

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

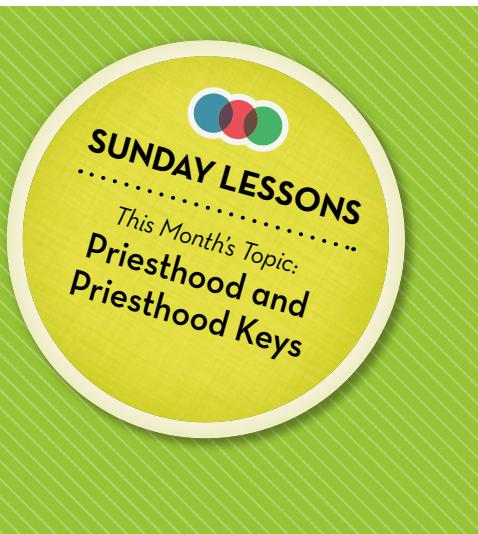
What if I'm not sure I have a testimony?

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.

