

# THE New Era

  
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THE REAL-LIFE  
**COWBOY**

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**ON THE COVER:** Kache, the Real-Life Cowboy, p. 24. Photograph by Carrie Ryan.

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**By Elder Dale G. Renlund**  
Of the Quorum of  
the Twelve Apostles

# THE BEST WAY FOR YOUR FUTURE

**IT IS NATURAL TO HAVE QUESTIONS** about your future: Where will you go and what will you do? What will happen? And when will it happen? I'm going to answer these questions for you: I don't know!

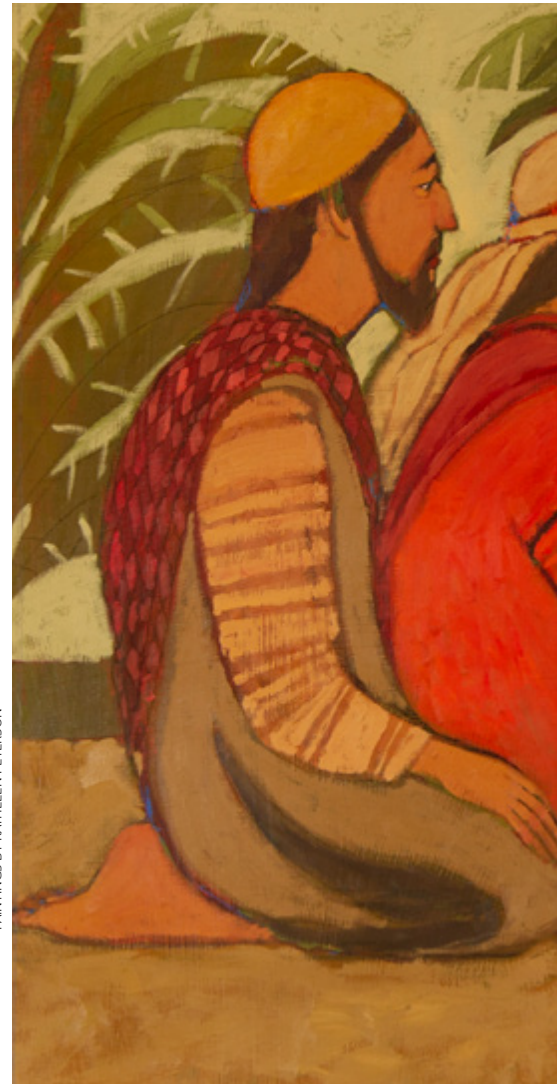
Life is a great adventure. But there is something I do know, and it is that not only do we turn to the Savior for peace, and not only is He the only source that never ceases to make us whole, but it is to Jesus Christ that we look for guidance, comfort, and direction.

Toward the end of the Savior's ministry, His disciples asked Him several questions about His Second Coming, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24:3).

The Savior told them they would not know and they could not know. This is just the same as for you and for me. We cannot know our futures. But the Savior told His disciples that they could prepare. The Savior's instructions to His disciples about preparing for the future are also a model for you and for me.

## **Have the Constant Companionship of the Holy Ghost**

The Savior further answered His disciples' question by giving them three parables. The first parable begins this way: "And then, at that day, before the Son of Man comes, the kingdom of heaven [shall] be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom" (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 25:1 [in Matthew 25:1, footnote a]).



PAINTINGS BY KATHLEEN PETERSON

# TO PREPARE YOUR

*As you follow the Savior's teachings,  
you will be prepared for whatever you  
face in this life.*





When the bridegroom came, five of these virgins had no oil in their lamps. They went out to buy, and then it was too late. The five who had oil in their lamps were described as wise. They were able to go with the bridegroom (see Matthew 25:1–13).

The Lord has told us in modern revelation the interpretation of this parable. He said:

“For they that are wise and have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived—verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day” (Doctrine and Covenants 45:57).

How does this help you prepare for whatever happens in your future? The answer is to live so the Holy Ghost is your constant companion. This is how you prepare for the Bridegroom and for what life brings, come what may.

President Russell M. Nelson has said: “Through the manifestations of the Holy Ghost, the Lord will assist us in all our righteous pursuits. . . .

“... We can pray to our Heavenly Father and receive guidance and direction, be warned about dangers and distractions, and be enabled to accomplish things we simply could not do on our own.”<sup>1</sup>

Worthiness, obedience, sincere inquiry, scripture study, and participating in the redemption of the dead through temple and family history work all help to bring the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

But the companionship of the Holy Ghost often doesn't happen overnight. Like the oil in the lamps of the five wise virgins, this oil must be consistently sought, drop by drop, day by day, and

cannot be borrowed. Nothing will prepare you more for your unknown future than striving each day to have the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

### Magnify Your God-Given Talents

The Lord has given you talents and spiritual gifts, and you are to build on them. In the next parable, the Savior said, “The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods” (Matthew 25:14). To one servant he gave five talents, to another he gave two talents, and to one he gave one talent, according to their differing abilities.

Then he took his journey. Both the five-talent and the two-talent servants traded what they had been given and doubled their talents. But the one-talent servant buried the talent he had been given in the earth and hid his Lord's money (see Matthew 25:16–18). After a long time, the man came back. He was equally pleased with the five-talent and two-talent servants, but he was unhappy with the one-talent servant (see Matthew 25:19–30).

The message is that as you prepare for your unknown future, it does not matter how many or what talents you have; what matters is that you magnify them. We all need to magnify the talents we have been given and be the person the Lord has given us the gifts to be.

### Serve and Bless God's Children

In the parable of the sheep and goats, God separated His children based on whether they had given meat when He was an hungered, given drink when He was thirsty, taken Him in when He was



a stranger, clothed Him when He was naked, visited Him when He was sick, and come to Him when He was in prison.

Both those on the right (the sheep) and those on the left (the goats) asked:

“Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink [or did not]?”

“When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee [or did not]?”

“Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee [or did not]?” (Matthew 25:37–39).

And the king said to them:

“Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done [or not done] it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done [or not done] it unto me” (Matthew 25:40, 45).

The king will say to those on His right, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit

the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” To those on His left, He will say, “Depart from me” (see Matthew 25:34, 41).

Service to God’s children brings blessings to you as well as to His children, because “when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17).

### A Blessed and Guided Future

As you follow the Savior’s teachings, you will be prepared for whatever you face in this life. You will be prepared to meet God, having accomplished your mission in mortality.

I know that these things are true. I certainly pray that God will bless and watch over and protect you, that you will be guided as you go through your life, that you will receive blessings in great abundance, and that you will be able to be ready in life for whatever comes. **NE**

#### NOTE

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” Apr. 2018 general conference.

*From an LDS Business College commencement address given on April 18, 2018.*

**NOTHING WILL PREPARE YOU  
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IONSHIP OF THE HOLY GHOST.**

# BUT I DON'T HAVE ANY

# T

*As a child of God, you are more  
gifted than you know.*



# TALENTS

By Michael R. Morris  
Church Magazines

I was too slow for football, too short for basketball, and too weak for wrestling. I played freshman and JV baseball, but by the time I reached my junior year in high school, the other guys going out for the varsity team were faster, taller, *and* stronger.

Three strikes and I was out.

I wasn't popular enough to run for student government, talented enough to pursue the performing arts, or courageous enough to try debate.

Game over at 17, right? Not necessarily.

In English class, I could write essays the night before they were due—and still get a decent grade. I had no problem ordering a burrito in Spanish or asking for directions to the bathroom in German—thanks to my foreign language classes. Somehow, I made the honor roll despite my grades in math. And I could make people laugh.

But did I really have any talents? I wasn't sure until I got older.

## FEELING SHORTCHANGED?

You may feel short-changed when it comes to gifts and talents. I know I did.

Most of us wonder why we don't have the abilities that seem to come so easily to others. But when we get down on ourselves for not being faster, taller, stronger,

smarter, more talented, or more popular, we forget something important we learned in Primary: "I am a child of God."

Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught that all God's children have "been blessed with many marvelous capabilities and talents. One of the great objectives of our journey through mortality is to improve upon them."<sup>1</sup>

To improve upon them, we first have to recognize them. When we're young, we may not recognize our gifts or talents if they don't bring us recognition or popularity, or point us toward wealth and stardom. But if we could see the future from an eternal perspective, we would realize that some of our most important gifts are spiritual gifts—gifts that bless others.

"A number of spiritual gifts are documented in scripture (see 1 Corinthians 12:1–11, 31; Moroni 10:8–18; Doctrine and Covenants 46:8–26), but there are many others," said Elder John C. Pingree Jr. of the Seventy.

"Some might include having compassion, expressing hope, relating well with people, organizing effectively, speaking or writing persuasively, teaching clearly, and working hard."<sup>2</sup>

Are you a good listener, a true friend, a champion of Young Women values, or a dependable priesthood holder? Those are gifts too.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DAVE STOKER

## FOUR WAYS TO FIND YOUR GIFTS AND TALENTS

Elder Pingree suggests four ways we can identify our gifts and talents:

1. **“Reference our patriarchal blessing.”** Pray over your patriarchal blessing, and study it for gifts and guidance, insights and inspiration. If you haven’t yet received your blessing, consider preparing for it.
2. **“Ask those who know us best.”** Our loved ones, leaders, and friends may recognize our gifts before we do. I was finishing my junior year in college when my mother suggested that I take a writing class. Her advice changed my life.
3. **“Identify what we are naturally good at and enjoy.”** If a gift comes easily, improve it. If a talent looks fun, develop it. If a dream seems daunting, go for it. Don’t be afraid to try new things. You might surprise yourself with what you’re good at.
4. **“Ask God.”** Ask Heavenly Father to help you discover your gifts, develop your talents, and pursue the abilities that interest you or that He would have you develop.<sup>3</sup>

“Each of you has been blessed with divine talents by our Father in Heaven,” said Elder Rasband. “He is waiting for you to identify, develop, and magnify those talents He has blessed you with.”<sup>4</sup>



## DON'T BURY YOUR TALENTS

When President Russell M. Nelson worked as a surgeon, many young people asked him how long it takes to become a medical doctor. He told them that after four years of undergraduate work, they needed four more years of medical school and then another five years to become a specialist.

“That’s too long for me!” some responded.

Then President Nelson would tell them: “Preparation for your career is not too long if you know what you want to do with your life. How old will you be thirteen years from now if you *don’t* pursue your education? Just as old, whether or not you become what you want to be!”<sup>5</sup>

Because some of our gifts and talents may take years to develop, we should remember the Lord’s counsel: “Thou shalt not idle away thy time, neither shalt thou bury thy talent” (Doctrine and Covenants 60:13). Don’t trade your gifts and talents for too much time with social media, video games, or other distractions.

Back in high school, I had no way of knowing that the fun I had—and the time I spent—studying Spanish and German would help me learn three languages as a full-time missionary. Nor did I know that my latent talent as a writer would lead me to my livelihood. But perhaps the Lord did.

Our gifts and talents from God may not bring us fame, fortune, or short-lived popularity in high school. But if we identify them, develop them, and use them wisely, someday we’ll be surprised how much they bless us—and others—and help further the Lord’s work (see Doctrine and Covenants 46:8–9, 26). And someday, with the wise servants in the parable of the talents, we may hear, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21). **NE**

### NOTES

1. Ronald A. Rasband, “You’ve Got Talent,” *New Era*, July 2018, 2.
2. John C. Pingree Jr., Oct. 2017 general conference.
3. See John C. Pingree Jr., Oct. 2017 general conference.
4. Ronald A. Rasband, “You’ve Got Talent,” 5.
5. See Russell M. Nelson, Oct. 1992 general conference.

# SHAKE IT OFF

A close-up, high-speed photograph of a white puppy shaking water off its fur. The puppy is captured mid-shake, with its head tilted back and eyes closed. A dense spray of water droplets is frozen in the air around the puppy's head and body, creating a dynamic and energetic scene. The background is a dark, textured blue, which makes the white puppy and the bright water droplets stand out.

"One of the great challenges each of us faces every day is to not allow the concerns of this world to so dominate our time and energy that we neglect the eternal things that matter most."

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Oct. 2017 general conference.

# PEOPLE OF GALILEE



By Breanna Call Herbert  
Church Magazines

**W**hile the Savior was on the earth, He taught and ministered to many. These are some of the people who Jesus Christ ministered to in Galilee. What would these people have said if they could tell their own stories found in the scriptures? Here are some ideas.



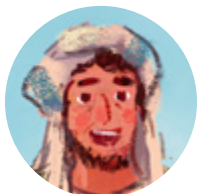
**CHILD:** I was standing close to Jesus Christ and His Apostles. The Apostles were

arguing about something, and Jesus Christ asked them about it. The Apostles got really quiet, and no one spoke up because they were arguing about which of them would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. The Savior then motioned to me. I stood in the middle of them, and He took me in His arms. He told them that whoever is humble like a little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (See [Mark 9:33-37](#); [Matthew 18:1-5](#).)



**LAD:** I had heard of Jesus Christ and the miracles He had performed for the

sick. So when He came to Tiberias, I joined the crowd that followed Him. There were a lot of us, around 5,000 people. I had five barley loaves and two fish. Jesus Christ took them and blessed them. Miraculously, everyone was fed from the food I had with me. But it didn't end there. When everyone was full, the disciples gathered up the leftovers. They filled 12 baskets. (See [John 6:5-14](#).)



**MAN:** I was sick with palsy, so I couldn't move. And on top of that, I had invol-

untary tremors. It was horrible. My friends had heard that Jesus Christ was teaching at a house. They knew He could help me, so they tried to bring me to Him. The house was crowded, so they decided to lower me through the roof. They uncovered it and then lowered me down in front of Jesus Christ. When He saw me, He told me my sins were forgiven. He told me to arise and to take up my bed and walk. So I did—and everybody was amazed!

(See Mark 2:1-12.)



**NOBLEMAN:**

I was in Cana at the time. And my son, who was in Capernaum, was

dying. I heard that Jesus was in the area, so I went to Him. When I did, I asked Him to go to Capernaum to heal my son. He told me to go home because my son was alive. I believed Him. As I arrived home, my servants came out to greet me. They told me that my son was alive. I asked them when he started to get better. They told me yesterday at the seventh hour. It was the same time that Christ had told me my son was alive!

(See John 4:46-53.)



**MARY MAGDALENE:**

Jesus Christ cast seven devils out of me. I followed

Him as He traveled to many villages preaching the gospel. (See Luke 8:1-3.) When Christ was crucified, I was at the cross (see John 19:25). I visited the tomb where His body was laid. I was the first person to see Him after His Resurrection. At first I thought He was a gardener, but when He called my name, I knew it was my Savior. (See John 20:11-16.)



**SALOME:** I am the wife of Zebedee and the mother of James and John, who were two

of Jesus Christ's Apostles. I followed and served Him while He was in Galilee. I was at Golgotha when He was crucified. (See Mark 15:37-41.) I brought sweet spices to His tomb to anoint His body, but when I arrived, He wasn't there. Instead, I saw a man in long white clothes. At first, I was scared, but he told me not to be. He said that Jesus Christ had risen and that I should tell the Apostles. (See Mark 16:1-8.)



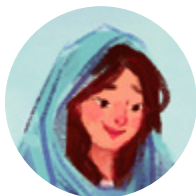
**SIMON PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW:** I was very sick with a horrible fever.

When Jesus Christ heard about it, He came to me. He took my hand and lifted me up. Immediately the fever left me. I felt so well that I even ministered to those around me. (See Mark 1:29-31.)



**WIDOW OF NAIN:** My son had just passed away. I had already lost my

husband. I was grieving deeply. Even though there were a lot of people with me, I couldn't stop crying. As we carried my son's body outside the city gates, a man came up to me. It was Jesus Christ. He had compassion on me and told me not to weep. Then He went to my son. The people who carried him stood still. Jesus Christ told my son to arise. And he did! He sat up and began to speak and he came to me. He was alive! We all glorified God and knew that there was a great prophet among us. (See Luke 7:11-17.)



**MARY:** I had heard of the Messiah who would come. I just didn't expect

to be a part of it. I was engaged to Joseph when an angel told me I would bear a child who would be the Son of God and to name Him Jesus. (See [Luke 1:26-38.](#)) And the Messiah did come. I gave birth to Him in a stable. Shepherds and Wise Men visited Him and gave Him gifts. (See [Matthew 2:1-12; Luke 2:1-20.](#)) Joseph and I raised Him, but He always amazed us. One time He went missing for three days. We finally found Him at the temple. Learned men were listening to Him and asking Him questions. (See [Luke 2:40-52.](#))



**PHILIP:** I am one of Christ's Apostles. He sent us to preach His gospel.

He told us to focus on the lost sheep of Israel. He also gave us the power to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out devils. He told us not to bring money or clothing, but He did warn us that we would be persecuted. But we trusted in Him because we knew that if we endured unto the end that we would be saved. (See [Matthew 10:1-10, 17-18, 22-23.](#))



**THADDEUS JUDAS:** I am an Apostle of Christ. One day, when He was

teaching us—He did that often—He told us that He wouldn't be on earth much longer. He told us that if we kept His commandments and loved Him, He would come and manifest Himself unto us. He said He would send the Holy Ghost to help us remember what He had taught us. (See [John 14:19-27.](#)) NE

# Improving ONE STEP AT A TIME

*Sitting at the cross-country awards ceremony,  
I didn't realize how far I'd come.*

By Heather Bergeson

**A**nother season of cross-country had come to an end, which meant it was time for our team's annual awards ceremony. I had loved running on the team, but as the ceremony progressed, I started to become discouraged. I knew that I hadn't been fast enough to receive any awards. It frustrated me that I couldn't run as fast as I wanted to, especially after working so hard.

Right when I'd lost all hope of receiving an award, I heard my name announced. To my surprise, my coach recognized me for being the Most Improved runner. Our coach gave this award only to the person who had achieved the biggest difference between her fastest time from last season and her fastest time from the current one. This year it was me.

I had been so focused on what I hadn't accomplished that, until then, I didn't recognize how much better I'd become.

Whether it's in running or any other aspect of life, it's easy to become discouraged when we don't measure up to the expectations placed on us by others or even by ourselves. The world tries to tell us that, no matter how hard we try, we will never be "good enough." But God wants us to "pursue personal improvement in a way that doesn't include . . . feeling depressed or demolishing our self-esteem" (Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Oct. 2017 general conference).

Heavenly Father is pleased with every step we take toward becoming better, even if those steps are small. There is no first or last place in life. All we need to do is try to be a little better today than we were yesterday.

Now, whenever I'm discouraged because I don't feel like I'm enough, I remind myself to look back and be grateful for how far I've come with the Lord's help. **NE**

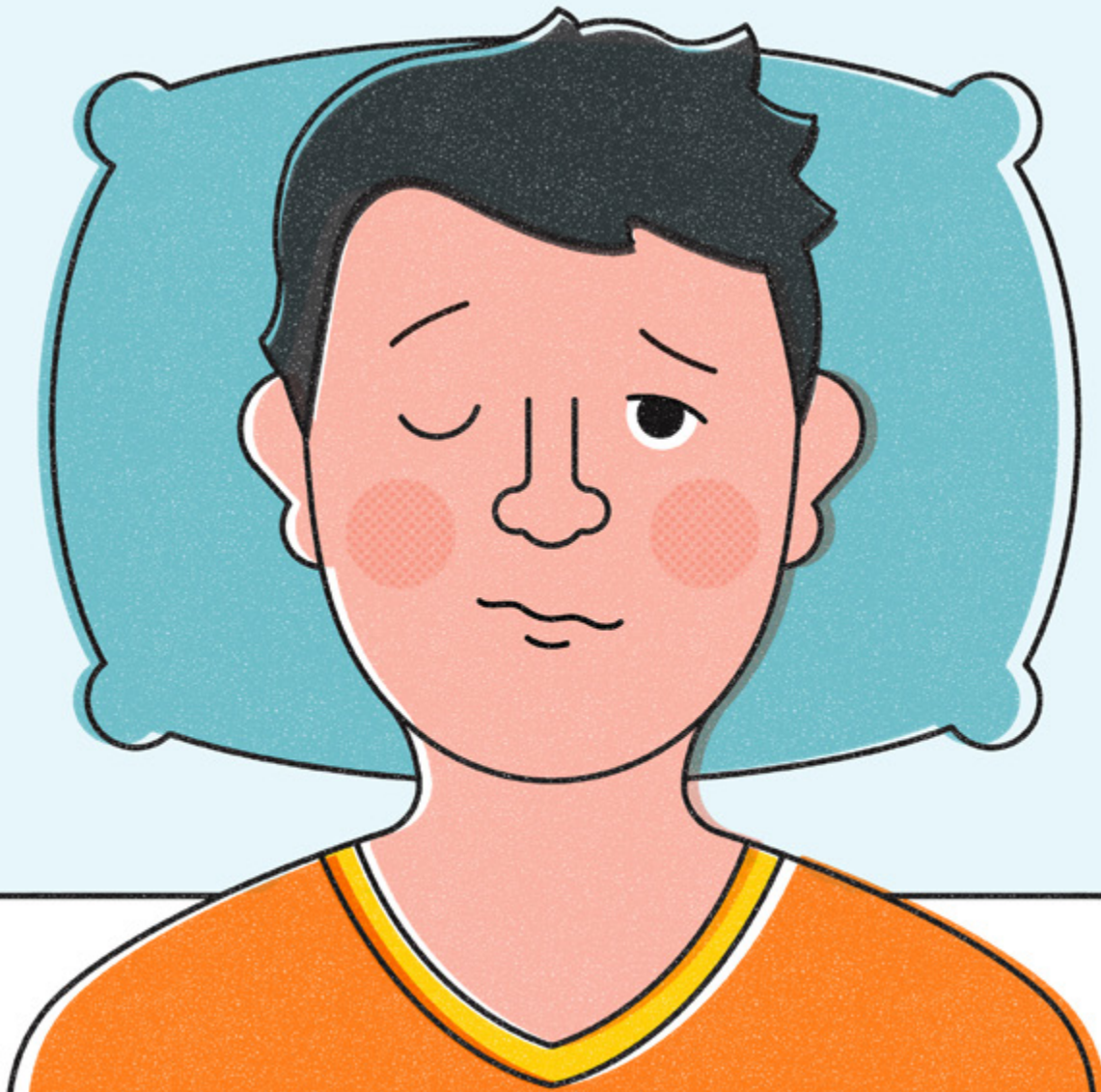
*The author lives in Utah, USA.*





# ON SNOOZING AND CHOOSING

THE POWER OF ONCE-AND-FOR-ALL DECISIONS



## IT'S POSSIBLE TO MAKE A CHARACTER-DEFINING DECISION ONCE AND HAVE IT STICK.

By David A. Edwards

Church Magazines

I'm sure I've used a snooze button before, though I couldn't tell you exactly when. I mean, I know how the thing works and what it does. Surely I must have tried this out before. It's just that I can't remember it, because I never use the snooze button.

A while back, the fact of my anti-snooze-button lifestyle somehow crept into my conscious mind. It made me think. When did this start? Probably around the time I got my first alarm clock. But why?

On the one hand, my young self probably saw the snooze button as illogical (if you need to get up at a certain time, set your alarm for that

time and get up—simple). But more than that, I suppose I must have unconsciously seen my morning routine as a reflection of the kind of person I am or want to be.

Now, I'm not advocating that everyone stop using snooze buttons. If you choose to snooze, that's fine. The point is that I made a personal decision once—and only once—and it has stuck with me throughout my life. And whether we know it or not, such one-time decision making is something we all do, especially when we're young, and it can have a powerful effect on our character.



**YOU CAN MAKE  
DECISIONS ONCE  
AND FOR ALL**

The power is in you to determine the kind of person you'll be. And whether you realize it or not, you're making some once-

and-for-all decisions right now that affect your character—decisions about far more important questions than “Will I be a snooze button user?”

Such character questions include some of the more obvious ones about your commitment to the Lord, His commandments, His standards, and His Church. For instance: *Will I try to keep the commandments no matter what? Will I try to avoid temptation? Will I repent every time I've sinned? Will I pray and study the scriptures regularly? Will I serve however I'm asked?*

But there are also other character questions that can greatly influence the course of your

life. For instance: *What will be my attitude toward hard work? Will I be happy for others when they succeed? Will I complain about things I have no control over? Will I make excuses and blame others for my failures? Will I acknowledge my mistakes and learn from them? Will I hold grudges? Will I be patient and kind, even when it's hard? Will I be reliable and keep my promises?*

The way you answer each of these and many, many other questions represents a decision that could have a lasting effect. If you take time to think about such questions and turn to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ for help, you can more consciously and deliberately make good decisions that will stick. Then you won't have to wake up a couple of decades later and realize that an unconscious decision (or a lack of decision) from long ago took you off course in harmful ways.

Consider just a few of the questions:

### DECIDE TO DECIDE

“[You] need to make certain decisions only once. . . . We can make a single decision about certain things that we will incorporate in our lives and then make them ours—without having to brood and redecide a hundred times what it is we will do and what we will not do.

“Indecision and discouragement are climates in which the Adversary lives to function, for he can inflict so many casualties among mankind in those settings. . . . If you have not done so yet, decide to decide!”

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), “Boys Need Heroes Close By,” Apr. 1976 general conference.



## WILL I BE HAPPY FOR OTHERS WHEN THEY SUCCEED?

Deciding now that good things that happen for other people do *not* take anything away from you will greatly increase your future happiness. As Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once said: "What a bright prospect that is—downing another quart of pickle juice every time anyone around you has a happy moment! . . . Coveting, pouting, or tearing others down does *not* elevate *your* standing, nor does demeaning someone else improve your self-image" (Apr. 2012 general conference).



## WILL I MAKE EXCUSES AND BLAME OTHERS FOR MY FAILURES?

Bitterness and stagnation are miserable. But that's what you get with excuses and blaming. You'll rob yourself of so much growth and joy if you choose not to take personal responsibility. Heavenly Father has a much better plan. Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, "In matters both temporal and spiritual, the opportunity to assume personal responsibility is a God-given gift without which we cannot realize our full potential as daughters and sons of God" (Oct. 2014 general conference).





## WILL I BE RELIABLE AND KEEP MY PROMISES?

This one is huge. We should “keep all [our] pledges one with another” (Doctrine and Covenants 136:20). Decide now to be the kind of person who can be relied on. Otherwise, people may not trust you to be there when they need you—friends, family, Church leaders, employers. After a while, they won’t even ask you to be there, or they won’t give you the job or the calling or whatever. So, to begin with, *just show up*. Decide to be where you say you’ll be when you say you’ll be there. And if you really can’t be there, let someone know. It’s one of those small and simple things that make a huge difference. And then *do what you say you’ll do*. The decision to be a person of your word will bring you great joy and all kinds of wonderful opportunities.

You may not be literally asking yourself questions like these, but with each passing day, you’re making decisions about the answers. A deliberate, once-and-for-all decision is within your grasp.

### HIT THE CHOOSE BUTTON

You probably have a pretty good idea of the kind of person you want to be. The Savior and the prophets have given many teachings and examples that help you know what kind of person Heavenly Father knows you can be. You can make a choice—once and for all—to be that person. That kind of choice can be powerful. Because it can help define you, it can have staying power and make future decisions easier.

There’s no formal process for making these kinds of decisions. It can even start unconsciously (like my snooze button decision probably did). But try making a conscious effort to choose. Make a statement—written, shouted, whispered, thought, however you want to make it. Declare who you are in simple terms: “I treat everyone with respect” or “I don’t procrastinate” or even something as simple as “I sing the hymns out loud in church,” for example.

A statement of decision like this won’t magically transform you into a different person, of course. But the combination of your sincere desire, your agency, your determination, and your faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ can take you a long way and can eventually lead to a character decision that sticks. **NE**

### WHEN YOU DEVIATE FROM YOUR DECISION

If you act out of character for the kind of person you’ve decided to be, that doesn’t mean your once-and-for-all decision is ruined. Through Jesus Christ’s Atonement, you can repent, be forgiven, and become better. And your continuing desire to be that kind of person means a lot.

If you have a sincere desire and real intent, Heavenly Father can bless you to become that person He knows you can be—the person you truly want to be.

As President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has taught: “Desires dictate our priorities, priorities shape our choices, and choices determine our actions. . . . In addition, it is our actions and our desires that cause us to become something, whether a true friend, a gifted teacher, or one who has qualified for eternal life” (Apr. 2011 general conference).

A dove is shown in flight, carrying an olive branch, against a blue sky. Below the dove, a city is visible, with a river flowing through it. The city is depicted with various buildings and structures, and the river is a prominent feature. The overall scene is one of peace and hope.

# UNDERSTANDING THE PLAN OF SALVATION GAVE ME PEACE

By Nance Regold J. Micabani

A few years ago, on the day of my parents' anniversary, my mom was diagnosed with a stage 4 pancreatic cancer. The results of her CT scan showed that her cancer was life-threatening and her body was deteriorating. It was in that moment that I knew my mom wouldn't live much longer.

I was not ready for that. I foresaw what life would be without my mom. Everything was dark, gloomy, and sad. There was no more joy or laughter—and no warm hugs from my mom that would comfort me. There didn't seem to be life at all.

Months passed by and my mom's body continued to weaken. But what amazed me the most was her desire to go to church, participate in our daily family scripture study, give lessons in our family home evenings, and even laugh with us.

*When my mom was diagnosed with terminal cancer, I could see only sadness in my future. And then she bore her testimony of the plan of salvation.*

One day, I asked her, “Haven’t you questioned Heavenly Father? Haven’t you wondered why you have to have cancer?” My mom smiled and shared her testimony about the plan of salvation. She told me that I needed to understand the plan of salvation to feel the genuine happiness that it gives. She said if I understood where we come from, what our purpose in this life is, and where we are going, I would understand that we will always be together, that I would never really lose her. She encouraged me to continue preparing for a mission and to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and the plan of salvation with others so that they could receive the blessings of comfort and happiness as well.

I realized that my mom was right. Why would I fear losing her here on earth if I knew that as long as I kept my covenants and completed the will of the Father that I would see her in the next life? I felt peaceful.

A little while later, my mom passed away. During my mom’s wake—a celebration of her life we held before her

burial—even though it was hard and I was sad, everything seemed peaceful, and I could still feel my mom’s presence. Even the people around me seemed to be uplifted. I knew that I was feeling the true blessing of understanding God’s divine plan.

Later, when it was time to take my mom to the cemetery, a young boy came up to me and asked me why I wasn’t crying. I remembered how I thought of my mom’s death before and how I had only seen a lot of sadness and grief. I smiled and knelt down to his level. I told him, “I know that I will see my mom again if I continue to follow God’s commandments.” The boy smiled too, and I knew that he felt the same peace I was feeling.

My mom was gone, but the darkness, gloom, and sadness I thought would fill my life weren’t present. I said goodbye to her and told her that we would see each other in the next life. I felt comforted despite our loss. It was a blessing that came from understanding the plan of salvation. **NE**

*The author lives in the Philippines.*

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To learn more about life after death, read Doctrine and Covenants section 76, in which the Lord describes those who inherit the celestial, terrestrial, and telestial kingdoms and compares the glory of those kingdoms to the sun, moon, and stars.

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# PRAYING TO FIND A FRIEND




HEY, I'M WILL.



IT REALLY BOTHERS YOU THAT  
WE GOT THE OTHER MOVIE, HUH?



YOU ARE  
CALLED TO SERVE  
IN ARGENTINA.



THANK YOU  
FOR ANSWERING  
MY PRAYERS.

WHEN I PRAYED  
TO HAVE A FRIEND,

WHAT CAME NEXT TURNED  
OUT TO BE THE ANSWER TO  
TWO SEPARATE PRAYERS.

By Jacob Tingen

**IT** was hard being the only Latter-day Saint at my school. It was hard to make friends—and harder still to make friends with the same high standards. So I prayed, and the Lord blessed me with a good friend.

Will became that friend. Once we started hanging out and having a great time, other people began to join us. And we soon found ourselves surrounded by friends.

Will got his driver's license first in the group, and the rest of us always used to joke that where there's a Will there's a way. Will and I and all our other friends went everywhere and did everything together. My teenage years were awesome because of my friendships.

Will wasn't a Latter-day Saint, but he respected me for my standards. On the rare occasions that a bad word came out of his mouth, he would apologize. If we were with other friends and one of them cursed, he would say, "Hey, we don't cuss around Jacob." It felt good to know that I didn't have to stick up for my standards all by myself. It was good to know Will would stick up for me.

One time we went to watch a couple of movies at somebody's house. My friends and I picked out one movie that was fine, and they also picked out another movie I knew was inappropriate. I mentioned something about not wanting to watch it, but everyone went ahead and rented it anyway. Will noticed I was quiet as we were driving away from the rental place.

"Hey, Jacob, is it really bothering you that we got that other movie?" he asked.

"Yeah," I said. "But it's OK. I'll just leave for that movie."

Will didn't think it was OK. He turned the car around and drove back to where we got the movie. Will and I exchanged the inappropriate movie for something better that everybody still wanted to watch. I was always glad to have friends who helped me live my standards.

Years passed, and I got my mission call. Before leaving to go to Argentina, I dropped by Will's house to say good-bye and tell him I'd miss him. He wasn't home at first, but his mom was. Surprisingly, she shared with me how much she appreciated the friendship I had offered Will. His dad had abandoned them when Will was two, and with no male role model for him, she felt helpless as she watched him grow up. She felt she was losing touch with her son. After her husband had left, she had prayed that her son would make a friend, a friend who would help keep her son out of trouble.

"You were that friend," she told me. "Thanks for helping me raise my son. Thanks for answering my prayers."

I couldn't help but hug her. She was the mother of my best friend through high school. The mother of a friend who had always been there for me. All this time she thought Heavenly Father had answered her prayer, and I thought He had answered mine. I know God hears our prayers. And sometimes, some very special times, He uses us to answer them too. **NE**  
*The author lives in Virginia, USA.*



#### HE WILL ANSWER

"In times of distress, let your covenants be paramount and let your obedience be exact. Then you can ask in faith, nothing wavering, according to your need, and God will answer. He will sustain you as you work and watch. In His own time and way He will stretch forth his hand to you, saying, 'Here am I.'"

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2009 general conference.

# KACHE

## THE REAL-LIFE COWBOY

By Laura Fuchs

*Fixing fences, doing ultrasounds, herding cattle—it's all in a day's work on the ranch.*

When you think of a cowboy, you might think of a ruggedly well-dressed man riding his horse into the sunset. The reality is a bit sweatier! There still is a lot of horseback riding—but into the sunrise more often than the sunset. Besides riding horses, being a real cowboy also means fixing fences, branding cattle, and feeding, herding, and even helping cows give birth.

Kache B., 15, from Texas, USA, is a real cowboy. "I see a cowboy as a person who is working hard out in the country," he says. "The world sees cowboys as boots and spurs."

Kache knows that being a cowboy isn't glamorous. He spends 30–40 hours a week during his summers working on a ranch owned by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that his dad manages. At the end of the day, he is often dusty, dirty, and drained.



### LONG HOURS AND SORE MUSCLES

Hard work is the theme of cattle ranching. Almost everything on the ranch requires long hours and sore muscles, and for Kache, it's all worth it. "Ranching has helped me see the world from a different perspective," Kache says. Putting in the effort to raise cattle helps him appreciate the land, food, and the value of a job well done.

Hard work isn't easy—that's why it's called hard! But for Kache, ranching comes with a great sense of accomplishment. Kache loves helping the cattle every day and says that there isn't much that's more rewarding than knowing the cows are happy, healthy, and safe.



And what Kache does on the ranch actually matters. Last summer he developed a grazing plan for the cattle, and two summers ago he helped build and repair over two miles of fence. Fencing is Kache's least favorite ranch chore, especially when it's hot outside. "It feels like it will never end." As Kache's dad explains, "There are parts of the job you love and there are parts of the job you love when they are over."

Even though it sometimes feels never-ending, Kache doesn't mind fencing too much, because it keeps the cows safe. Plus, "fencing helps me stay in shape for football and track," he says. Some of the work on the ranch (like riding horses and wrestling cattle so they can be branded) is more fun than other work, but Kache says he likes to learn about and do it all.

### FAITH ON THE RANCH

Life on a cattle ranch is both stressful and faith-building. One time they needed to plant oats to feed the cattle. Kache and the other ranch hands were ready to plant—there was just one problem. "It was really dry and hot and there was no rain for the oats," Kache says. "My dad asked us to pray for rain. After a few days, we got that rain. The oats were able to grow, and we were able to have food for our cattle."

Things don't always work out the way they hope, but that doesn't mean the Lord's arm of mercy isn't still extended (see 2 Nephi 9:14). Kache says, "There was a cow this last summer that needed a C-section. We pulled the first calf out and it ended up being twins." They both died not long after



the C-section. "Seeing them die was hard," said Kache, but he is learning to trust God even when things don't work out. "If we are strong and stay true to the gospel, we will be rewarded in the end."

### GROWING AND LEARNING

The ranch is beautiful with rolling hills and spectacular views. The land is both awesome and intimidating. "You have to show respect for the land," says Kache. Sometimes it is difficult being so reliant on the land. On tough days a desk job might seem like a safer career option, but Kache is determined to become a rancher. "Ranching has helped me appreciate all that the Lord has made for us. He gave us this world to use so that we can grow and learn."

Cowboys don't just have to be good with animals; they also need to be veterinarians, nutritionists, farmers, builders, and planners. Kache's dad went to graduate school to become a ranch manager. The challenge of learning so many skills is part of what makes being a cowboy so cool. "You have to work to get what you want," says Kache.

This work ethic has pushed Kache to be strong on the ranch and in his faith. "Ranching has shown me how important it is to be strong, especially during hard times," he says. "Things can be difficult, but we are able to push through it with the Lord's help."



### THE FACTS ABOUT COWBOY BOOTS

Have you ever wondered why cowboy boots look the way they do? It's not for fashion; it's for function. Cowboy boots are built so that they stay on when you're working in the mud. When you're riding a horse, though, they come off fairly easily. That's why they have a heel—so that if the horse bucks the rider, the heel and the boot get caught in the stirrup and the rider falls off the horse shoeless. If they were wearing regular shoes, they might get their foot caught in the stirrup and be dragged by the horse!





"EVERY LITTLE KID WANTS TO GROW UP AND BE A COWBOY. BUT IT TAKES A LOT OF WORK. WITH KACHE, WE ARE SEEING THE DESIRE TURN INTO SOMETHING REAL."—KACHE'S DAD



## OFF THE RANCH

When he is not on the ranch, Kache keeps busy. He's on the football team, does online seminary, runs track, and plays the clarinet in his school's band. Even though his busy school schedule is almost relaxing compared to ranching, Kache says, "I miss the ranch a lot during school."

Kache's branch covers two massive counties, so there aren't many members where he lives. "Being the only member of the Church in my school is a little hard sometimes, but it shows me how important it is to have and keep high standards." Working on the ranch has taught him to do what's right on and off the ranch, no matter who is watching.

Thankfully, Kache has found a lot of great friends. "After my friends learned about my standards and beliefs, they respected them. Some of my friends even raised their standards and tried to become better people." Kache's friends have not only been lifted by his example, but he has learned from them too. "I have good friends who are from other Christian faiths—in fact those are my best friends. They have shown me that you don't have to be a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to be a good person."

## WORDS TO LIVE BY

Whether on or off the ranch, Kache lives by the same motto: "Work hard to get what you want and always be willing to learn and try new things." So, when his alarm goes off at 5 a.m. in the middle of summer, Kache gets excited to put his boots on and get to work. **NE**

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*



## THE CHURCH AND RANCHING

Did you know that the Church owns and operates 13 ranches in the United States and Canada? These ranches are used both as investment properties and for food production for the needy. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said, "We have felt that good farms, over a long period, represent a safe investment where the assets of the Church may be preserved and enhanced, while at the same time they are available as an agricultural resource to feed people should there come a time of need" ("The State of the Church." Apr. 1991 general conference).



# AN AGNOSTIC'S JOURNEY TO FAITH

By Chris Artificavitch

*My studies and an invitation by my friend brought me to the Church, but faith gave me my testimony.*

**M**y brother, Andrew, my twin sister, Stephanie, and I were all raised by parents who sacrificed for us, taught us right and wrong, and, most importantly, taught us strong moral values. Nevertheless, I started to doubt my parents' advice and beliefs around the beginning of my teenage years.

I made many poor choices, but one thing remained firm in my mind: a desire to know the truth in religion. I desired to know of God, so I turned to the intellectual pursuit of that knowledge and thought of myself as an agnostic.

One year I spent hours pondering the meaning of life and the nature of God. I pored over religious books and

websites, learning about different religions and forming my own theories about God and His workings in our lives.

I wasn't happy during that year, but I was too busy seeking more knowledge to realize it. I continued to make poor choices, which only widened the rift between my family and me. I felt lost.

I came to a point where I felt I had to make a life-ending or a life-starting decision. When I thought about making the life-ending choice, I remembered what a young man had given me almost four years earlier.

In the seventh grade, Sawyer had recognized my curiosity about God and had given me a Book of Mormon. Later, that Book of Mormon was sold in a garage sale. In tenth grade, he asked what I had done with the Book of Mormon. I had felt so bad about telling him it had been sold

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*An agnostic is someone who thinks we can't be certain about God's existence.*



that when he invited me to go to Mutual or seminary with him, I agreed.

I went to seminary after having read all I could find about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, with a notepad full of questions intended to disprove it. Once there, as I read them, they were answered with kindness and certainty. I exhausted all my questions and gave up, resigned to the fact that there was something special about the Church.

The next Tuesday, I went to Mutual with Sawyer. He asked if I minded if the missionaries came over to talk to me. I didn't fully understand the question, but I agreed to meet them.

During the discussion with the missionaries, I recounted the story of Joseph Smith and wanted to know the next step. It was a very Spirit-filled discussion, but I was lacking one thing. I told the missionaries I believed, and I thought I believed, but I didn't truly understand what it meant. I continued to have discussions with the missionaries and to learn about Jesus Christ's restored gospel.

There came a point, however, when I was overwhelmed with the storm of life,

and I went to the missionaries for help.

They showed me 3 Nephi 14:24–25:

“Therefore, whoso heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock—

“And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.”

Once I heard those verses, my heart rejoiced, and I felt the storm lessen. I asked the missionaries what that meant. They replied that it was the Holy Spirit confirming truth to me. After that moment, I had a testimony of the Book of Mormon, and since I had a testimony of the Book of Mormon, everything else fell into place. I knew that there is a living prophet, that Joseph Smith really was called of God and is the Prophet of the Restoration, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints really is the true Church.

My knowledge was gained through my faith; my faith was not gained by my knowledge.

Ever since I received a testimony

of the Book of Mormon, I have strived to live according to the commandments of God. It's a lifelong journey but one I look forward to.

I can't give thanks enough to the people who set me on this journey. I can, however, be the best disciple of Jesus Christ I can be and pray that my actions will invite others to join me on this journey back to our Heavenly Father. **NE**

*The author lives in Texas, USA.*



#### AVAILABLE TO ALL

“A testimony is a gift from God and is available to

all of His children. Any honest seeker of truth can obtain a testimony by exercising the necessary ‘particle of faith’ in Jesus Christ to ‘experiment upon’ (Alma 32:27) and ‘try the virtue of the word’ (Alma 31:5), to yield ‘to the enticings of the Holy Spirit’ (Mosiah 3:19), and to awaken unto God (see Alma 5:7). Testimony brings increased personal accountability and is a source of purpose, assurance, and joy.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Oct. 2012 general conference.



# FLIPPING FEAR UPSIDE- DOWN

*Fear rooted  
me to the spot.*

*Unfortunately, I  
was already over  
the edge.*

By Megan Fairbanks

**"OK,"** the counselor said. "Just remember: move your legs balance, don't worry. Your belay partner at the bottom has a hold of the rope. Got it?"



I took a deep breath and nodded. I and another young woman from my class were standing at the top of a 60-foot cliff, preparing to rappel (abseil) down to the bottom. For Young Women camp that year, my leaders had arranged to bring us to a Scout camp in the Uintah mountains. I had only discovered after our arrival that a lot of the activities involved one of my greatest fears: heights. Even though I was terrified, I'd agreed to give this activity a try. "It's not that far," I told myself. "Just don't look down."

My friend was way more excited about rappelling than I was and quickly got ahead of me and disappeared over the edge. After taking a deep breath (and another, and another) I decided that I was ready.

With one hand on the rope in front of me and one on the rope behind me, which I would use to lower myself down the cliff face, I began to walk slowly backwards down the steep incline toward the ledge that marked where the real work would begin.

I eased myself down onto the cliff so that I stood with my feet on the cliff, nearly parallel to the ground below. It was here that things went wrong: I kept feeding rope through the hitch, but I was so afraid that I completely forgot to move my legs. In a matter of seconds, I was hanging upside-down on the cliff with my

back against the rough stone.

I tried pushing myself back out but couldn't seem to find a way to get upright again. Finally, I decided that the only thing I could do was try to catch the attention of the counselors at the top of the cliff.

"Hey," I called. "Help! Help me!"

There was a pause, and then a helmeted head appeared over the cliff.

"How did you do that?" the counselor said. He started to laugh so hard that he had to step back and get another one of the counselors to help. By then, I could hear the worried voices of my leaders and fellow young women asking if I was OK and shouting encouragement. I started laughing too—the whole situation was so ridiculous that I couldn't be afraid!

With the help of the other counselor, I was able to flip myself around. When I reached the bottom of the cliff, I realized that I hadn't been afraid once on the way down. I even found enough courage to try some other activities that I was normally afraid of during the remainder of camp.

Over the years, this experience has really influenced the way I approach my faith. I learned that fear was the only thing standing in

the way of discovering an activity I really enjoyed. If I let the fear of messing up or doing something wrong get in the way of learning about the gospel or acting on a prompting, then I might end up upside-down again, but in a different way. However, I also learned that even if that did happen, the people around me were prepared to help me get back on my feet.

Heavenly Father loves you and wants you to learn and do new things. He is always ready to help you forget fear and find courage in knowing that He is there to help you find your balance again. **NE**

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID STOKER



By Elder Evan A. Schmutz  
Of the Seventy

*Looking back, I can see  
that Uncle Ash was more  
interested in molding  
my character than in  
moving his dirt.*



# —HOW TO— MOVE *your* MOUNTAINS

When I was 13 years old and growing up in Orem, Utah, USA, my great-uncle Ash called and said he had a summer job for me. I gladly took it, since it wasn't easy for a 13-year-old to get a job. On my first day, Uncle Ash brought me to a lot he owned where a grocery store was being built. Construction workers had already dug a huge hole on the land where they would put the building's foundation. At one end of the lot they had piled up a huge mountain of dirt they had excavated for the foundation. It was so big that the neighborhood kids had turned it into a bike-riding hill, complete with jumps and paths.

Uncle Ash was a kind, older man about the age of my grandfather. He and his wife had never had children of their own. When I met Uncle Ash at the lot, he handed me an old wooden-handled shovel and a scuffed-up black wheelbarrow and told me that my job was to move the mountain of dirt to the back end of the lot, about 75 yards (69 meters) away.

As I look back on the experience now, I am sure Uncle Ash could have moved the dirt much faster and more efficiently with a backhoe, but he offered to pay me \$1.40 an hour, which was good pay back then—so I took the job and went to work.

### One Wheelbarrow at a Time

I toiled away at that mountain of dirt for weeks, one wheelbarrow load at a time. I soon settled into a pattern: Every day, I got to the lot early in the morning, while it was still cool, filled the wheelbarrow one shovelful at a time, pushed it across the field and dumped it in the location Uncle Ash had pointed to, then returned to do it again. I pushed that wheelbarrow back and forth so many times I eventually wore a smooth path between the large mountain of dirt and the little mound I was creating.

I worked from four to six hours a day, every day, pushing the wheelbarrow back and forth, back and forth, until I thought I would never see the end of it. It seemed to me that the big mountain was not getting any smaller, no matter how hard or long I toiled.

Every now and then, Uncle Ash stopped by the lot to check on my progress. I really respected him. He was one of those older men who seem a little bit gruff but are really soft-hearted on the inside. Looking back, I can see that Uncle Ash was more interested in molding my character than in moving his dirt. He had entrusted me with this job, and I was determined to complete it even if it took me the whole summer.



### A New Perspective

After a few weeks, I began to feel like I would never be able to complete the task. The original mountain of dirt didn't seem to be getting any smaller, and I wondered if all my work and effort was making any difference at all, or if I was just wasting my summer.

Then one day, something very simple happened that changed my entire outlook. As I pushed a full wheelbarrow up my pile to dump it, I noticed I had to push the wheelbarrow up higher and higher to reach the top. Then, as I was pushing the empty wheelbarrow back to fill it again, for some reason I stopped midway between the two piles of dirt. I stood and looked at the mountain of dirt I was supposed to move. It hadn't really changed. But, when I turned around and looked at the mound I was creating, I saw that it had become huge! I was making a mountain of my own.

Suddenly, my perspective changed. The piles were the same size they had been a few minutes before, but my new perspective allowed me to see that my efforts were amounting to something; they were not in vain. It gave me a sense of accomplishment and pride in what I was doing, though I still had a long way to go. As I bent and lifted the handles of the wheelbarrow to return to work, my attitude had changed. I was happier. I felt more worthwhile, more confident in myself.

### Our Own Mountains to Move

What mountains of dirt need to be moved in our lives? Heavenly Father may ask us to complete tasks or face trials that seem impossible at first, but little by little as we work one shovelful at a time, we can move mountains with the Lord's help. Having faith in Jesus Christ changes our perspective so that we can look and see how far we've come with His help.

The scriptures teach us that if we have "faith as a grain of mustard seed" (Matthew 17:20), we can move mountains. There are times when mountains are moved by our faith in Christ, by His power alone. But most of the time, the exercise of our faith requires a great deal of work and persistence on our part. I learned that summer that faith and a willingness to persist can overcome challenges and obstacles that seem like mountains in our lives.

Whether our mountains are trials, commandments, skills to learn, goals to accomplish, or lifelong challenges, we can eventually overcome these things as we work and exercise faith in Christ. It will take lots of time and persistence, so don't get discouraged when it doesn't seem like you're making any progress. Don't give up and don't give in! By and by, you will accomplish the things you desire and become a better, more accomplished person in the process.



Set your goals in life by choosing the good things that will matter most and bring lasting joy and blessings. Look forward with an eye of faith to what you have chosen to accomplish or overcome, and then go to work. With diligence and with patience, your faith will be rewarded. (See Alma 32:41–43.)

No matter what your circumstances are, you can always choose something to work on. It could be playing a sport, learning to play a musical instrument, trying to get into a certain school or college, learning a new language, or acquiring Doctrinal Mastery. Choose your own mountains of dirt to move. Set your own goals and desires. When you seek opportunities to learn, work or acquire skills, and you are diligent and persistent in your effort, the Lord will bless you by increasing your talents and gifts. He will also find ways to use your talents in His work.

### A Test to Prove Myself

Uncle Ash also owned a carwash. After I finished moving the mountain of dirt that summer, he hired me to work at his carwash a few days a week after school. He told me later that he gave me that job to move the dirt as a way of determining whether he wanted to hire me for other jobs. I realized that the whole point of the mountain-moving job wasn't just

hauling dirt from one place to another—it was a way for me to be tested and prove I was a diligent, hard-working young man.

Sometimes Heavenly Father will ask us to do difficult things so that we can prove ourselves to Him. We may not always understand the reasons for these tasks or trials, just as I didn't understand the reasons Uncle Ash asked me to move that dirt mountain. But when we listen and obey and diligently labor to

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I LEARNED THAT SUMMER THAT  
FAITH AND A WILLINGNESS TO  
PERSIST CAN OVERCOME  
CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES  
THAT SEEM LIKE MOUNTAINS  
IN OUR LIVES.

---

show Heavenly Father our love for Him and our faith in Jesus Christ, He blesses us (see John 14:15). The good things in life come with faith, persistence, and diligence, especially as we serve our Heavenly Father. **NE**



# YOUTH

## At the school I go to right now,

there are very few members. So it's important to live my standards because it's the only way for the gospel light to shine through me so that nonmembers can eventually find their way to the Church. Maybe not now, but one day they'll remember there was this one strange boy who didn't drink iced tea and coffee, who didn't swear, and who was part of a church. Maybe someday my example will lead them to where they need to be.

It can be hard to be different, to stand out. It's really easy to drop standards. My family's example and prayer really keep me going throughout the day. Prayer reminds me to keep my standards.

Never doubt for a moment that what you are doing is not right. People are always trying to put you down for things that you don't do. Maybe you won't be cool. That's totally fine. Your Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ see you as cool for keeping the standards. You'll realize eventually that what you're doing now makes you happy. It really is that lasting joy that comes from keeping your standards. So keep going, keep living your standards!

**Nathan O.,** 18, Manila, Philippines





**Grace B., 17, Utah, USA**

Hi! My name is Grace, and I'm a hot chocolate enthusiast who loves overalls and plants. I like to draw, read, and go hammock camping. What I love most about the gospel is that even if I'm going through trials, there are talks, scriptures, and ward members that can help me to remember that Heavenly Father is there and that He loves me and knows me and my challenges and will help me.



**Garrett L., 20, Colorado, USA**

I think movies and film can bring great power. I feel it gets hard to find wholesome content sometimes. I decided to make a short film that would inspire and uplift people. I called it "You Are Great." It's about a man who's sad and is able to feel better by doing service for people. God wants us to stay clean. If you watch things that remind you of the Savior, it will bring the Spirit into your life.

# FUN STOP



## What's in a Name?

Below is a scripture that explains why we sometimes are a little particular about what people call us. The letters have been replaced by other letters. See if you can figure it out.

"EXA CJVW WJFYU SU KJVAKJ  
ZM KFYUMP HT CJM YFWC  
PFUW, MGMT CJM KJVAKJ  
XE IMWVW KJAHWC XE  
YFCCMA-PFU WFHTCW."

HINT: Y=L



# TEMPLE TRIVIA



With all the excitement over new temples, first check your knowledge about some of the first temples built in these latter days.

- The early Saints were forced to abandon this temple—the first built in this dispensation—within two years of its completion.

  - a. Nauvoo Illinois Temple
  - b. Salt Lake Temple
  - c. Kirtland Ohio Temple
  - d. Palmyra New York Temple
- This was the first temple built outside the United States of America.

  - a. London England Temple
  - b. Sidney Australia Temple
  - c. Cardston Alberta Temple
  - d. Mexico City Temple
- This temple, the longest-operating temple in use today, was dedicated in 1877.

  - a. Manti Utah Temple
  - b. Salt Lake Temple
  - c. Los Angeles California Temple
  - d. St. George Utah Temple
- This temple—the second built in this dispensation—was abandoned almost as soon as it was finished. First, however, thousands of Saints received ordinances inside before journeying west. It was later destroyed by fire and a tornado.

  - a. Nauvoo Illinois Temple
  - b. Columbus Ohio Temple
  - c. Manhattan New York Temple
  - d. Chicago Illinois Temple
- This was the first temple in Europe.

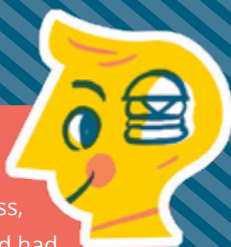
  - a. Paris France Temple
  - b. Bern Switzerland Temple
  - c. Freiberg Germany Temple
  - d. London England Temple
- This was the first temple in Asia.

  - a. Tokyo Japan Temple
  - b. Hong Kong China Temple
  - c. Manila Philippines Temple
  - d. Taipei Taiwan Temple

## A Riddle, Brain Food

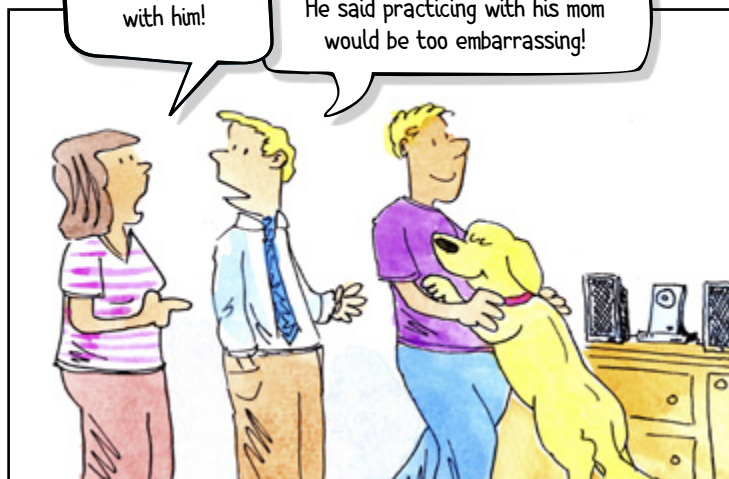
One morning, while in the wilderness, Sariah noticed that some of the food had disappeared from their provisions overnight. Unfortunately, last night's rainstorm made it very dark and washed away any traces of footprints, so she couldn't tell who took it. She asked each of her sons what he was doing after bedtime last night. Sam said he was futilely trying to get sand out of his clothes. Laman said he was just looking at the stars. Lemuel said he was doing whatever Laman was doing. Nephi said he was planning out what he would do if he had to go back to Jerusalem one more time.

Sariah then told Laman and Lemuel that they had to go without breakfast. How did she know it was them?



But the dance is next week! I thought John wanted me to practice with him!

He said practicing with his mom would be too embarrassing!



RYAN STOKER

7. This was the first temple in South America.

- a. Guayaquil Ecuador Temple
- b. Cochabamba Bolivia Temple
- c. Lima Peru Temple
- d. São Paulo Brazil Temple

8. What do the 12 oxen supporting temple baptistries represent?

- a. The original 12 apostles.
- b. The 12 months of the year, and the ongoing work of the Lord.
- c. The number of oxen used to haul stone for the Salt Lake Temple.
- d. The 12 tribes of Israel.

9. **Bonus question:** who came up with the idea to put the angel Moroni on top of the temple?

- a. President Wilford Woodruff
- b. 19th century explorer Jim Bridger
- c. Sculptor Cyrus Dallin
- d. Mary Ann Angell Young, wife of President Brigham Young

## The Father's Day Gift Every Dad Needs

"Dad, I'm hungry!" Wait for it. "Hi, Hungry! I'm Dad!" Groan. But here's the great thing about Dad jokes. The worse they are, the more they make you laugh. Chalk it up as one of the grand mysteries of the universe.

See if you can match setups with punchlines in these classic Dad jokes. Then try to make your dad (or anybody else) chuckle with the horrible puns. Just don't be surprised if Dad uses them on you down the road. You've been warned.

- 1. I'm reading a book on the history of glue.
- 2. Never buy anything with velcro.
- 3. How does a penguin build his house?
- 4. Hmm, you might want to avoid the sushi.
- 5. When I play soccer, I don't expect to win.
- 6. What did the buffalo say when his son left for college?
- 7. You should never trust atoms.
- 8. I used to hate facial hair.
- 9. Where do you learn how to make ice cream?
- 10. Last night I dreamed I was a muffler.
- 11. Why don't crabs share their toys?
- 12. What do you call a pony with a sore throat?

- a. Sunday school.
- b. They're shellfish.
- c. It's a total rip-off.
- d. Bison!
- e. I just can't put it down.
- f. They make up everything.
- g. I woke up exhausted.
- h. Igloos it together.
- i. It's a little fishy.
- j. A little horse.
- k. It's just for kicks.
- l. Then it grew on me.

Answers on page 43.

June 2019

41

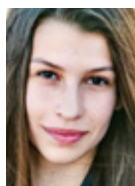


# "How do I keep my electronics from distracting me at church and seminary?"

*"Handheld devices, such as smartphones, are a blessing, but they can also distract us from hearing the 'still, small voice.' They need to be our servants, not our masters. . . .*

*" . . . When smartphones begin to interfere with our relationships with friends and family—and even more importantly, with God—we need to make a change."*

President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Be Still, and Know That I Am God" (Church Educational System devotional for young adults, May 4, 2014), broadcasts. [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://ChurchofJesusChrist.org).



## Out of Sight, Out of Mind

I recently noticed my tendency to use electronics during church and youth

activities. It had become a habit. Anytime I saw my phone, I immediately had to grab it and check to see if I had any new notifications or text messages. The solution? Hiding my phone from myself. Whether it was in a bag, under a chair, or even with a friend—if I couldn't see my phone, I wouldn't be tempted to use it.

**Taryn M., 15, Florida, USA**



## Prepare Your Devices to Minimize Distraction

Prepare your devices the same way you prepare your

mind and body for the Sabbath. Silence cell phone notifications during class. You could place the Gospel Library app separately from other apps so that if you need to use the scriptures or the notebook, you don't get distracted by those apps.

**Delguimar S., 21, São Paulo, Brazil**

## Pray for Help

I look for the Spirit by praying. This helps me to be able to give up my electronic devices on the Sabbath day and during seminary. Whenever I pray to my Heavenly Father and read the Book of Mormon, I receive a way to give up my devices.

**Desire M., 18, Comoé District, Ivory Coast**



### Don't Forget about Hard Copies!

Using electronics for gospel study is OK, but sometimes it can get out of hand. To keep yourself from getting distracted, try using hard copies of the scriptures. The Lord will guide you. You'll learn so much more and feel the Spirit.

**Aiyana A., 13, Laguna, Philippines**

### Put It Away

At church, I turn the sound off on my phone and keep it in my pocket unless I'm using it for scriptures. During the sacrament, I don't use it at all. I keep it out of my hands to avoid the temptation to use it.

**William W., 17, Virginia, USA**

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

## What should I say when my friends question our beliefs about marriage and family?

In ***"The Family: A Proclamation to the World,"*** the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles proclaimed that "marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children" (familyproclamation.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

This proclamation "is a statement of eternal truth" that came through a "revelatory process" and is not "just a statement of policy" (Dallin H. Oaks, Oct. 2017 general conference). You can share your personal belief that this is so, and you can share the blessings these truths bring you.

In responding to others, we need to avoid being self-righteous or contentious. We should seek to love them. Those who are open and sincere deserve a sincere answer. But if it's obvious that someone isn't serious and just wants to mock or belittle your views, or if they just want to pick a fight, it's best to avoid the discussion (see Matthew 7:6).

### Tell Us What You Think?

"How can I be positive around my friends who seem depressed?"

**Send your answer and photo by July 15, 2019.**

Go to [newera.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](http://newera.ChurchofJesusChrist.org), and click "Submit Your Work." Sign in with your LDS Account and then select "New Era" under "Choose Magazine." Click "Add File" to select your file and photos, and then click "Submit" to upload and send us your file.

*Responses may be edited for length or clarity.*



# Map My ANCESTORS

For iOS

WOULDN'T IT BE COOL to stand on the same street where your great-great-grandfather used to play baseball with his neighborhood friends? Or to pick a peach from the orchard your great-aunt used to own? Well, now, you can use the Map My Ancestors feature on the FamilySearch Family Tree app to get directions to places like these.

1

Click on the three dots in the bottom right corner of your screen.

2

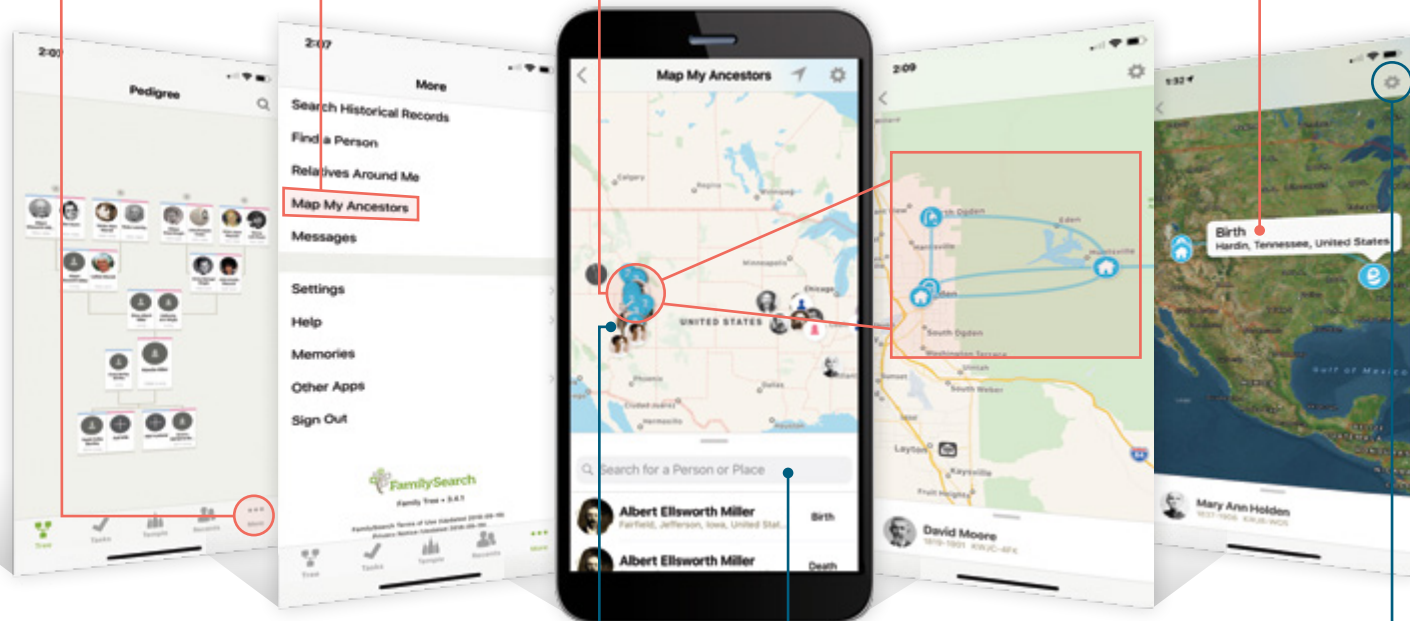
From the drop-down menu, select "Map My Ancestors."

3

When you tap a blue bubble, the world map zooms in and the bubbles break apart to show the specific locations of your ancestors' life events.

4

From here, you can tap on the map icon to get directions so you can visit the location of this life event (if the address is available). Or you can select other life events and watch the map take you to different locations that relate to your ancestor's life. You might even cross the ocean—like your ancestors may have done.



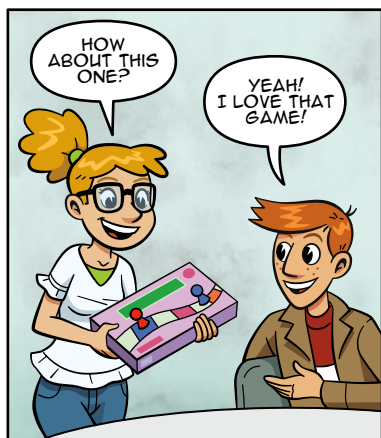
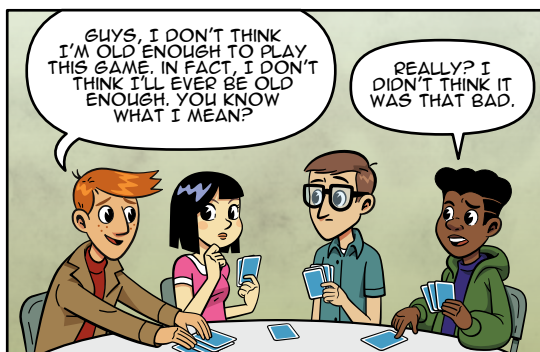
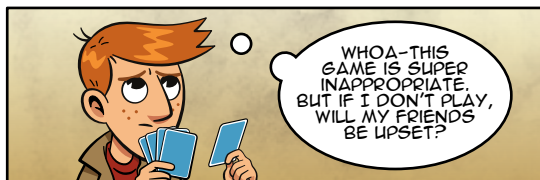
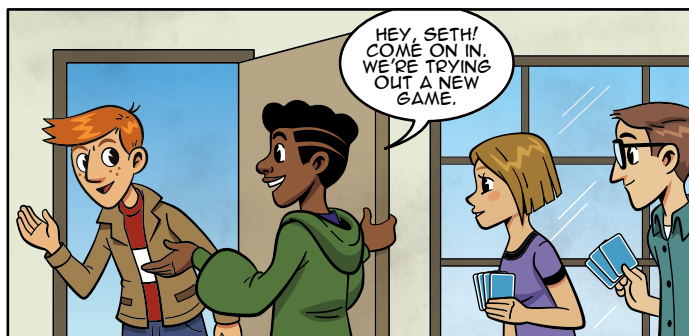
On your screen, you should see a world map with blue bubbles. The numbers in the bubbles mark your ancestors' life events, such as where they were born, raised, married, and buried. You may even see pictures of your ancestors in place of bubbles.



Below the world map and the bubbles, you should see a list of ancestors. You can tap on an ancestor's name to show the specific locations of their life events.



By clicking on Settings in the top right corner you are given three Map Types for viewing. Map, Satellite, or Map and Satellite view.



"As you seek to be a friend to others, do not compromise your standards. If your friends urge you to do things that are wrong, be the one to stand for the right, even if you stand alone."

*For the Strength of Youth (2011), 16.*



## RUN!

**ONE EVENING**, I was walking to my house. It was only a few blocks away from where I had met up with some friends earlier, but now it was completely dark. I could barely see where I was walking.

I noticed that three young men were following me. I began walking faster to distance myself from them, but they kept following me. I felt a heavy feeling inside me. Then a clear thought

“You can learn how to follow the best guide of all—the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. That is individual revelation. There is a process through which we can be alerted to spiritual dangers.”

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 1976 general conference.

came to me: run! I began running up the hill. The hill was really steep, but I felt a strength that wasn't mine. It was beyond my own.

Now the young men were running too and catching up. I wasn't sure what to do next. Again, a clear thought came to my mind that told me to go down a narrow passageway. When I did, much to my surprise, I saw a police officer. Exhausted from running all those blocks and almost out of breath, I asked him for help. When the young men saw me talking to the police officer, they stopped chasing me and eventually walked away. To make sure I was safe, the police officer walked me home.

That night I kept thinking about the promptings I had received. I felt at peace knowing that Heavenly Father had helped me. I said a prayer thanking Him for His guidance. I know that if we obey the voice of the Spirit, we will be safe.

**Martín S., Puerto Madryn, Argentina**



### How can I be ready to hear and follow promptings?

#### 1. Be still.

Taking quiet time to ponder and reflect will help you hear the Spirit (see Psalm 46:10).

#### 2. Repent.

Repentance makes you clean so that the Spirit can be your companion (see Alma 34:36).

#### 3. Study.

When you know the words of the Lord, it can be easier to recognize His voice (see Doctrine and Covenants 1:38).

## GETTING UP IS UP TO ME

**ON SUNDAYS** my mom usually woke me up so I could get ready for church and get there before the meetings began. But one Sunday my mom didn't wake me up. I woke up by myself and noticed that I didn't hear the usual noise of my family getting ready for church. I nervously looked at the clock and realized I was half an hour late for church. I had missed the sacrament. I probably would miss Sunday School too.

I felt confused and abandoned. Why didn't my mom wake me up this morning? She always woke me up. But then it hit me: It wasn't my mom's responsibility to wake me up so I could get to church on time—it was mine. I had made my own covenants with Heavenly Father, and it was my responsibility to keep them.

Later that day my mom commented on not waking me up for church. She said that she wouldn't wake me up again. She told me that I should put in my own effort and gain my own testimony.

During that week, I found myself thinking about how I couldn't live on my parents' testimonies forever and how I should try harder to strengthen my own testimony. Since then, I have worked hard to wake up early every Sunday so that I can make it to church on time and take the sacrament. I am learning to be spiritually self-sufficient.

*Lia A., Ceará, Brazil*



## FROM KICKED TO KIND

**I WAS STANDING** in line with my mom to pay for our groceries. The line was crowded, so my mom had to bend over this little boy in front of us to buy our things. The little boy started to kick her. The second time he kicked her, she backed away and said, "Will you please stop kicking?"

The boy's mom turned around and told my mom it was her fault she got kicked. She said all sorts of insulting things to us. I started to glare at her as she turned back around and was rude to the cashier too! I acted calm, but inside I was angry. It bugged me. I knew that what happened wasn't my mom's fault or mine, but I still felt hurt.

When we got home, I went to my room and pulled out my scriptures. After reading for a minute, I felt a need to pray. I hardly felt in the mood, but I knelt down and started to pray. Eventually, I found myself praying for this woman who had treated us so awfully. The calmest feeling I've ever felt settled all over me. I couldn't find room in my heart to be angry at her anymore. I felt love.

*Teresa G., Idaho, USA*



# "Fear Not, I Am with Thee"

By Elder David A. Bednar

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

*From a devotional given at Brigham Young University–  
Hawaii on December 15, 2012.*

A famous military leader once stated emphatically: "Never take counsel [from] your fears."<sup>1</sup>

As we consider the things that are occurring all around us today, we might find many reasons to be afraid, to hesitate, and to wonder if things in our lives can indeed turn out the way we have long hoped.

Some of you may question or lack confidence in your own ability to succeed temporally and spiritually. Perhaps you wonder if the Lord's promises of support and guidance—which you readily recognize and acknowledge in the lives of so many other people—will likewise be evident in your life. You may be uncertain about pursuing an opportunity because you cannot foresee all of the details about how things will work out, and thus you are reticent to start and take the first steps on that path. Or you may be so concerned about making a mistake that you fail to act in faith and press forward and thereby increase the likelihood of the very failure you fear.

To not take counsel from our fears simply means that we do not permit fear and uncertainty to determine our course in life, to affect negatively our attitudes and behavior, to influence improperly our important decisions, or to divert or distract us from all in this world that is virtuous, lovely, or of good report. To not take counsel from our fears means

that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ overrules our fears and that we press forward with a steadfastness in Him. To not take counsel from our fears means that we trust in God's guidance, assurance, and timing in our lives. I promise each of us can and will be blessed with direction, protection, and lasting joy as we learn to not take counsel from our fears.

As we exercise faith in Christ and trust in His promises, we can walk into the dark with the absolute assurance that our pathway will be illuminated—at least far enough to take the next step—and then the next step—and the next step.

Joseph Smith declared, "We have nothing to fear if we are faithful."<sup>2</sup>

President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) counseled, "Fear not. Be of good cheer. The future is as bright as your faith."<sup>3</sup>

As you face your future in faith, the Savior will go before your face, will be on your right hand and on your left, and His Spirit shall be in your hearts (see Doctrine and Covenants 84:88) in all of your righteous endeavors and throughout all the days of your life. **NE**

## NOTES

1. In Mary Anna Jackson, *Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson* (1895), 264.
2. *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, rev. ed. (2002), 338.
3. Thomas S. Monson, "Be of Good Cheer," Apr. 2009 general conference.

Born in  
**San Leandro,  
California,**  
on June 15, 1952.



Served a  
**mission**  
in Southern  
Germany.

Served as president of  
**BYU–Idaho**  
from 1997 to 2004.



# Elder **DAVID A. BEDNAR**



Married  
Susan Robinson  
in 1975 in the  
**Salt Lake  
Temple.**



As a boy, he  
**helped  
his family  
can fruit.**  
*He jokes that  
he ate more of  
the fruit than  
what ended up  
in the jars.*



Was the  
quarterback of his  
**high school  
football team.**

Met his wife at a flag football game.  
**She impressed him**  
when she caught his long pass.



Was a  
**professor**  
at Texas Tech  
University and  
the University of  
Arkansas.

Graduated from  
**Brigham Young University.**

Received a **PhD** in organizational  
behavior from Purdue University.



Has **three sons.**



One of his  
favorite hymns is  
**“Redeemer of  
Israel”** (Hymns, no. 6).



Sustained as a  
member of the  
**Quorum  
of the  
Twelve  
Apostles**  
on October 7, 2004.



# ONE YEAR AGO

MONTH DAY YEAR  
06 03 2018

It's been a year since  
President Russell M. Nelson  
invited youth to

**HELP GATHER  
ISRAEL.**

See [HopeofIsrael.Churchof  
JesusChrist.org](https://HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

## HOW HAVE YOU RESPONDED?

Go to [youth.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://youth.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) to see how other youth have responded and to share your experiences.

THE CHURCH OF  
**JESUS CHRIST**  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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