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THE

New Era



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Have you heard about the new website for sharing Mutual activity ideas? At lds.org/go/activitiesNE3, you'll be able to search for activity ideas on a certain topic and even add your own activities! It also has a calendar where activity plans can be sent to the members of your Young Women and Young Men groups!

* Check out this article for support for this month's Sunday lesson theme.



By Elder
Richard G. Scott

Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

HEALING

THE TRAGIC SCARS OF ABUSE

*You may be left scarred by abuse,
but those scars need not be permanent.*

I speak from the depths of my heart to each one of you who have been scarred by the ugly sin of abuse.

Unless healed by the Lord, mental, physical, or sexual abuse can cause you serious, enduring consequences.

As a victim you have experienced some of them. They include fear, depression, guilt, self-hatred, destruction of self-esteem, and alienation from normal human relationships. When aggravated by continued abuse, powerful emotions of rebellion, anger, and hatred are generated. These feelings often are focused against oneself, others, life itself, and even Heavenly Father. Frustrated efforts to fight back can degenerate into drug abuse, immorality, abandonment of home, and, tragically in extreme cases, suicide. Unless corrected, these feelings lead to despondent lives, discordant marriages, and even the transition from victim to abuser. One awful result is a deepening lack of trust in others, which becomes a barrier to healing.

To be helped, you must understand some things about eternal law. Your abuse results from another's unrighteous attack on your freedom. Since all of Father in Heaven's children enjoy agency, there can be some who choose willfully to violate the commandments and harm you. Such acts temporarily restrict your freedom. In justice, and to

compensate, the Lord has provided a way for you to overcome the destructive results of others' acts against your will. That relief comes by applying eternal truths with priesthood assistance.

Know that the wicked choice of others cannot completely destroy your agency unless you permit it. Their acts may cause pain, anguish, even physical harm, but they cannot destroy your eternal possibilities in this brief but crucial life on earth. You must understand that *you are free to determine to overcome the harmful results of abuse*. Your attitude can control the change for good in your life. It allows you to have the help the Lord intends you to receive. No one can take away your ultimate opportunities when you understand and live eternal law. The laws of your Heavenly Father and the Atonement of the Lord have made it possible that you will not be robbed of the opportunities that come to the children of God.

You may feel threatened by one who is in a position of power or control over you. You may feel trapped and see no escape. Please believe that *your Heavenly Father does not want you to be held captive by unrighteous influence, by threats of reprisal, or by fear of repercussion to the family member who abuses you*. Trust that the Lord will lead you to a solution. Ask in faith, nothing doubting. (See James 1:6; Enos 1:15; Moroni 7:26; D&C 8:10; 18:18.)

I solemnly testify that when another's acts of violence, perversion, or incest hurt you terribly, against your will, you are not responsible and you must not feel guilty. You may be left scarred by abuse, but those scars need not be permanent. In the eternal plan, in the Lord's timetable, those injuries can be made right as you do your part. Here is what you can do now.

Seek Help

If you are now or have in the past been abused, seek help now. Perhaps you distrust others and feel that there is no reliable help anywhere. Begin with your Eternal Father and His Beloved Son, your Savior. Strive to comprehend Their commandments and follow them. They will lead you to others who will strengthen and encourage you. There is available to you a priesthood leader, normally a bishop or at times a member of the stake presidency. They can build a bridge to greater understanding and healing. Joseph Smith taught: "A man can do nothing for himself unless God direct him in the right way; and the priesthood is for that purpose" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 109).

Talk to your bishop or branch president in confidence. His calling allows him to act as an instrument of the Lord in your behalf. He can provide a doctrinal foundation to guide you to recovery. An understanding and application of eternal law will provide

the healing you require. He has the right to be inspired of the Lord in your behalf. He can use the priesthood to bless you.

Your bishop can help you identify trustworthy friends to support you. He will help you regain self-confidence and self-esteem to begin the process of renewal. When abuse is extreme, he can help you identify appropriate protection and professional treatment consistent with the teachings of the Savior.

Principles of Healing

These are some of the principles of healing you will come to understand more fully:

Recognize that you are a beloved child of your Heavenly Father. He loves you perfectly and can help you as no earthly parent, spouse, or devoted friend can. His Son gave His life so that by faith in Him and obedience to His teachings, you can be made whole. He is the consummate healer.

Gain trust in the love and compassion of your Elder Brother, Jesus Christ, by pondering the scriptures. As with the Nephites, He tells *you*, "I have compassion upon you; my bowels are filled with mercy. . . . I see that your faith is sufficient that I should heal you" (3 Nephi 17:7–8).

Healing best begins with your sincere prayer asking your Father in Heaven for help. That use of your agency allows divine intervention.



When you permit it, the love of the Savior will soften your heart and break the cycle of abuse that can transform a victim into an aggressor. Adversity, even when caused willfully by others' unrestrained appetite, can be a source of growth when viewed from the perspective of eternal principle (see D&C 122:7).

As a victim, do not waste effort in revenge or retribution against your aggressor. Focus on your responsibility to do what is in your power to correct. Leave the handling of the offender to civil and Church authorities. Whatever they do, eventually the guilty will face the Perfect Judge. Ultimately, the unrepentant abuser will be punished by a just God. Predators who victimize the innocent and justify their own corrupted life by enticing others to adopt their depraved ways will be held accountable. Of such the Master warned: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6).

Understand that healing can take considerable time. Recovery generally comes in steps. It is accelerated when gratitude is expressed to the Lord for every degree of improvement noted.

Forgiveness

During prolonged recovery from massive surgery, a patient anticipates complete healing in patience, trusting in others' care. He does not always understand the importance of the treatment prescribed, but his obedience speeds recovery. So it is with you struggling to heal the scars of abuse. Forgiveness, for example, can be hard to understand, even more difficult to give. *Begin by withholding judgment.* You don't know what abusers may have suffered as victims when innocent. The way to repentance must be kept open for them. Leave the handling of aggressors to others. As you experience an easing of your own pain, full forgiveness will come more easily.

You cannot erase what has been done, but you can forgive (see D&C 64:10). Forgiveness heals terrible, tragic wounds, for it allows the love of God to purge your heart and mind of the poison of hate. It cleanses your consciousness of the desire for revenge. It makes place for the purifying, healing, restoring love of the Lord.

The Master counseled, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them *who despitefully use you and persecute you*” (3 Nephi 12:44; emphasis added).

Bitterness and hatred are harmful. They produce much that is destructive. They postpone the relief and healing you yearn for. Through rationalization and self-pity, they can transform a victim into an abuser. Let God be the judge—you cannot do it as well as He can.

To be counseled to just forget abuse is not helpful. You need to understand the principles that will bring healing. Healing may begin with a thoughtful bishop or stake president or a wise professional counselor. If you had a broken leg, you wouldn’t decide to fix it yourself. Serious abuse can also benefit from professional help. There are many ways to begin healing, but remember that a full cure comes through the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Master and Redeemer. Have faith that with effort, His perfect, eternal,

infinite Atonement can heal your suffering.

As impossible as it may seem to you now, in time the healing you can receive from the Savior will allow you to truly forgive the abuser. When you can forgive the offense, you will be relieved of the pain and heartache that Satan wants in your life by encouraging you to hate the abuser. As a result, you will enjoy greater peace. While an important part of healing, if the thought of forgiveness causes you yet more pain, set that step aside until you have more experience with the Savior’s healing power in your own life.

Caution

I caution you not to participate in two improper therapeutic practices that may cause you more harm than good. They are: Excessive probing into every tiny detail of your past experiences, particularly when this involves penetrating dialogue in group discussion; and blaming the abuser for every difficulty in your life.

The repair of damage inflicted by abuse should be done privately, confidentially, with a trusted priesthood leader and, where needed, the qualified professional he recommends. There must be sufficient discussion of the general nature of abuse to allow you to be given appropriate counsel and to prevent the aggressor from committing more

violence. Then, with the help of the Lord, bury the past.

I humbly testify that what I have told you is true. It is based upon eternal principles I have seen the Lord use to give a fulness of life to those scarred by wicked abuse.

If you feel there is only a thin thread of hope, believe me, it is not a thread. It can be the unbreakable connecting link to the Lord, which puts a life preserver around you. He will heal you as you cease to fear and place your trust in Him by striving to live His teachings.

Ask now for the Lord to help you (see Mormon 9:27; Moroni 7:26, 33). Decide now to talk to your bishop. Don’t view all that you experience in life through lenses darkened by the scars of abuse. There is so much in life that is beautiful. Open the windows of your heart and let the love of the Savior in. And should ugly thoughts of past abuse come back, remember His love and His healing power. Your depression will be converted to peace and assurance. You will close an ugly chapter and open volumes of happiness. **NE**

From Elder Scott’s April 1992 and April 2008 general conference addresses; capitalization and punctuation standardized.



More on Healing

To learn more about the healing the Redeemer can provide, see Elder Richard G. Scott, “To Be Healed,” in the April 1994 general conference at [lds.org/go/healedNE3](https://www.lds.org/go/healedNE3).



Grace AND THE Atonement OF JESUS CHRIST

We can receive strength to do more than we realize.

By Joshua J. Perkey

Church Magazines

In the summer of 2012, Palakiko C. had just graduated from high school in Hawaii, USA, and was looking forward to attending Brigham Young University and serving a mission. Palakiko had done a lot to prepare for his mission already—he had accompanied the full-time missionaries all day three times, and he often went with them to visit and teach the gospel to families.

One evening Palakiko and the missionaries began teaching a

part-member family with five children, ages 8 to 14, who hadn't been baptized.

"We visited with them for six weeks," Palakiko says. "Each week, I saw their faith increase as we taught them doctrinal principles that would help them receive eternal life."

Soon all five children had accepted the invitation to be baptized and asked Palakiko if he would perform the baptisms. He enthusiastically agreed. Baptizing them would be

a privilege and an honor. But for Palakiko, there was a more difficult challenge: they also asked him to give a talk about the Holy Ghost at the baptismal service.

Palakiko was more than a little nervous. “How was I supposed to give a talk on a day that they would remember for the rest of their lives?” he asked. “What would I say?”

In spite of his anxiety, Palakiko knew he should do it, and he started preparing for his talk that very day.

“I did everything in my power to make sure everything would go well,” he says. He prayed, read scriptures for guidance and comfort, and rehearsed the baptismal prayer in his mind. On the day of the service, the baptisms went fine. And as he gave his talk and focused on striving to have the Spirit, he felt guided in what to say.

“At no other time in my life have I felt the Spirit more than during that talk,” Palakiko says. “I’m glad I was able to be an instrument in the Lord’s hands.”

Palakiko was able to do what he needed to do because he was strengthened by the grace, or enabling power, of the Atonement.

What Is the Enabling Power of Jesus Christ?

Because we all sin, we need to learn about and apply the principles of repentance, a core part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Without the

Savior’s sacrifice, none of us could conquer sin and return to the presence of our Father.

Helping us overcome sin is one aspect of the Savior’s grace. But there’s another. Grace is defined as “divine help or strength . . . given through the mercy and love of God.”¹ By the grace of Jesus Christ, we can be strengthened to “do and be good and to serve beyond our own individual desire and natural capacity.”² As Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has explained, “The word *grace* frequently is used in the scriptures to connote a strengthening or enabling power.”³

Palakiko was blessed by the grace of the Savior to accomplish something he felt inadequate to do on his own. That same power can help all of us in ways both small and great.

How Can We Access the Savior’s Grace?

When we need guidance or support or strength, God can help us. But it depends on us too. We have to seek His help and be worthy of it.

As Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “When we obey the commandments of the Lord and serve His children unselfishly, the natural consequence is power from God—power to do more than we can do by ourselves. Our insights, our talents, our abilities are expanded because we receive

strength and power from the Lord.”⁴


This pattern can be seen in the life of Jasmine B. of Washington, USA, who received help in coping with a disease. Before contracting the disease, she was a healthy young woman who excelled on her high school track team and loved getting up early for seminary.

Then she started feeling ill. She lost 15 pounds very quickly, and no matter how much sleep she got, it became harder and harder to get up for seminary. She couldn’t run as well as she used to and was hungry, thirsty, and weak all the time.

Over a month went by before she started to pray for help. “I held off so long,” she says, “because the thought of praying for help was an act of submission, admitting that something was indeed wrong with me. It scared me.”

But because she humbled herself to seek the Lord’s help, answers started to come. She went to see a doctor, who discovered she had developed type 1 diabetes, which meant her body could not produce insulin to process sugar. Diabetes has lifelong consequences and must be carefully monitored. Even as the doctors developed a plan to help her manage her condition, she began to worry that she would not be able to continue running track.

“I never ceased to pray as I struggled to understand my new life and to control my disease,” she says.



“I prayed for strength and understanding and that I would be able to accept this trial. I would not have made it through those hard days and weeks without prayer.”

Jasmine made incredible strides. Within two weeks of being diagnosed, she was back practicing on the track, and later that year she did well in state competitions. “I believe Heavenly Father has blessed me with a strong, healthy body,” she says. “Having diabetes was not the end of the world. With His help, I knew I could get through this.”

By the grace of God and through her dependence on Him, Jasmine is able to cope with her disease and have wonderful successes in her life.

Grace Is Available to Everyone

This same strengthening power, the grace of Christ, is available to all of us. Whenever you feel alone or

overwhelmed or discouraged, remember that the Lord Jesus Christ makes His grace available to you.

As Elder Craig A. Cardon of the Seventy has explained, “If we exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the enabling power of His Atonement *strengthens* us in our moment of need [see Jacob 4:7], and His redeeming power *sanctifies* us as we ‘[put] off the natural man’ [Mosiah 3:19]. This brings hope to all, especially to those who feel that recurring human weakness is beyond the Savior’s willingness to help and to save.”⁵ **NE**

NOTES

1. Guide to the Scriptures, “Grace,” scriptures.lds.org.
2. David A. Bednar, “The Atonement and the Journey of Mortality,” *Ensign*, April 2012, 43.
3. David A. Bednar, “In the Strength of the Lord,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 76.
4. Richard G. Scott, “For Peace at Home,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 30.
5. Craig A. Cardon, “The Savior Wants to Forgive,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 15.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

THINGS YOU MIGHT DO:

- Ponder on the times God has granted you grace and record these experiences in your journal.
- Set goals to stretch your abilities and take time to recognize the Savior’s grace as you strive to reach your goals.
- Share your testimony and experiences with others at home, at school, at church, on social media, or at [lds.org/go/graceNE3](https://www.lds.org/go/graceNE3).



Talking to One Another Like Sisters

Usually, we sit in two or three rows for our Young Women lesson, and our teacher stands in the front. But one Sunday our teacher had us move our chairs around a circular table. For some reason sitting in a circle made it feel like we could talk to one another instead of only speaking to the teacher. We all felt like we were actually sisters, not just students. In fact, before the lesson even began, one young woman said, “I feel like we’re family right now.”

That Sunday, the lesson was on the Atonement. Our teacher started by passing out copies of a general conference talk. She asked us to circle words that describe the Savior. We called out the words we were circling so others could circle them. After that, our teacher spoke briefly about the Atonement and then turned to me and asked if I had anything to say. I don’t remember what I said, but afterward all the young women started talking

to one another. We had a conversation! We were talking about our Savior and His sacrifice as a group of friends. After a while, the conversation slowed down and we

just sat in silence, enjoying the Spirit.

By Mary Ann Call

Participating in class strengthened my testimony of Jesus Christ and increased my love.

This lesson was remarkable. Because I participated, I felt the Spirit strongly and the lesson became a part of me. I had a testimony of the Atonement before, but this lesson reminded me that the Savior is real and that the Atonement and the gospel are about love. I now have a stronger love for my peers—Church members and those who are not members—and I want to share the gospel with everyone so they can know the blessings of the Atonement. *Doing* something about a lesson—whether it’s commenting in class or writing in your journal—changes you. **NE**

Mary Ann Call lives in Missouri, USA.

Speak Up
What can you do to help create good conversations in your Sunday lessons?

REACHING FOR THE LIGHT

*A struggling sunflower seed taught me
about repentance and testimony.*



By Dawn M. Mangum

One spring I received three sunflower seeds. The instructions for their planting were very clear: place the seeds in soil with the pointed top down, cover completely with soil, and then water regularly. I carefully followed the instructions and placed my new sunflower pot on the windowsill. After a few days I noticed two sprouts; I figured the third sprout would soon follow.

A week later it was time to replant the growing stems in my small porch garden. The third seed had never sprouted; I thought it must have been defective. As I began to dig around the sunflower pot, I discovered that my careful planting had not been so careful. The third seed was not defective—I had just planted it upside down. The seed had grown—it just hadn't grown upward. It had

pushed itself down through the dirt to the bottom of the pot. As a result, the sunflower's stem had become badly twisted. I wondered if I should even replant the flower outside. Would it ever grow well with such a bad start?

My sunflower had tried to grow properly—had tried to reach the light of the sun—but my carelessness prevented it from doing so. I realized this sunflower bore a remarkable resemblance to my own life.

As a young woman, I had planted myself upside down. My halfhearted efforts at attending church, paying tithing, and having regular prayer and scripture study had slowed my spiritual growth almost to a halt. In high school it became clear that I would need to choose between my current direction and the Lord's direction. I then decided



IT IS NEVER TOO LATE

"If you have made covenants, keep them. If you haven't made them, make them. If you have made them and broken them, repent and repair them. It is *never* too late so long as the Master of the vineyard says there is time. Please listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit telling you right now, this very moment, that you should accept the atoning gift of the Lord Jesus Christ and enjoy the fellowship of His labor. Don't delay."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Laborers in the Vineyard," *Ensign*, May 2012, 33.



to replant myself, try my best, and rely on the Lord's care.

With all my strength I began pushing up toward the Son, working my way past feelings of doubt, anger, insecurity, and selfishness. It wasn't long before I realized how much Heavenly Father loves me, how much He has blessed me, and how much He wants me to reach my full potential as His daughter. I was given nourishment from Young Women leaders, bishops, seminary teachers, and friends. My righteous desire, however, was not without trials and tears. In His loving mercy, Heavenly Father gave me a push here and there when I felt that I could push no more. He helped me grow from my setbacks and successes. No sunflower, after having sensed the light of the sun, would bury itself back in the ground. I too could



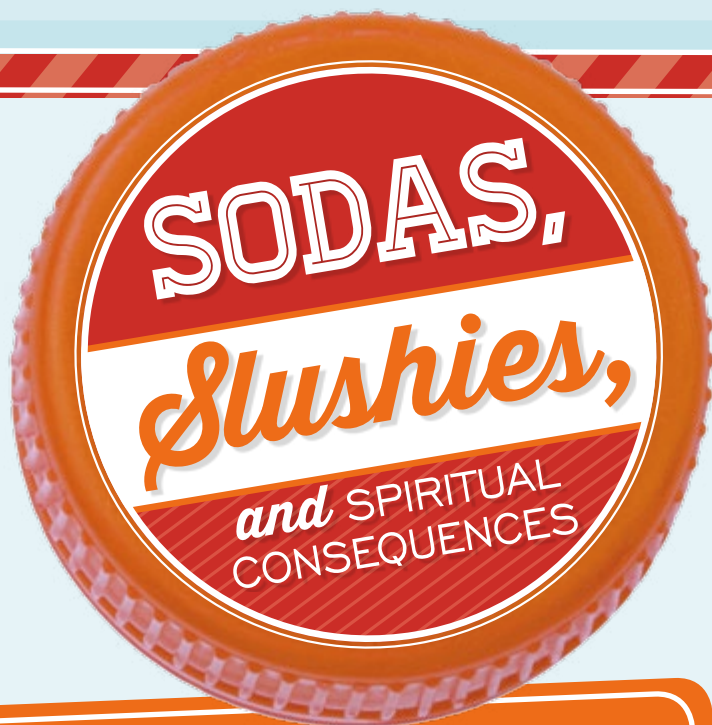
sense the light of the Son, and I would no longer hide myself from His goodness and joy. I would "follow the Son, with full purpose of heart" (2 Nephi 31:13).

Back in my garden, I decided to replant my sunflower and hope for the best. After a few weeks, my sunflower made an amazing recovery. It was beginning to grow just as tall and straight as the others. A poor beginning had just slightly stalled the sunflower's eventual growth and potential, and I knew that it would continue to thrive and reach toward the sun, a beautiful reminder for me to do the same. **NE**

Dawn M. Mangum lives in Oregon, USA.



Editor's note: Learn more about how you can reach toward the Son at lds.org/go/MarchNE3.



THIS OBJECT LESSON WILL FREEZE
YOUR FAMILY IN THEIR TRACKS.

It's a magic trick. It's an object lesson. It's a family home evening treat! The five-second slushie might not yet be considered the Eighth Wonder of the World, but it's well on its way.

With a little preparation, you can share an inspiring object lesson at your next family home evening that's both delicious and fun. All you need are some 20-ounce plastic bottles of soda (any flavor), a freezer, and a few hours to let chemistry run its course.

The five-second slushie offers a way to talk about spiritual deception. It shows how our choices have consequences, even if those consequences may not seem visible at first.

Shaking Things Up

Remember how Mom and Dad have always told you not to shake soda bottles before you opened them? It's time to ask for an exception to that advice. Leave the lids on and shake those bottles to your heart's content. Then place them in a freezer.

Freezing times will vary, but you're aiming for around

three hours before you teach the lesson. It's a good idea to buy a few extra soda bottles so you can experiment with several freezing times in the days before family home evening. (Don't leave them in too long, though—the plastic containers could pop open if the soda freezes solid and expands. You may want to place them inside a plastic bag just to be safe.)

After about three hours in the freezer, the soda temperature will drop below freezing. But the soda will remain liquid because shaking the carbonation prolongs the freezing process.

More Than Meets the Eye

So, what is this soda sensation all about? This activity is a lesson about deception. Nobody works harder at deception than the adversary, and one of the ways he deceives us is to convince us that our actions have no consequences. The prophet Nephi taught: "And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them: I am no devil, for there is none—and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance" (2 Nephi 28:22).

To begin your lesson, you might consider reading the above verse from 2 Nephi to talk about deception. Or you can find another scripture you prefer. The point is to teach that we need to guard against deception.

Now it's time to bring out a soda from the freezer. Handle it carefully without jarring or shaking it, which could result in premature freezing. Ask your family if they notice anything unusual about this soda, which should appear perfectly normal if you found and used the right freeze time.

Very slowly, remove the lid. Ask them again if it still looks like a regular soda. (It should.)

Here's the jaw-dropper. Slowly pour the soda into a chilled cup. As your soda leaves the bottle, the below-freezing beverage finally has a chance to freeze. It turns into an instant slushie as soon as it hits the chilled cup—completely unlike the liquid it had been only seconds earlier. It's something you have to see to believe.

Looking Beyond the Exterior

Tell your family that the soda had been sitting in the freezer for several hours. You can point out that while at first it didn't appear as if the soda had changed in any way, its time in the freezer had a definite consequence.

In a similar way, consequences from not keeping the commandments aren't always immediately visible. For example, if somebody you know starts secretly breaking the Word of Wisdom, you might not notice a visible difference in them right away. But we shouldn't be deceived. Spiritual consequences are real whenever we break—or keep—the commandments.

Perhaps here you could ask your family to list some of the unseen dangers of breaking the commandments—and even some positive consequences of keeping them.

After the discussion, you might end with the following quote from President Thomas S. Monson: “My young friends, be strong. The philosophies of men surround us. The face of sin today often wears the mask of tolerance. Do not be deceived; behind that facade is heartache, unhappiness, and pain. You know what is right and what is wrong, and no disguise, however appealing, can change that” (“Examples of Righteousness,” *Ensign*, May 2008, 65).

In this life, we're free to make choices but we're not free to choose the consequences that follow (see *For the Strength of Youth* [2011], 2).

Science Never Tasted So Good

Lucky for you and your family, the consequence of placing a soda in the freezer for several hours is a delicious one! The five-second slushie works with any flavor of soda. So pick a favorite to start with, and once the lesson is over, you'll have a

built-in treat to share with your family.

That's a magical consequence we can all enjoy. **NE**

WHAT YOU NEED:

- 20-ounce plastic bottles of soda

WHAT TO DO:

- Shake bottle to your heart's content.
- Place in freezer.
- Wait about 3 hours (test freeze times beforehand).
- Remove from freezer; handle carefully.
- Slowly remove lid.
- Carefully pour soda into a chilled cup.

Watch it turn into an instant slushie!



VIRTUAL Pen Pals

My family's friend Aleksander told me about his niece Lule. She is about my age, and he wanted me to get to know her. I didn't think much of it, but a few weeks later, she added me as a friend on Facebook.*

Hi, Stephanie! I'm Lule, Aleksander's niece. He told me that you and I are about the same age.

Hey, Lule. I remember hearing about you. Aleksander said you live in Albania. That's so cool!

That's funny—to me, living in America sounds cool! Hahaha. What are you doing this weekend?

I have a basketball game on Saturday morning, then I'm going to a Latter-day Saint temple. On Sunday I'm going to church. What are you doing?

Not much. I saw a picture of the Salt Lake Temple on the Internet. It is beautiful! My uncle told me that you are a Mormon, just like he is. I've been to church with him a few times. I really liked it! I would love to go every week, but I usually have things to do with my family on Sundays.



If you want, I can take notes at church each week and send them to you. That way you can learn more about what we believe in.

Oh, thank you! I would love to hear what you talk about there.

Hey, Lule! I hope you had a good week. Church was great yesterday. Here are some notes I took. We talked a lot about service and prayer.

- When we serve other people, we are serving God (read Mosiah 2:17 at scriptures.lds.org/bofm).
- Check out “Dayton’s Legs” on YouTube. It is about a boy who helped his friend with cerebral palsy compete in a triathlon.
- God is there for you and will listen to you when you pray. I found an article called “Improving Your Personal Prayers” that talks about how we pray: lds.org/ensign/2013/06.

Stephanie, thanks so much! That video was so inspiring! I pray a lot, and I want to do the right thing . . . but how can I know if what I’m doing is right?

Stephanie Acerson lives in Utah, USA.

THE STORY CONTINUES . . .

Stephanie is still teaching Lule about the gospel by sending her notes and answering her questions. Stephanie says that when she takes notes on Sundays, “the lessons stay with me more.” And by answering Lule’s questions, Stephanie gets to have meaningful discussions about the gospel with her parents. This experience has also taught Stephanie about missionary work. “I can still be a missionary even though I’m young,” she says.

**Names have been changed.*

Please counsel with your parents or guardians before communicating with strangers on Facebook.

How many times
can I go out with
someone before it
becomes "steady
dating"?

Can I listen to a song
or watch a movie with
a bad part if it's played
in school and the
teacher says, "It's not
really that bad"?

Is it OK to
wear immodest
clothes as
part of a sports
team?

IS IT OK TO...? CAN I...?

*What can you do if you don't know how to
apply the standards in For the Strength of
Youth to a certain situation?*

By Heidi McConkie

Brooke P. of California, USA, could feel her resolve wavering—it would be so much easier to blend in with her teammates. The other girls were pressuring her to dress like them for practices and games.

Brooke had already decided that she wanted to be modest, but she didn't know what that meant for playing her sport. Would it be OK to dress like her teammates just during sporting events?

"I decided to do some research," Brooke says. "I looked through *For the Strength of Youth*, the scriptures, Church talks—everything I could get my hands on. Nothing seemed to describe my exact situation and give me specific enough advice. But I knew that Heavenly Father knew me and that He knew what would be modest."

So Brooke took action again. "I decided to get down on my knees and pray," she says. As she prayed, she expressed her desire to obey the commandments and then asked whether it would be OK for her to dress like her teammates for their practices and games.



YOUR STORY

Perhaps you've never found yourself in Brooke's specific dilemma, but you've probably faced a similar predicament. You're doing your best to live by a gospel standard—being modest, using uplifting language, watching wholesome entertainment, obeying the Word of Wisdom, . . .

Then BAM! Someone cranks up the heat, and suddenly “opposition in all things” (2 Nephi 2:11) is more than just an oft-quoted phrase from the scriptures. Your friends—or maybe even your own family members—pressure you to dress or speak or act differently from what you feel is right. You want to make good gospel choices, but maybe you're starting to feel confused: *What does living by the standards mean in your life, anyway?* Just like Brooke, you can discover your own answer to this question through study, prayer, and personal revelation.

YOUR QUESTIONS

Your everyday life is full of questions: *What will I wear to school? What will I eat for lunch? Whom will I hang out with?* Some questions have pretty simple answers. *Should I chew this piece of gum I found on the sidewalk?* No. You probably don't have to think twice about that one. Some of your questions, particularly ones about standards, can be a lot trickier to answer, though: *What music is appropriate to listen to? How do I keep the Sabbath day holy?* Fortunately, you don't have to come up with all of the answers on your own. Our living prophets have outlined gospel standards, and you can study their teachings in *For the Strength of Youth*.

After you've studied the standards, you likely won't always know exactly how to apply them in every situation, and that's

normal. You're in good company if you have some unanswered questions about what a specific standard means for your situation.

Just think about the Book of Mormon story where the Lord commanded Nephi to build a ship. Nephi didn't know immediately how to obey the Lord's commandment, but he chose to try anyway. And he didn't hesitate to seek help; he asked, “Whither shall I go that I may find ore to molten, that I may make tools to construct the ship?” (1 Nephi 17:9). He started by figuring out what the first step would be—make tools—and then asking the Lord to help him know how to do that. The Lord answered Nephi's questions, and step-by-step Nephi was able to complete the ship. And when you're trying to obey the commandments, He can answer your questions too.

YOUR ANSWERS

When you have questions about how to live by a particular standard or obey a certain commandment, first go to the scriptures, *For the Strength of Youth*, *True to the Faith*, the prophets' counsel, and prayer. You can look up the relevant scriptures listed in the booklets or general conference talks—and even branch out to include additional scriptures in your search. As you seek knowledge

You can discover your answer to any question through study, prayer, and personal revelation.



through gospel study, the Holy Ghost will “enlighten [your] understanding” (Alma 32:28).

You can also turn to family members, friends, and Church leaders for counsel. They may be able to guide you to helpful resources, provide support and encouragement, and even share personal experiences about similar issues and how they overcame their challenges.

Sometimes even after praying, rereading *For the Strength of Youth*, studying the scriptures, and seeking advice, you may still feel like you’re wandering through a fog of uncertainty regarding particular standards. Although you’ve received great counsel, applying it to your circumstances can sometimes feel like trying to find a street by using a globe instead of a roadmap. At other times you may need to make a quick decision without the luxury of thoughtful study over a long period of time.

In either case, remember that prayer is a powerful resource. It’s not a last resort either; prayer is a great place to begin your quest for knowledge and a helpful tool all along the way. Heavenly Father knows you personally—your gifts, your challenges, your strengths, and your struggles. So if you don’t know how best to follow the Church’s standards in a particular situation, don’t panic. He knows! It’s easy to fall into the trap of trying to fit the gospel into your life; but instead, He can show you how to fit your life into the gospel. When you pray in faith, He will teach you, providing answers just for you “in the very moment” (D&C 100:6) that you need them. That opportunity for personal revelation is one of the great blessings we have because we were baptized and received the gift of the Holy Ghost.

YOUR EXAMPLE

As you live by God’s standards, you can be a light to others around you. You can encourage them to keep the commandments. And when they’re confused about *how* to obey, you can teach them this pattern for finding answers to their personal questions.

As you strive to set a good example, don’t be too surprised if sometimes others—even those who are also trying to live the gospel—don’t always make the same choices you do. If you feel frustrated, just remember that someone, perhaps Mom or Dad, once had to teach you the answers to even the most basic questions—like *Should I chew this piece of gum I found on the sidewalk?* So try to be patient with yourself and others as we all work to figure out the answers to trickier questions, the kind that don’t always come with a yes-or-no answer. *How do I live by this standard in my life?* Keep in mind that we’re all imperfect people learning day by day to live a perfect gospel and working toward becoming perfected ourselves. It’s an ongoing process. And you can take an active role in that process!

Now let’s return to Brooke. After her prayer, she felt impressed not to alter her clothing choices. Although her decision was unpopular, she found confidence and peace knowing that her choice was pleasing to Heavenly Father.

As you actively seek out answers to your personal questions and encourage others to do the same, always remember that regardless of others’ choices, you can choose to keep Heavenly Father’s commandments. **NE**

Heidi McConkie lives in Delaware, USA.





YOU CAN BE A GIANT HELP

Each time you set a good example, help a family member, or show kindness, you make a big difference in building your home.

(See For the Strength of Youth [2011], 14.)

SHARING THE GOSPEL

Naturally

YOU CAN BE A MISSIONARY IN SMALL WAYS EACH DAY.

In the October 2013 general conference, President Thomas S. Monson reminded us how important it is to help others come unto Christ.¹ For many of us, sharing the gospel can feel intimidating, though. After all, have *you* ever felt nervous about talking to others about the gospel or the Church?

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that there is a way to overcome that fear. He said, “Fear will be

replaced with faith and confidence when members and the full-time missionaries kneel in prayer and ask the Lord to bless them with missionary opportunities. Then, we must demonstrate our faith and watch for opportunities to introduce the gospel of Jesus Christ to our Heavenly Father’s children, and surely those opportunities will come. These opportunities will never require a forced or a contrived response. They will flow as a natural result of our love for our brothers and sisters. Just be positive,

and those whom you speak with will feel your love.”²

As you strive to follow that counsel, check out these ideas about how you can share the gospel in your everyday life.

NOTES

1. For example, “Now is the time for members and missionaries to come together, to work together, to labor in the Lord’s vineyard to bring souls unto Him” (Thomas S. Monson, “Welcome to Conference,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 4).
2. M. Russell Ballard, “Put Your Trust in the Lord,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 44.





10 Scriptures to Cheer Up Your Friends

Know people who are having a bad day? Sharing a scripture with them might be just the thing to brighten their day. And if they see that you believe in the scriptures, they may ask you more about your beliefs or the Church. Here are 10 scriptures that inspire with hope and provide comfort to the soul.

- Joshua 1:9
- 2 Nephi 31:20
- Proverbs 3:5–6
- Mosiah 4:9
- Isaiah 12:2
- Alma 36:3
- Matthew 11:28–30
- Helaman 5:12
- John 16:33
- D&C 136:29



10 Conversation Starters

Need some suggestions for how to bring up the gospel in everyday conversations? Here are 10 simple ideas.

- Ask your friend what he thinks about God, and really listen. Then share your thoughts.
- Talk about what you did at Mutual this week. If your friend asks what “Mutual” is, then it’s an easy way to say what Church you belong to.
- Ask around for jobs or ideas to earn money and let others know you’re saving to pay for a mission.
- Share a scripture you read in the Book of Mormon that touched you.
- Tell about a skill you learned at a ward activity or family home evening—and talk about what a “ward” or “FHE” is.
- When you’re outside, share your thoughts about all the beautiful things Heavenly Father made for us.
- Ask your friends where their names came from. If they’re family names, you can bring up family history and share how it connects us to our past and to our future through temples.
- Talk about seminary—about getting up early to go or about something you learned there.
- When talking about what you did over the weekend, tell about an experience at church.
- When anyone talks about media, share what you like and why you have your standards.

Pray for Missionary Opportunities

As you fulfill the Lord’s call to invite others to come unto Christ, pray every day for opportunities to share the gospel. You can find more ideas on how to do this at [lds.org/go/shareNE3](https://www.lds.org/go/shareNE3). Remember that your success doesn’t depend on people’s accepting your invitation; the Lord will be pleased that you simply *extend* an invitation.

10 Videos to Share

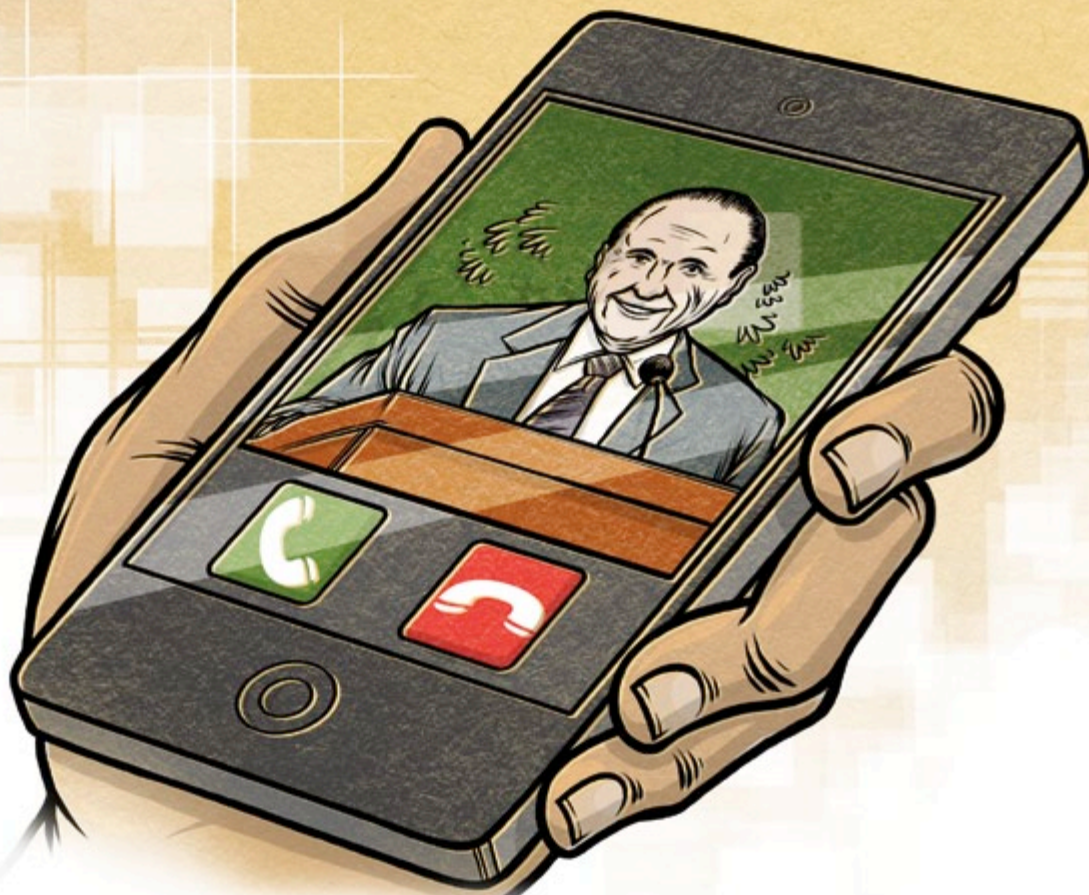
Sharing videos created by the Church is a great way to lift another’s spirits or share gospel truths in a friendly way. Here are 10 videos you might want to consider. If your friend:

- Wants to know who the Savior is and how He lived, share “Christlike Attributes” at [lds.org/go/attributesNE3](https://www.lds.org/go/attributesNE3).
- Suffers from the pain of losing a friend or loved one, share “He Will Give You Help” at [lds.org/go/helpNE3](https://www.lds.org/go/helpNE3).
- Wonders if you’re a Christian, share “For God so Loved the World” at [lds.org/go/loveNE3](https://www.lds.org/go/loveNE3) (or any video at [biblevideos.lds.org](https://www.biblevideos.lds.org)).
- Has a health problem and wants to know how to stay happy, share “God Will Lift Us Up” at [lds.org/go/liftNE3](https://www.lds.org/go/liftNE3).
- Would like to know what the Book of Mormon is, share “Book of Mormon: An Apostle’s Introduction” at [lds.org/go/bookNE3](https://www.lds.org/go/bookNE3).
- Wants a better life, share the story of a homeless young man who changed his life after learning about Jesus Christ in “Hi, I’m Paris. I’m a Mormon” at [lds.org/go/ParisNE3](https://www.lds.org/go/ParisNE3).
- Wonders why the law of chastity is important, share “I Choose to Be Pure” at [lds.org/go/pureNE3](https://www.lds.org/go/pureNE3).
- Doesn’t understand exactly what you mean when you talk about “serving in your quorum” or “priesthood service” or a “class presidency,” share an example of looking out for each other in “Dayton’s Legs” at [lds.org/go/DaytonNE3](https://www.lds.org/go/DaytonNE3).
- Wants to know who we really are, why we’re here on earth, and where we’re going after this life, share “Our True Identity” at [lds.org/go/trueNE3](https://www.lds.org/go/trueNE3).
- Has lost hope, share “The Power of Hope” at [lds.org/go/hopeNE3](https://www.lds.org/go/hopeNE3).



Need More Ideas?

Go to [lds.org/go/storiesNE3](https://www.lds.org/go/storiesNE3) for 30 more ways to share the gospel and for stories from 15 youth who did just that.



Don't Miss **THE PHONE CALL**

*In each general conference,
there is bound to be a
message just for you.*

Don't miss it!

By David Dickson
Church Magazines

Imagine that you're expecting an incredibly important phone call. Pretend, for example, that you've applied to a dozen colleges and your top choice wanted to call you on Thursday night to let you know whether you were accepted. But there's a slight catch: they have a long list of people to call and will have to automatically reject you if you aren't available to talk through the details.

If college is too far down the road

to imagine, picture instead something else that you'd be waiting for anxiously. Maybe somebody is calling to let you know whether you've been accepted on a sports team, dance class, or the school musical—whatever would be truly important to you.

Now, here's the question: would you stay close to your phone for that expected call?

Chances are, if it were important enough to you, you wouldn't want to be out of earshot of that phone! You wouldn't want to miss the call.

Similarly, every six months there's an extremely important message waiting for you personally. But again there's a small catch: you have to first show up to receive the message.

An Outpouring of Revelation

General conference is a time to be uplifted, inspired, and strengthened spiritually. It's also an invaluable opportunity to find answers to personal questions.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, "A general conference of this Church is a remarkable occasion indeed—it is an institutional declaration that the heavens are open, that divine guidance is as real today as it was for the ancient house of Israel, that God our Heavenly Father loves us and speaks His will through a living prophet."¹

If you have any questions you've been praying about, general conference can be a time to find answers to those questions. Even if you don't have specific questions in your heart, you never know which message or messages from general conference will be exactly what you need to hear. Often, the most important inspiration we receive helps us know how to serve others better.

Speaking in general conference *about* general conference, President Thomas S. Monson has said: "We meet each six months to strengthen one another, to extend encouragement, to provide comfort, to build faith. We are here to learn. Some

of you may be seeking answers to questions and challenges you are experiencing in your life. Some are struggling with disappointments or losses. Each can be enlightened and uplifted and comforted as the Spirit of the Lord is felt."²

The messages given in general conference are like scripture to us in our day. As the Lord said, "Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same" (D&C 1:38).

If you prepare yourself spiritually for conference and especially if you pay close attention to the messages, you can and will find instruction and inspiration specific to you—no matter your circumstances.

Preparing to Be Inspired

It always helps to spend time before conference preparing to receive revelation. The Lord has counseled us to seek revelation: "If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal" (D&C 42:61).

While it's possible to receive personal revelation anywhere, anytime, we should never let that fact keep us from studying general conference closely. Only at general conference can we hear from prophets, apostles, and other leaders of the Church in such abundance.

In the October 2013 general conference, Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"To the young members of the Church, I promise that if you will listen, you will feel the Spirit well up within you. The Lord will tell you what He wants you to do with your life."³

Every Session Counts

Back to that important phone call. If you knew such a call were coming, you most likely wouldn't stray from your phone unless it were absolutely necessary. With general conference, then, does it make sense to skip a session or two because you'd rather do other things for part of the week-end? What if you decided to go hiking Saturday morning—missing "only" that first session—but it happened to be the exact session you most needed to hear?

Whether you live in a part of the world where you can watch a live general conference broadcast or you need to wait some time before it reaches your area, it's always worth the time and effort to pay close attention to each talk as soon as it is available to you.

Consider deciding today that you will show up ready to hear and willing to listen to each talk, paying close attention for the inspiration you most need to hear.

After all, you never know when the phone is going to ring. **NE**

NOTES

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, "The Peaceable Things of the Kingdom," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 82.
2. Thomas S. Monson, "As We Gather Once Again," *Ensign*, May 2012, 4.
3. Robert D. Hales, "General Conference: Strengthening Faith and Testimony," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 6.

SIMPLE ANSWERS, GREAT REWARDS

Have you ever sat in Sunday School and didn't answer a question because it seemed so obvious? "Pray, read your scriptures, attend the temple." We hear those answers so often, but have you ever thought about *why* they are usually the best answers?

In order to become more like Christ, we constantly repeat many simple and important spiritual steps. As we repeat these small and simple things, we can see that "he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day" (D&C 50:24).

Here are some reasons why these steps help us strengthen our testimony and lead us to deeper conversion.

KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS

We can learn of the commandments through the words of our

prophets and apostles and the scriptures. President Thomas S. Monson has said, "If we heed His words and live the commandments, we will survive this time of . . . wickedness—a time which can be compared with the waves and winds and floods that can destroy. He is ever mindful of us. He loves us and will bless us as we do what is right."¹

PRAY

The ability to communicate with our Heavenly Father is one of the greatest blessings, privileges, and opportunities we have, and it's essential for our spiritual development. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said, "We can speak to Him of our life experiences, trials, and blessings. We can listen for and receive celestial guidance from the Holy Spirit. We can offer our petitions to heaven and receive an assurance that

our prayers have been heard and that He will answer them as a loving and wise Father."²

As we pray and learn to communicate with our Heavenly Father, we can come to know that He is mindful of us and that He loves us. Our faith in Him and His plan will grow. Then no matter what we face, we can trust—because of our experiences in communicating with Heavenly Father—that He will give us the strength, comfort, and help we need.

READ THE SCRIPTURES

"The scriptures hold the keys to spiritual protection,"³ taught President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Daily, meaningful scripture study helps us become more receptive to the Holy Ghost and have a clearer understanding of the gospel. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, "Because scriptures



ARDS

Why does it seem that the answers to so many questions seem to be things like “pray” and “read your scriptures”?

By Hikari Loftus

are generated from inspired communication through the Holy Ghost, they are pure truth. . . . Scriptures are like packets of light that illuminate our minds and give place to guidance and inspiration from on high.”⁴

As we faithfully study the scriptures individually and with our families, we will find answers to our questions. We’ll also learn more about Jesus Christ and how we can become like Him.

GO TO THE TEMPLE

Prophets and apostles have always encouraged temple attendance. As you attend the temple you will be enabled to receive the highest blessings available, which will allow you to fully take upon yourself the name of Jesus Christ. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “I bear solemn witness that the fire of the covenant will burn in the heart of every faithful member of

this Church who shall worship and honorably hold a name and standing in the Lord’s holy house.”⁵ Within the temple you will feel peace and receive spiritual guidance.

If you live too far from a temple to attend often or are not currently worthy to enter the temple, prepare now to one day participate in sacred ordinances in the temple.

LISTEN TO THE SPIRIT

Learning to hear and understand the Holy Ghost takes practice. Elder Scott has said, “I am convinced that there is no simple formula or technique that would immediately allow you to master the ability to be guided by the voice of the Spirit. Our Father expects you to learn how to obtain that divine help by exercising faith in Him and His Holy Son, Jesus Christ. Were you to receive inspired guidance just for the asking, you would become weak and ever more dependent



BY SMALL AND SIMPLE THINGS

“We should find great comfort in the fact that ordinary people who faithfully, diligently, and consistently do simple things that are right before God will bring forth extraordinary results.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “‘By Small and Simple Things Are Great Things Brought to Pass’ (Alma 37:6–7),” (Brigham Young University Women’s Conference address, April 29, 2011), 2, ce.byu.edu/cw/womensconference/pdf/archive/2011/Elder_David_A._Bednar.pdf.

on Them. They know that essential personal growth will come as you struggle to learn how to be led by the Spirit.”⁶ With time, your confidence will grow as you recognize and follow the promptings of the Spirit. You will know that the Lord is mindful of you and is guiding you. **NE**

Hikari Loftus lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Closing Remarks,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 109.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Prayer and the Blue Horizon,” *Ensign*, June 2009, 6.
3. Boyd K. Packer, “The Key to Spiritual Protection,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 26.
4. Richard G. Scott, “The Power of Scripture,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 6.
5. David A. Bednar, “Honorably Hold a Name and Standing,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 100.
6. Richard G. Scott, “To Acquire Spiritual Guidance,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 6–7.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY CURVABEZIER/ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK



LOST IN THE CANYON

WITH THE SUN SETTING
BEHIND THE MOUNTAINS, IT WAS
NOT A GOOD TIME TO BE LOST.

By Zackary Bradshaw



On the first morning of our vacation, my family and I went snowboarding. After several runs and then lunch, my father, my older brother, and I decided to try a new trail. We snowboarded for quite some time through unfamiliar territory, encountering strange obstacles that you wouldn't normally find on a regular ski trail. We weaved through trees and pushed through the endless snow until we discovered we'd taken a wrong turn at the top of the mountain. Now near the bottom of the canyon, we realized we were lost.

We were standing in three feet of snow, and aside from the few pine trees that dotted the canyon, everything was white. We had no idea where to go. It was three o'clock in the afternoon; in a few hours, the sun would set and temperatures would drop dramatically. Plus, the ski patrol went home at four o'clock. If we didn't get help soon, we'd have to spend the night in the freezing cold, stranded in a snowy canyon without food, water, or clothes that would keep us warm enough through the night. I didn't even want to think about what might happen to us.

We knew that contacting Mom was the only way we'd get out of the canyon that night. So we got out our phone, but we didn't have any reception and the battery was almost dead. We adjusted the settings on the phone so an alarm would go off if we got to

a place with service, and then we wandered anxiously as the sun sank lower behind the mountain.

As it got darker and colder, our chances for survival seemed to decrease. I began to worry. "What if we don't make it out tonight?" I thought. Feeling overwhelmed and scared, the three of us offered a prayer to Heavenly Father asking for safety and for the comfort of the Holy Ghost. We asked Heavenly Father to help us find our way out of the canyon, to meet our physical needs, and to allow us to contact help.

As we opened our eyes, we saw a small trail, and the Holy Ghost prompted us to follow it south. Hiking through three feet of snow in winter gear is not an easy task, but we felt God's merciful hand pushing us forward.

We reached the top of a small hill, and the phone beeped. We didn't dare move from where we stood. Carefully, I pulled out the phone and sent Mom a message explaining our dire situation and asking her to contact the ski patrol.

By this point, the sun had almost disappeared behind the mountain. Temperatures averaged -25° Fahrenheit (-32° C) and were dropping fast. We were wet, cold, and tired, and we still had no idea where to go. "We could die out here," I thought.

Then we heard voices—people were yelling for us! We yelled back and waved our arms around to try to get their attention. The ski patrol followed the sound of our voices until they saw us. They led us safely out of the canyon, and we were reunited with Mom, who waited just outside the mouth of the canyon. We had been saved.

As soon as I sat down, my tired body collapsed, the setting sun disappeared behind distant mountains, and my cell phone's battery died. Heavenly Father had given us just enough energy and time to safely make it out of the canyon. He had heard our prayers and granted them to the fullest.

I am so grateful for a loving Heavenly Father who hears our prayers and watches over us. **NE**

Zackary Bradshaw is serving a mission in the Peru Piura Mission.



FAITH TO RELY UPON HIM

"The Lord wants us to develop the faith that will help us rely upon Him in solving our

problems and trust Him. Then we can feel His love more constantly, more powerfully, more clearly, and more personally."

Elder Terence M. Vinson, "Drawing Closer to God," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 105.



PURE *Hearts* and CLEAN *Bodies*

The Lord has commanded, “Prepare yourselves, . . . yea, purify your hearts . . . that I may make you clean” (D&C 88:74).

“You young people are being raised in enemy territory,” said President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.¹ Truly, the moral standards of faithful Latter-day Saints are under attack! Are you ready to fight against any unclean or impure thought that Satan, the Internet, and the world may put in your head or heart?

Prepare Yourselfes

On most mornings before 5:00 a.m., groups of worthy youth line up in the dark by the Salt Lake Temple doors, ready to enter the baptistry.

They step from the dark of the world into the light of the temple. After dressing in white, they quietly proceed to the magnificent baptismal font, where they are baptized for the dead. As they emerge from the pure, refreshing waters of the font, these youth are fortified, knowing they have participated in an eternal work for others.

Back out into the dark they go, hurrying to school—but they are not the same, because they leave armed with power and glory (see D&C 109:22–23). Carrying the light and purity of the temple in their hearts, they are prepared to push

back the darkness of this “enemy territory” and stay morally clean. This scene is not unique to the Salt Lake Temple—it happens frequently as youth throughout the world leave the darkness of enemy territory and choose to live worthy of and enter the light of the temple.

For example, a sister and brother from Colorado, USA, have each been baptized for more than 50 of their ancestors this past year and have experienced the purity of the temple. The brother said, “I get a good, spiritual feeling when I’m in the temple. Later, when I face temptations, I remember that feeling and it helps



By Neill F. Marriott

Second Counselor in
the Young Women
General Presidency

me.” In an effort to live worthy of attending the temple, the sister wrote a list in her journal of what she *will* and *will not* do when faced with temptation. She took a stand, and she even shared the list with her parents and friends so they could help her. These two young people have created a powerful moral armor for their hearts, minds, and bodies.

Purify Your Heart

Along with clean actions, do you have clean desires?

David, the psalmist, prays in Psalm 139:23–24: “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me.” Referring to these verses, President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901) counseled: “I would recommend that [every person] adopt this prayer of David. . . . Many fail in coming up to this standard of excellence because they do things in secret . . . that . . . alienate them from the Almighty.”²

Asking Heavenly Father to create a clean heart in you is an act of faith. He has all power; turn to Him often and humbly ask for His divine help to keep your feelings pure—even sexually pure.

“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). What power you will have when you walk in the Spirit! Each Sunday as you partake of the sacrament, you witness that you are willing to always remember Jesus Christ (see D&C 20:77, 79). Remembering the Savior can give you spiritual power to turn away from impurity.

Be Clean before God

Why is sexual purity a commandment? Because Heavenly Father provided the powers of procreation within marriage for godly purposes only. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “How we feel about and use that supernal power will determine in large measure our happiness in mortality and our destiny in eternity.”³

Sexual intimacy provides loving, emotional unity to husband and wife. However, Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has warned, “Those intimate acts are forbidden by the Lord outside the enduring commitment of marriage because they undermine His purposes. . . . They cause serious emotional and spiritual harm. Even though

participants do not realize that is happening now, they will later. Sexual immorality creates a barrier to the influence of the Holy Spirit.”⁴

Sexual intimacy is not given to satisfy lust, popularity, or curiosity. Such selfish use of this God-given gift will *always* cause unhappiness and limit spiritual growth.

As you prepare yourself and purify your heart, the Lord can make and help keep you clean. If you feel guilty or quietly ashamed, seek the power of the Atonement. It is only through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ that we can be cleansed. Repent and pray honestly for forgiveness. Go to your bishop or branch president if necessary. Can you become clean and stay clean in an unclean world? Yes, you can! You know the truth and have the support of the Holy Ghost, parents, leaders, and the living prophet. As you look to Jesus Christ, you can and will remain clean before Him. **NE**

NOTES

1. Boyd K. Packer, “Counsel to Youth,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 16.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow* (2012), 120.
3. David A. Bednar, “We Believe in Being Chaste,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 42.
4. Richard G. Scott, “Making the Right Choices,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 38.

REPENTANCE IS REAL



THE DIVINE GIFT OF REPENTANCE

"Repentance is a divine gift, and there should be a smile on our faces when we speak of it. It points us to freedom, confidence, and peace. Rather than interrupting the celebration, the gift of repentance is the cause for true celebration."

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Divine Gift of Repentance," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 38.

NO MATTER WHAT YOU'VE DONE, THERE'S A PATH BACK TO PEACE AND HAPPINESS.

By Joshua J. Perkey

Church Magazines

Have you ever felt like your sins are so great that you can't be forgiven? You're not alone. Think about Corianton, the son of Alma the Younger who left his missionary work to chase after Isabel, a harlot in the land of Sidon. Not only did Corianton "forsake the ministry,"¹ but the sin he engaged in—breaking the law of chastity—was "an abomination in the sight of the Lord; yea, most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost."²

But that wasn't the end of it. Because of what Corianton did, many of the Zoramites refused to believe the teachings of his father, the prophet.³

This young man had a pretty stern lecture coming.

Imagine how Corianton must have felt—probably pretty miserable. His father, Alma, had to explain the doctrine pretty intensely for him to understand the plan of salvation and the fact that there is right and wrong, blessing and judgment, based on how we live our lives. But he also taught about the beauty of repentance and becoming clean again.

Corianton could trust in his father. After all, Alma had been through sore repentance himself. As Alma explained to his son Helaman, when he realized the scope of his own sins, he "was racked with eternal torment" and his "soul was harrowed up to the greatest degree . . . with the pains of hell."⁴ Alma even said, "The very thought of coming into the presence of my God did rack my soul with inexpressible horror. Oh, thought I, that I could be banished and become extinct both soul and body, that I might not be brought to stand in the presence of my God, to be judged of my deeds."⁵

That's pretty severe, but it's not the whole story. For three days, Alma was so sick he couldn't move his body as he suffered excruciating pain.⁶ But then he remembered the Savior and called silently to Him for help.

"And now, behold," he said, "when I thought this, I could remember my pains no more. . . . And oh, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul

Even after all Corianton had done, he was invited to repent and was called back to the ministry.

was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain! Yea, I say unto you, my son, that there could be nothing so exquisite and so bitter as were my pains. Yea, and again I say unto you, my son, that on the other hand, there can be nothing so exquisite and sweet as was my joy."⁷

Have you ever wondered if Corianton, like his father, worried that he couldn't really repent? Do you think he felt his sins were so great that he believed the lies that whisper to us that we can't really be forgiven or that we can't change?

And have you ever felt that way yourself—that awful feeling that because you've done something wrong, you're terrible, maybe even worthless—that things are so bad you should just give up?

Don't believe those lies. They are some of the most effective weapons Satan has, and they simply aren't true.

That's the beauty and the miracle of the gospel—that through repentance and the grace of God bestowed through the Atonement of our Savior, Jesus Christ, we all can repent. We all can change. We all can become what we have the potential to become.

That's how it worked for both Alma and his son. In spite of all of Alma's sins, repentance wiped away his pains, and he found peace and true joy again. Even after all Corianton had done, he was invited to repent and was called back to the ministry.⁸

And Corianton responded. He did repent and return to the ministry to preach the word.⁹

He learned what we all need to learn and remember: the Atonement of Jesus Christ is real. Christ truly did suffer for our sins and made a way for us to be forgiven. Through repentance, we can feel clean, pure and worthy, whole and happy. No matter what we've done, there's a way back. It's through repentance, and it's very real. **NE**

NOTES

1. Alma 39:3.

2. Alma 39:5.

3. See Alma 39:11.

4. Alma 36:12–13.

5. Alma 36:14–15.

6. See Alma 36:16.

7. Alma 36:19–21.

8. See Alma 42:29–31.

9. See Alma 43:1–2.

KEY IDEAS ABOUT SEXUAL PURITY

"Avoid situations that invite increased temptation. . . . Do not participate in any type of pornography. The Spirit can help you know when you are at risk. . . .

"If you are tempted to commit any form of sexual transgression, seek help from your parents and bishop. Pray to your Father in Heaven, who will help you resist temptation and overcome inappropriate thoughts and feelings. If you have committed sexual transgression, talk to your bishop now."

For the Strength of Youth (2011), 36–37.



Find help for pornography addiction at

overcomingpornography.org.



STAY WATCHFUL

Name withheld

I have many regrets about the last four years of my life. I was raised in the Church, and many family members and friends have set good examples for me. Despite these blessings, I was not watchful enough, which caused a series of problems in my life.

It started when I was about 13 and became addicted to media. I watched endless TV and acted as if I would die without video games. My media addiction led to another problem: I didn't have any good friends because I had not made enough of an effort to befriend the boys in my quorum. In an attempt to find friends, I looked in the wrong places and became part of an online chat group. In this group some people posted pornography. Because of the weakness that had come from my other problems, I was easily ensnared by pornography.

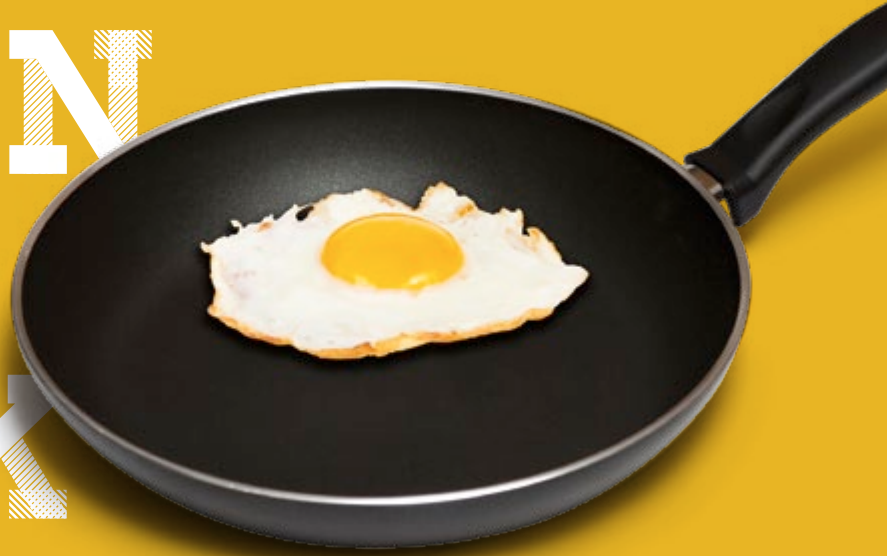
I tried to justify my behavior by making excuses: it's not hurting anyone; it can't be that wrong. I hated viewing pornography from the first time I saw it, but I became hooked. I wanted to be a good member of the Church, but I had made a series of

mistakes and did not correct them in the right way for a long time.

It took me one and a half years to see my bishop. He helped me overcome the desire to view pornography. Over time I also began to make friends with the people in my ward, stake, and seminary class. I am 17 now, and only recently have I been able to feel free. Only in the last few months have I conquered my addiction to media, sincerely prayed daily, and regularly read the scriptures.

Do not let any of these problems take root in your heart. I testify that the Lord does forgive those who have sinned. But you will have a much less painful life if you don't have to repent as I have. I beg you to spare yourself as much pain as possible by learning the consequences of sin in such a way that you will fear and avoid it. I say this because sin kills the soul, and if you sin, you will feel pain. The devil hates us, seeks our misery, and has power to influence us if we let him. But I testify that we can find grace, charity, kindness, and safety in the Atonement of Jesus Christ. **NE**

THE LESSON THAT STUCK



Is a “frying pan” keeping you from spiritual growth?

By Levi Jackson

I love whole wheat pancakes. On my mission in Brazil, I bought a nice nonstick frying pan to cook them in. I also made sure that I had a plastic spatula so as not to scratch the pan.

About this same time, I received my first junior companion. One of the first things I did was show him my frying pan and plastic spatula, with specific instructions on how to use them. I didn’t mind him using them to fry an egg or something, but I didn’t want my pan ruined.

On our next preparation day, I heard my companion stirring something in the kitchen. I soon realized that he was frying an egg. I decided to peek in to see if he was following my instructions.

When I turned the corner, I just about had a heart attack. There he was, with the frying pan in one hand and a metal spoon in the other, trying to flip the egg. He was scraping and scratching, trying to get underneath the partially cooked egg, all the while destroying my frying pan.

Before I could yell, it hit me. It was an honest mistake. With help from above, I was able to calmly walk over to the drawer, pull out the spatula, and hand it to him, saying:

“Here, use this. I think it will work better.” He thanked me and went on frying his egg.

Back in our room I realized that, as strange as it sounds, I had been “worshipping” that frying pan. For days, it had been more important to me than many other things, including my relationship with my new companion. It had been affecting the spirituality of our companionship. It had become my idol.

It can happen to any of us. How often do we put material things ahead of what really matters? It doesn’t have to be a big thing like a new motorcycle, car, job, or tech device. It could be a frying pan. These things really don’t matter and don’t have eternal consequences.

I’m so thankful that my Heavenly Father taught me an eternal truth through this small but powerful experience. I’ve come to better understand what the Lord meant when He said, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3)—including the nonstick kind. **NE**

Levi Jackson lives in Utah, USA.



For help with putting God first, visit lds.org/go/firstNE3 and lds.org/go/prioritiesNE3.



WHAT ARE WE DOING AT MUTUAL?

From making cookies for others to playing volleyball, teens all around the Church come together for wholesome activities at Mutual. While they're at it, they learn about cooperation, unity, and friendship.



By Sally Johnson Odekirk

Church Magazines

Sometimes Mutual night can be built around a fun activity, such as having a game night, playing sports, or doing service projects. And sometimes it can be more serious, with discussions on standards. But what comes out of these weekly activities is something more important: experiences that strengthen testimonies and friendships. For example, one ward planned a combined Young Men/Young Women activity of Dutch oven cooking. “We each prepared a dish, and while the dishes were cooking, we played games,” remembers John E. of Idaho, USA.

“It was a great experience,” says John, “because everyone was involved and had fun. I learned what I could do better next time, including giving better instructions on how to do Dutch oven cooking.”

At fun activities like these, teens are given a chance to gather together regularly in a safe setting and to practice gospel principles. These activities also help you grow, serve, and build friendships and unity, and they provide opportunities to fellowship or help rescue others.

Gaining Strength from Activities

Mutual activities such as John’s help build unity. Natalie M. of Washington, USA, says, “It’s so nice to know that you can feel that you’re not alone in your beliefs and can associate with others who have the same standards.

“I LOOK FORWARD TO GOING TO MUTUAL AND INTERACTING WITH OTHERS, AS WELL AS BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING MY TESTIMONY, FEELING THE SPIRIT, AND HAVING FUN AT THE SAME TIME.”

—DUSTIN B., WASHINGTON, USA

It lifts you up every time you go to activities and get to know others a little bit better.” Lauren D. of Idaho adds, “I think some kids have a hard time with getting to know people, and Mutual makes it easier to make new friends.”

When the opportunity comes to plan an activity, those involved learn how to cooperate with others to make it a success. Taylor W. of Idaho says, “We planned a water-balloon volleyball game. We got big towels and balloons and tossed the balloons back and forth over a volleyball net with the towels. I felt good because I helped plan it and it went well. It also brought us closer as a quorum because we had to work together.”

Learning from Leaders

In addition to building friendships and learning leadership and planning skills, teens bond with their leaders and learn from them. Brian C. of Washington observes, “The Young Men leaders in my ward have helped me advance through the Scouting ranks and let me know what the activities are. They make me feel good about myself because of all the work they’ve done to help me feel like a part of the Young Men group and to serve in my callings with dignity.”

Lani C. of Washington says she enjoys it when her ward has a bishop’s youth fireside. “It helps us to know our bishop. It’s important to know that our bishop and his counselors really care about us.”

“For me, it’s not just one single activity that makes a difference; it’s the regular Mutual activities that I go to every week,” says Dustin B. of Washington. “I look forward to going to Mutual and interacting with others, as well as building and strengthening my testimony, feeling the Spirit, and having fun at the same time.”



THE PURPOSE OF PROGRAMS

“We have been charged to watch over one another and to serve one

another. . . . Our goal should always be to use the programs of the Church as a means to lift, encourage, assist, teach, love, and perfect people.”

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “O Be Wise,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 18.

HOW CAN I HAVE A SUCCESSFUL ACTIVITY?

Have you been asked to help plan an activity? Here are some words of advice:

- Plan ahead to be organized. Decide when the activity will be, and then estimate how many people will be there and who will bring what.
- Counsel together about the purpose of the activity, such as reaching out, serving others or improving spiritually, socially, or physically.
- Be willing to listen to quorum or class members. Get to know them to understand how they see things.
- Pray for guidance.
- Make it a team effort rather than having one person do everything.
- Make sure that there's something for everyone to do at the activity.
- Show up with a great attitude, and be ready to learn.
- Participate wholeheartedly. You can never tell how many blessings you're receiving or how grateful you'll be for just diving in and staying with it.



YOUTH VOICES: FAVORITE ACTIVITIES

We often hear about ward and stake activities that encourage participation and build unity. Here are a few favorites that youth have told us about:



VISITS WITH MISSIONARIES

"One Mutual night we paired off with the missionaries and went on visits with them. It was a big testimony builder of what being on a mission is like. Ever since then, we regularly schedule time to go with the missionaries."

Eric U., Washington, USA

MODEST FASHION SHOW

"We had an activity where we were given a small amount of money and a ride to a thrift shop. We had to find modest clothing. After that, our mothers came to the meetinghouse, and we had a fashion show about modesty. It made a big impact on me, and I learned that it's cool to be modest."

Lani C., Washington, USA



DANCES

"I love dances. It's not weird for me to go up to someone and say, 'Hey, do you want to dance?' and then dance and have a good time getting to know her."

Levi J., Idaho, USA

SERVICE PROJECTS

"We went Christmas caroling at a retirement home. It was really fun to see how happy it made other people. We also did a service project to make pillowcases, and we gave them to cancer patients."

Ashley S., Arkansas, USA

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

"We have a campout every year where we meet at someone's house and have games and discussions about the Book of Mormon. Everybody gets involved, and we can express our feelings to each other. It really strengthens our quorum."

Dominic F., Washington, USA



TESTIMONY MEETINGS

"Testimony meetings with the quorum help you realize how much your quorum members care about you and raise friendship to a deeper level. I feel more connected with them because I know they care."

Neal M., Washington, USA



SKILL NIGHTS

"We've learned how to make pretzels, bagels, and a lot of different foods."

Holly H., Pennsylvania, USA

"There have been really fun things that we've done, such as painting little pumpkins. I've learned a new skill, and then we sit around the table and talk and bond with the other young women."

Allie H., Arkansas, USA



.... New website with over

165
MORE IDEAS

Have you heard about the new website for sharing Mutual activity ideas? At lds.org/go/activitiesNE3, you'll be able to search for activity ideas on a certain topic and even add your own activities! It also has a calendar where activity plans can be sent to the members of your Young Women and Young Men groups!

John 17:3

Jesus prayed that we would come to know Him and His Father.



WHOM THOU HAST SENT

“God in His ultimate effort to have us know Him, sent to earth His Only Begotten and perfect Son, created in His very likeness and image.”

“In all that Jesus came to say and do, including and especially in His atoning suffering and sacrifice, He was showing us who and what God our Eternal Father is like, how completely devoted He is to His children in every age and nation. In word and in deed Jesus was trying to reveal and make personal to us the true nature of His Father, our Father in Heaven. He did this at least in part because then and now all of us need to know God more fully in order to love Him more deeply and obey Him more completely.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Grandeur of God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 71, 70.

KNOW THEE

“Seek to know your Father in Heaven. He loves you, and He has given you the precious opportunity to draw near to Him as you pray. . . .

“You can also come to know your Father by learning about His Beloved Son and applying the gospel in your life. . . .

“You draw near to God the Father as you study the scriptures and the words of latter-day prophets and as you give service. When you follow God’s will and live as He would have you live, you become more like Him and His Son. You prepare yourself to return to live in Their presence.”

True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference (2004), 75–76.

3 And this is “life” eternal, that they might “know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”



THE ONLY TRUE GOD

“Some wonder, why is belief in God so important? . . . Without

God, life would end at the grave and our mortal experiences would have no purpose. Growth and progress would be temporary, accomplishment without value, challenges without meaning. There would be no ultimate right and wrong and no moral responsibility to care for one another as fellow children of God. Indeed, without God, there would be no mortal or eternal life.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Seeking to Know God, Our Heavenly Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 29.

LIFE ETERNAL

The literal translation of the original Greek phrase means *life that is never ending*. However, there is a difference between living forever (immortality), which is guaranteed to every person who lives on earth because of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and eternal life, which means living forever *in the presence of God*. This scripture teaches that knowing God is part of eternal life. Here are some other things the scriptures teach us about eternal life:

- The Atonement of Jesus Christ made it possible (see John 3:15–16).
- God’s work and glory is to help us receive it (see Moses 1:39).
- It will be given to those who receive the gospel and work righteousness (see D&C 20:14) and are faithful and endure (see D&C 50:5).
- We should hope for it (see Moroni 7:41).
- Faith, repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end qualify a person for it (see 2 Nephi 31:10–21).
- It is the greatest gift of God (see D&C 14:7).

Editors’ note: This page is not meant to be a comprehensive explanation of the selected scripture verse, only a starting point for your own study.

The scriptures tell us
to **be perfect.**
How **can I do that?**

What was the Savior asking of us when He said, “Be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect” (3 Nephi 12:48)?

In the scriptures, *perfect* means “complete, whole, and fully developed; totally righteous. . . . True followers of Christ may become perfect through his grace and atonement.”¹

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught that perfection in this life “can be achieved as we try to perform every duty [and] keep every law. . . . If we do the best we can, the Lord will bless us according to our deeds and the desires of our hearts.”²

Now, the Savior did *not* say that being perfect means never making mistakes. He also did *not* say that making a mistake means that perfection is out of reach. We *can* repent.

According to President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901), the key to perfection in this life is to “be better today than you were yesterday. . . . Continue to be a little better day by day.”³ **NE**

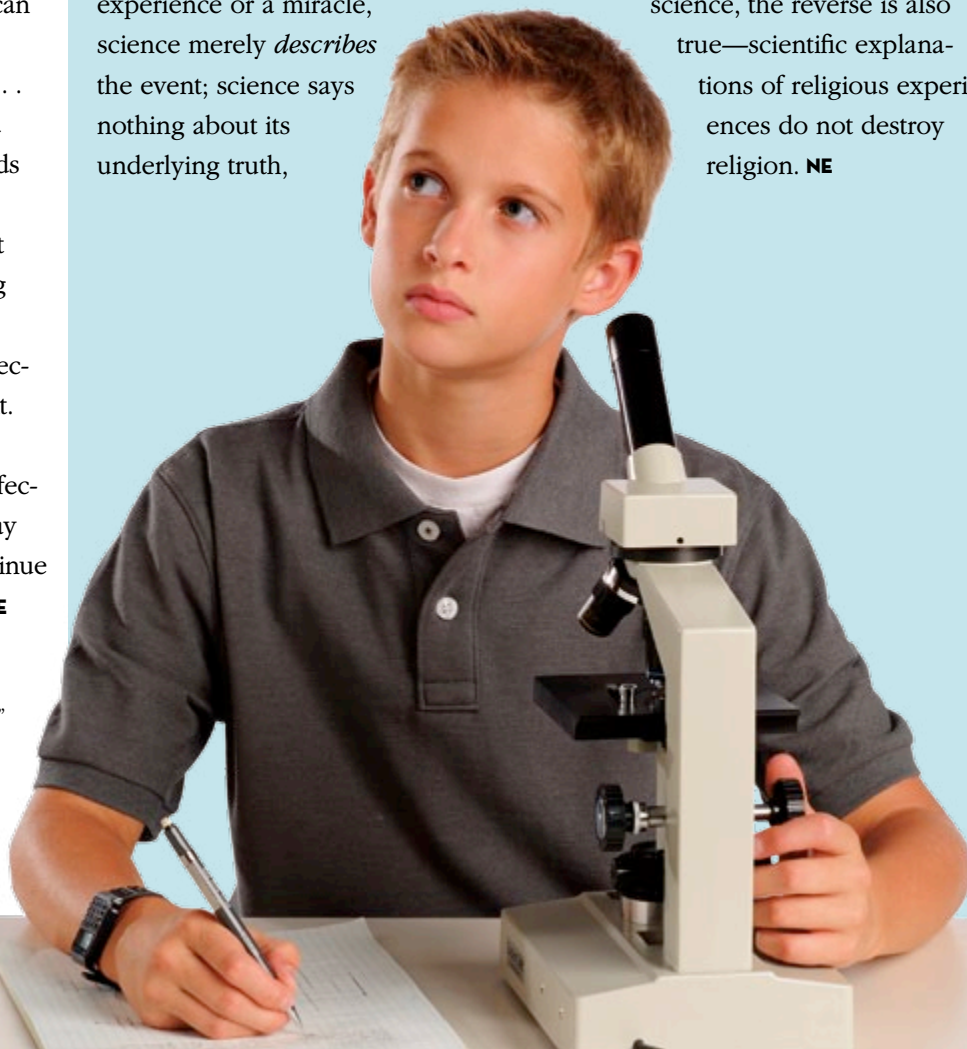
NOTES

1. Guide to the Scriptures, “Perfect,” scriptures.lds.org.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “Perfection Pending,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 86.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow* (2012), 103.

I have a **friend who believes**
that there is a **scientific**
explanation for everything—
spiritual feelings, answers to prayer,
miracles, and so on.
What can I tell this friend?

In one sense, your friend is right—all things probably have explanations that can be given in scientific terms (though we don’t have all of these yet). The ability of science to explain something does no harm to religion. Even if you accept scientific explanations of a spiritual experience or a miracle, science merely *describes* the event; science says nothing about its underlying truth,

meaning, or purpose. That’s the role of religion. Our Father in Heaven knows all things and reveals to us what we need in order to return to Him and to develop faith, hope, charity, and all other divine attributes. Just as religious interpretations of natural phenomena do not destroy science, the reverse is also true—scientific explanations of religious experiences do not destroy religion. **NE**





Strengthened through the Atonement of Jesus Christ

Life isn't easy. It seems like the challenges are endless. For example:

- People all around you try to get you to do things you know aren't right.
- You often sin or fall short of where you'd like to be, and it can be discouraging. You may wonder if Heavenly Father can still love you when you're so imperfect.
- Trials can be really discouraging, whether they're from the illness or loss of a loved one, family tensions, bullies at school, or difficult classes.
- You have so much to do. You worry how to fit it all in.

Yes, there are many things that are hard. But in every case, there's hope. That hope comes through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Alma 7:11–13 teaches how the Atonement helps us be cleansed from sin and also strengthens us to overcome or have our burdens lightened from pain, sickness, and infirmity.

When we have faith in Christ, He will give us added strength and ease our burdens. The prophets teach us how:

- President Thomas S. Monson, "I Will Not Fail Thee, nor Forsake Thee," lds.org/go/willNE3
- President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "You Can Do It Now!" lds.org/go/canNE3
- President Boyd K. Packer, "The Key to Spiritual Protection," lds.org/go/keyNE3
- Matthew 11:28–30; Philippians 4:13; D&C 68:6

As you learn about the Atonement of Jesus Christ in your Sunday lessons this month (see lds.org/youth/learn), think about times in your life when you've seen blessings from Heavenly Father because you've had faith in Christ and the Atonement. Consider sharing your experiences in your classes or quorums, with your family, or in your journal. For more on how the Atonement can strengthen you, visit lds.org/go/AtonementNE3.

Handouts to Download and Share

These cards provide great reminders that you can share in your classes and quorums, at family home evening, or on social media. You can even hang them in your locker or bedroom or place them in your scriptures. Download or share them online at lds.org/go/cardsNE3.

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER . . . KNOWS THAT WE
LEARN AND GROW AND BECOME
STRONGER
AS WE FACE AND SURVIVE THE TRIALS.
... SUCH DIFFICULTIES ALLOW US TO CHANGE FOR THE BETTER, TO
REBUILD OUR LIVES IN THE WAY OUR HEAVENLY FATHER TEACHES
US, AND TO BECOME SOMETHING DIFFERENT FROM WHAT WE WERE.

President Thomas S. Monson, "I Will Not Fail Thee, nor Forsake Thee,"
October 2013 general conference

YOUR PATH WILL AT TIMES BE DIFFICULT, BUT I GIVE YOU THIS PROMISE: . . .

RISE UP

AND

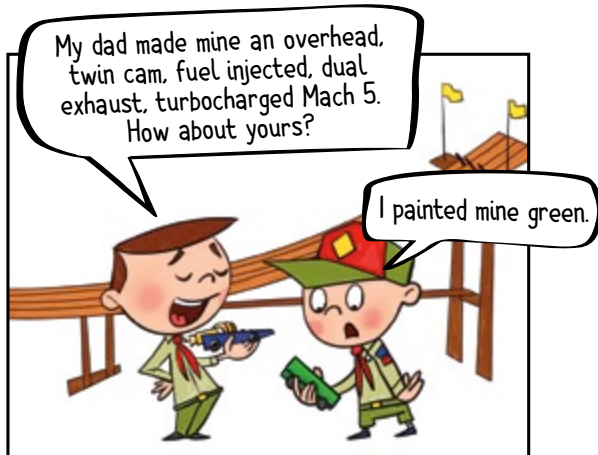
Follow
IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF OUR
Redeemer
AND SAVIOR,

AND ONE DAY YOU WILL LOOK BACK
AND BE FILLED WITH ETERNAL
GRATITUDE THAT
YOU CHOSE
TO

TRUST THE ATONEMENT
and its power to

LIFT YOU UP.

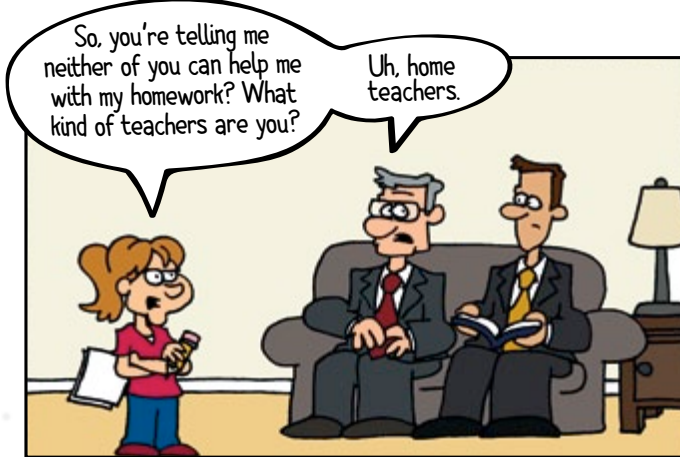
President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency,
"You Can Do It Now!" October 2013 general conference



RICK + RYAN GOLDSBERRY

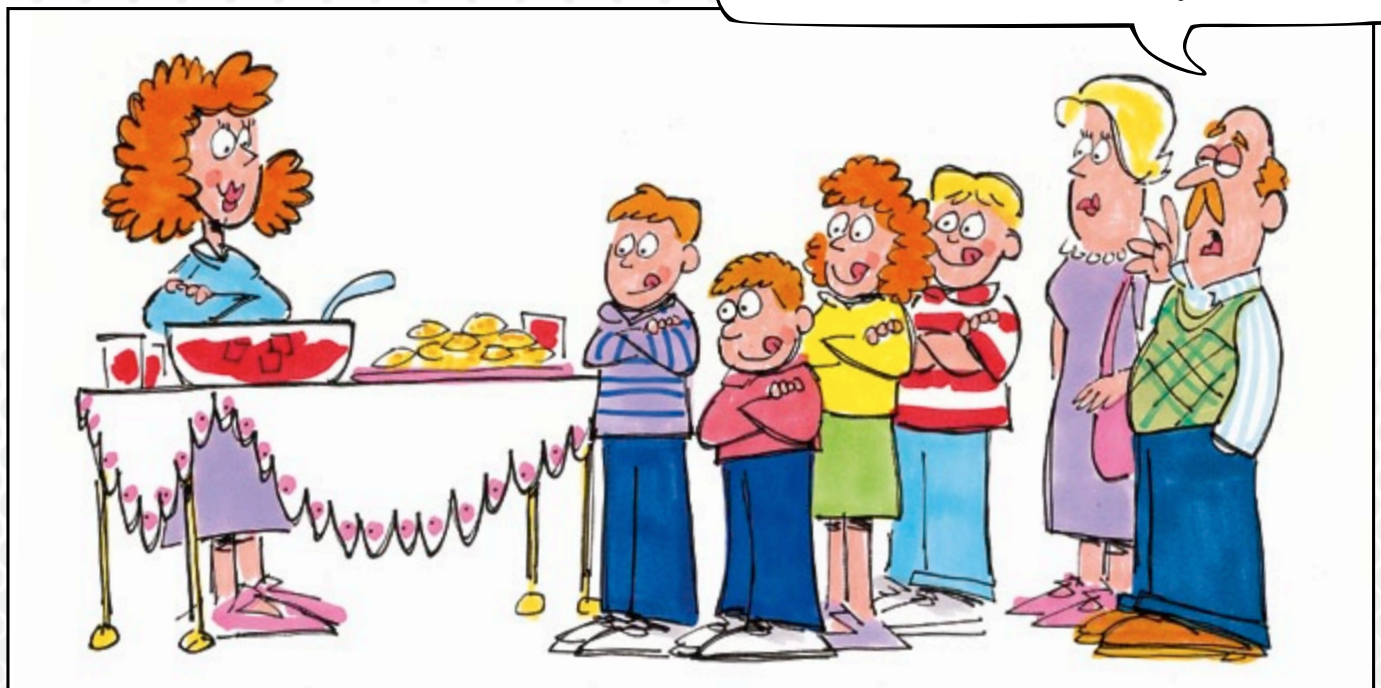


RYAN STOKER



ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF

These people have amazing faith. They bless Hawaiian Punch® and snickerdoodles to nourish and strengthen their bodies!



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

“I sometimes **feel** like
I’m **alone** in the world
and **nobody**
understands what
I’m going through.
What do I do?”

You might be surprised at how common this feeling is. But that doesn’t make it any less hard. Try to surround yourself with good people and uplifting activities, even when it’s difficult. Sometimes just focusing on activities, like Mutual nights, school games, or aerobic activities, can help take your mind off your trials.

Remember that Heavenly Father loves you and that you are never truly alone. So be sure to pray and study the gospel. Never give up on your relationship with Heavenly Father, because He never gives up on you.

Also remember that the Savior understands our lives completely and knows how to help us (see Alma 7:11–13). As we turn to Him, He will give us strength to overcome our challenges through the enabling power of the Atonement. Consider learning more about the Atonement and how it can help you in times like these (see page 6).

Sometimes it also helps to find someone to talk to, like a parent, leader, or trusted friend. Although your exact circumstances may be different from theirs, parents and trusted leaders can help us learn from their similar experiences and give good advice for the future.

If your feelings of loneliness last a long time or get worse, it could be a sign of a more serious issue, like depression. Be sure to talk to someone you trust about how you’re feeling. There’s absolutely no shame in getting help (see Jeffrey R. Holland, “Like a Broken Vessel,” *Ensign*, Nov., 2013, 40; [lds.org/go/lonelyNE3](https://www.lds.org/go/lonelyNE3)). **NE**

Turn to God



It’s normal to feel this way; it’s a part of life. You have to pray constantly to have the Spirit with you. His

mission is to comfort us, and through Him you’ll know without any doubt that the Savior has gone through your sufferings. Even when nobody seems to understand, He understands, and He won’t leave you alone. If you’re having a hard time, remember that there’s a purpose to it and that Heavenly Father won’t leave you to handle it on your own if you turn to Him.

Mariana L., 17, Quebec, Canada

Fear Not

When I feel like nobody understands what I’m going through, I remember the hymn “How Firm a Foundation,” especially verse three: “Fear not, I am with thee; oh, be not dismayed, for I am thy God and will still give thee aid. I’ll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand” (*Hymns*, no. 85). This message serves as a constant reminder that my Heavenly Father loves and cares for me.

Rachel F., 13, Arizona, USA

Stand in Holy Places

If you pray diligently and prayerfully study the scriptures, you’ll understand you aren’t alone and you’ll come through this trial stronger and more faithful. Listen to the Spirit’s

promptings and always remember to “stand ye in holy places, and be not moved” (D&C 87:8).

Kellen L., 14, New Mexico, USA

Seek Peace



When I feel alone and that nobody understands me, I try to always remember that my Heavenly

Father loves me. When I think this, it brings peace and makes me feel like I'm not alone.

Allison H., 14, Oregon, USA

Realize You're Unique

What often helps me is realizing that I'm unique. By making this a positive thing, I can feel better about myself and not get so frustrated when people don't understand me. They just think different from me, and Heavenly Father has made them unique as well.

Jeshua M., 14, New Zealand

Reach Out



When I struggled with this, I found that as I served others and shared the gospel, my joy was hugely

increased. The Lord understood me, and He comforted me and was proud of me. As I have gained a testimony of the happiness and comfort that comes from sharing the gospel and showing others they are loved—even when I need love myself—my life has

become brighter and my desire to serve even stronger.

Sawyer I., 16, Tennessee, USA

Talk to Someone

Talk to your parents and Church leaders. They may not have gone through exactly what you're going through, but they can understand. Don't be afraid to let them know how you feel; it's one of their roles as parents and leaders to help you.

Beka W., 15, Texas, USA

Focus on Others



I try to turn my attention away from myself and toward the needs of other people through service. I've

found that in forgetting myself, I've felt happier and more included. I know that service can bring you closer to God and closer to others. If you feel alone, go out and serve.

Aza M., 17, New Jersey, USA



NOT ALONE

"We were not placed on this earth to walk alone. . . . [God] has assured us that He will be there for us to provide help if we but ask. . . . I promise you that you will one day stand aside and look at your difficult times, and you will realize that He was always there beside you."

President Thomas S. Monson, "We Never Walk Alone," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 121, 124.

Remember God's Plan

Remember that your Father in Heaven has a plan specifically for you. Everything you endure has a purpose and can be used to strengthen your testimony if you turn to Him and the Savior for help.

Ethan I., 15, Washington, USA

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

UPCOMING QUESTION

"My friend is being **bullied**, even by **Church members**. What can I do to **help her?**"

Send your answer and photo by April 15, 2014.

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

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

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

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

GENERAL WOMEN'S MEETING

Saturday, March 29, 2014 | 6:00 p.m. MDT

Learn more at lds.org/go/gwm14.

FRIENDS YOU CAN COUNT ON

Josh C., a 13-year-old from Alberta, Canada, loves hanging out with his tight-knit group of Church friends as often as possible. All in the same deacons quorum, they love to play basketball, hit the ski slopes, and do all sorts of other activities together. They also look out for and support one another.

About a year and a half ago, when Josh's life took an unexpected turn, his deacons quorum was there for him every step of the way. Toward the end of sixth grade, Josh began having small seizures. Despite trips to the doctor and antiseizure medication,

the seizures grew worse over the summer. Several months into seventh grade, Josh had to drop out of school for health reasons.

Throughout this time, his friends helped him every chance they could—even if that meant just taking him treats and playing games with him when he wasn't feeling well enough to leave the house. "I feel lucky," Josh says about his quorum members. "They are always there for me."

Ultimately, neurologists recommended surgery to remove the lesion in Josh's brain that was causing the seizures. Josh's friends decided as a group that

they would fast for him on the day of his surgery. The eight-hour surgery took place during a school day. His friends went to school and spent lunch together as they normally did, but they didn't eat. "It was neat they thought of doing it on their own," says Josh.

The surgery was a big success. While Josh's recovery hasn't always been easy, his friends have stayed by his side all along.

Now in eighth grade, Josh



hasn't had a single seizure since the surgery 14 months ago. He feels so grateful for his friends and for the gospel. "People are there for you. Heavenly Father is there for you," he says. "Look at your blessings—not at your trials—and see how Heavenly Father is helping. You don't have to be afraid."

MISSION LIFE

I really enjoyed the article "Mission Life" in the October 2013 *New Era*. I especially liked the part of the article that talks about the daily personal and companionship study. It said this daily study is essential for missionaries to focus on the scriptures and the doctrines of the lessons in *Preach My Gospel*. I also enjoyed the section that describes how missionaries teach investigators and what they teach them. My brother is currently on a mission in Texas, USA, and I really enjoyed reading about what he does, how he prepares for the day, how he sets goals during planning sessions, and how prayer impacts his decisions.

Elliott H., 15, Washington, USA

Editor's note: The October 2013 New Era has several articles on missionary work. If you've been curious about full-time missionary work, check out the issue at lds.org/go/missionNE3.

Tell Us What's Up
Do you have an inspiring story or favorite scripture to share? We love hearing from you. Go to newera.lds.org and click "Submit Your Work." Or you can email us at newera@ldschurch.org. You can also leave a comment on any article at youth.lds.org.

YOU'RE INVITED

You're invited to gather with women ages 8 and up as sisters, daughters, mothers, and friends. Invite others to join with you at local meetinghouses to hear from a member of the First Presidency and the general presidents of the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary organizations.

Come be inspired by messages, music, and videos.
Which friends will you invite?

Invite others through social media at lds.org/go/share14.

NUNCHAKUS AND MANICURES

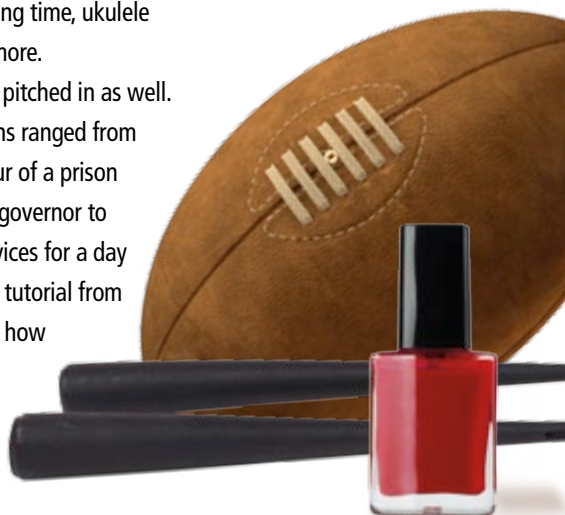
When youth from one ward in Birmingham, England, needed to raise money in order to attend stake youth camps, they knew just what to do: it was time to roll up their sleeves and teach nunchaku lessons. And origami lessons. Oh, and some one-on-one rugby training sessions for good measure.

After leaders counseled with the bishop and obtained his approval, ward members pulled together to support the youth in their efforts by holding a ward auction for promised services. At

the auction, people could bid on all manner of "I owe you"-type services. The youth donations included manicures, basketball lessons, shoe shining, gardening help, babysitting time, ukulele lessons, and more.

The adults pitched in as well. Their donations ranged from a personal tour of a prison by the prison governor to chauffeur services for a day and even to a tutorial from the bishop on how to buy and sell on eBay. In the end, the ward

raised enough money for the youth to attend the camps, all while having fun and getting to know one another by serving in creative ways.





TALKING TO LENNY

Every day on the bus ride home from school, I would see Lenny. He always wore the same baggy T-shirt and worn-out tennis shoes, and he often had a big smile. He also had a disability. Often, the Spirit prompted me to say hello to him, but my pride stopped me.

One winter afternoon when I got on the bus, the Spirit's promptings were especially strong, and I had a little extra courage. So when I saw Lenny in his usual spot, I decided to sit next to him. When I was almost to my stop, I closed my eyes, said a silent prayer, and then turned toward Lenny.

"Hi, I'm Ashley," I said in an insecure but friendly voice.

He smiled at me, and all of my fear and pride melted away.

"I'm Lenny," he shyly replied.

With those few words, a friendship began to form.

The next day, I sat next to Lenny again. He reached into his backpack and pulled out a handmade Valentine's Day card addressed to "the pretty girl I see on the bus every day." Valentine's Day was long over, but Lenny had made this special card for me and had been patiently waiting for me to talk to him before giving it to me. I

couldn't help the tears from trickling down my cheeks.

Now I talk to Lenny daily. We exchange simple gifts on holidays, and we even went bowling with a group of friends. Each time I'm with Lenny, I'm reminded of the scripture in 1 John 4:18: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear." Lenny helps me remember the blessings that come from forgetting pride and having courage to follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost.

Ashley J., Utah, USA

HEARING FIVE SIMPLE WORDS

When I was 14, my grandfather passed away. On the day of the funeral, many people came up to me and expressed love and sympathy, but I didn't really pay attention because I was so sad. Then my grandma came up to me and said five simple words: "We will see him again."

Those five words meant a lot to me. I really took them to heart, and I finally fully understood that because of Jesus Christ and the great plan of happiness, we will see our loved ones again. There is a resurrection! I took great comfort in Mosiah 16:8–9:

"There is a resurrection, therefore the grave hath no victory, and the sting of death is swallowed up in Christ.

"He is the light and the life of the world; yea, a light that is endless, that can never be darkened; yea, and also a life which is endless, that there can be no more death."

I miss my grandfather so much, but with the knowledge of the gospel, I'm comforted because I know, like Grandma said, that "we will see him again." I'm so grateful for the gospel and for the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

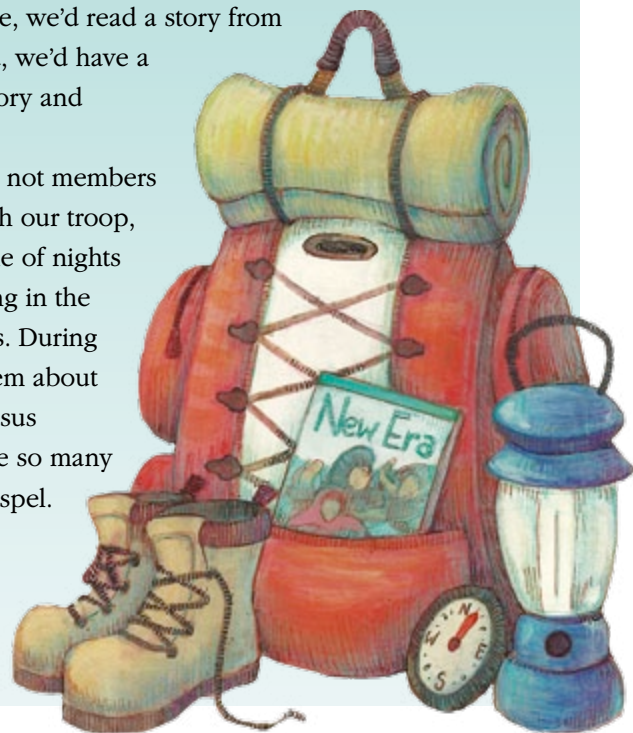
Kyira H., Alberta, Canada

TEACHING WITH THE NEW ERA

At Scout camp, my troop and I had a "spiritual moment" every night before we went to bed. During that time, we'd read a story from the *New Era*. Afterward, we'd have a discussion about the story and a closing prayer.

Two boys who were not members of the Church were with our troop, and after the first couple of nights they started participating in the discussions and prayers. During the week we taught them about Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. I'm glad we have so many tools for sharing the gospel.

Burke B., Utah, USA



TURNING FEAR INTO FAITH

The Sunday after my 17th birthday, I had my first epileptic seizure. It was terrifying to lose all control and slip into darkness. When I awoke, I struggled to remember basic things like where I was or what day it was. I was prescribed medication to help the physical condition, but the psychological terror remained. I constantly monitored myself, paranoid that I would have another seizure. I was afraid to fall asleep, and I lost some of the freedoms I'd had before. I even thought that I might leave this world soon.

But then I remembered who I

am. I am a son of God. I remembered one of my favorite scriptures, Joshua 1:9, which says, "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." This scripture brought me much-needed comfort. As I prayed for comfort each day, the terror was replaced by a stronger reliance on God and a stronger testimony that He is always watching over me and keeping me safe. I know I have a bright future ahead of me, because no matter what happens, God is always at my side.

Nick C., California, USA



By President
Thomas S. Monson

HOW TO CHOOSE GOOD FRIENDS

In a survey which was made in selected wards and stakes of the Church, we learned a most significant fact. Those persons whose friends married in the temple usually married in the temple, while those persons whose friends did not marry in the temple usually did not marry in the temple. The influence of one's friends appeared to be a more dominant

factor than parental urging, classroom instruction, or proximity to a temple.

We tend to become like those whom we admire. Just as in Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic account "The Great Stone Face," we adopt the mannerisms, the attitudes, even the conduct of those whom we admire—and they are usually our friends. Associate with those who, like you, are planning not for temporary convenience, shallow goals, or narrow ambition but rather for those things that matter most—even eternal objectives.

Inscribed on an east wall of Stanford University Memorial Church is the truth: "All that is not eternal [is] too short, [and] all that is not infinite [is] too small."¹

Beyond your circle of earthly friends, I urge you to make a friend of your Heavenly Father. He stands ready to answer the prayer of your heart. Being the Father of your spirit and having created you in His own image, knowing the end from the

beginning, His wisdom will not fail and His counsel is ever true. Make a friend of Him.

There is another important friend you should have, and that is the bishop of your ward. He has been called of God by prophecy and the laying on of hands by those who are in authority. He is entitled to heavenly help in providing you with counsel and guidance. Make a friend of him.

Choose your friends with caution. **NE**

From a Brigham Young University devotional given on November 6, 2005.

NOTE

1. See www.stanford.edu/group/religiouslife/cgi-bin/wordpress/memorial-church/history/memorial-church-inscriptions.

HOW HAVE YOU DONE THIS?

My Heavenly Father has always been my best friend and provides me with comfort and guidance every day. My earthly friends have helped me gain a stronger testimony and a deeper desire to do more diligent work in the Church. And the bishop of my ward has given me an insightful view of the Church that has helped me grow as a member. By choosing uplifting friends, I've been able to better follow the strait and narrow path that will one day take me to see my Father in Heaven again.

Savannah A., Montana, USA



Share Your Experiences

Share your experiences in applying this counsel and read the experiences of other youth by going to lds.org/go/friendNE3.



NO ONE

IS A STRANGER

▶▶▶ *to our* ◀◀◀

**HEAVENLY
FATHER.**

**THERE IS NO ONE
WHOSE SOUL IS NOT**

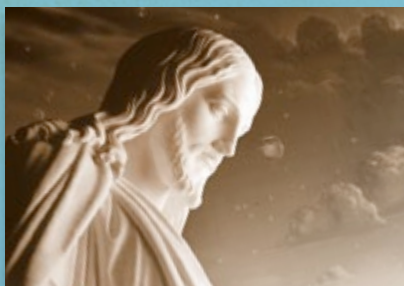
PRECIOUS

to Him.

Bishop Gérald Caussé, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric,
October 2013 general conference

WHAT'S ONLINE

As you think about this month's *Come, Follow Me* lesson option on "How can I use the words of living prophets and apostles to strengthen my faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ?" consider these resources for finding recent messages from the Brethren.



SPECIAL WITNESSES OF CHRIST

Watch members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles bear testimony of Christ and His gospel in such places as the Garden of Gethsemane, the Kirtland Temple, the Susquehanna River, and Palmyra, New York. Visit [lds.org/go/witnessNE3](https://www.lds.org/go/witnessNE3) to watch these short videos.



WORLD TRAVELS AND TESTIMONIES

As General Authorities travel throughout the world to meet with members, their experiences are shared in articles and videos on a part of LDS.org called "Prophets and Apostles Speak Today." See these recent messages at [lds.org/go/speakNE3](https://www.lds.org/go/speakNE3).

FACEBOOK PAGES FOR THE GENERAL AUTHORITIES



If you're on Facebook, consider liking the pages of each member of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles so you can receive occasional short videos and inspiring quotes from them in your news feed. To find their official pages, visit the *New Era* Facebook page at [lds.org/go/NEFB](https://www.lds.org/go/NEFB) and find their pages in our "Likes" section.

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS