and “with [His] grace assisting [us, saying]: Thy will be done, O Lord, and not ours” (D&C 109:44).

As we wait upon the Lord, we are **“immovable in keeping the commandments,”** (Alma 1:25) knowing that we will “one day rest from all [our] afflictions” (Alma 34:41).

And we “cast not away . . . [our] confidence” (Hebrews 10:35) that “all things wherewith [we] have been afflicted shall work together for [our] good” (D&C 98:3).

May we wait upon Him by pressing forward in faith, that we may say, “Thy will be done” (Matthew 26:42), and return to Him with honor. **NE**

Adapted from the October 2011 general conference.



HOW HAVE YOU APPLIED THIS?

One of my favorite scriptures is Alma 38:5:

“I would that ye should remember, that as much as ye shall put your trust in God even so much ye shall be delivered out of your trials, and your troubles, and your afflictions, and ye shall be lifted up at the last day.”

When I was going through a hard time, I felt like nothing could help me. One night I opened up my scriptures and this was the scripture that I opened to. It showed to me if I did the things I was supposed to, I would get through my trials.

Alyssa C., Iowa, USA



Share Your Experiences

Share what you're doing to wait on the Lord and read the ideas of other youth at lds.org/go/wait6NE.

WHEN | **DON'T**
ADVERSITY |
COMES, | **LET**

SOMETHING
YOU DON'T FULLY
UNDERSTAND

UNRAVEL | **YOU DO**
EVERYTHING | **KNOW.**

Elder Kevin W. Pearson
of the Seventy
April 2015 general conference

WHAT'S ONLINE



FIND YOUR LINE OF *Priesthood Authority*

Did you know that all priesthood holders can trace their priesthood line of authority back to the Savior? Young men, if you don't know your line, you can request a copy from the Church. All it takes is an email or a letter to find out. For more details, go to lds.org/go/priesthood6NE.



CHECK OUT
JOE'S ADVENTURE AT

lds.org/go/found6NE

FAMILY HISTORY: *What I Found*

As Joe began filling in the gaps of his grandpa's unwritten past, he stumbled upon the picture of an old Japanese pistol his grandpa wanted him to have. All he had to do was find it.

UNPLANNED PREGNANCY *and Christ's Grace*

How great is the grace of God? Sometimes in our most difficult moments, it's easy to ask ourselves, "Can Christ's Atonement help me?" Through the hardships of an unplanned pregnancy and placing her baby for adoption, Katie learned that His grace is enough, no matter what.



CHECK OUT
KATIE'S STORY AT

lds.org/go/Katie6NE

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS