

THE New Era

MARCH 2017

Brighter Days
== THROUGH ==
Repentance
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SERVICE
YOU DIDN'T THINK WAS
SERVICE
p. 8

HELPING
refugees
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Walk in the light, . . . choose the right,
and . . . defend the right. —page 5 •

I opened the machine back up and looked
carefully at the 15 circuit cards inside.

—page 13 • Instead of having a great
time, we were awake and miserable
most of the night. —page 20 • If I

tell my bishop what I've done, he'll be so
disappointed—and I'll be so embarrassed. —

page 25 • That almost makes a doctor's shots
seem like getting a high five from Grandma.

—page 29 • [Soccer] is a “language” that
we have in common. —page 35 • There
is always a place for you here. —page 48



Cover: Repentance and Change, pp. 24–33
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By Elder
Robert D. Hales

Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

Choosing

RIGHT FROM WRONG

*Choose to do what is right because your
greatest desire is to love the Lord.*

Do you remember being afraid of the dark when you were a child? When you became frightened, you probably turned on the lights—all the lights in the house! When your parents came home later in the evening, they would ask, “Why is every light in the house on?” Then they would proceed to lecture you about the family budget and the cost of electricity.

You had learned, however, that by turning on an electric light or by lighting a candle, there was no more darkness, no more fear. You learned a simple law of nature, which is also a spiritual law: Light and darkness cannot occupy the same space at the same time. Satan and his disciples cannot tolerate the spiritual light of the gospel; they must immediately depart.

Commandments Lead Us to Light

When we live the commandments, our countenance is surrounded by gospel light. With this spiritual light we no longer wander in the strange and darkened paths of the adversary, becoming lost, discouraged, depressed, and fearful. Walking in the light of the gospel, we will not lose sight of our eternal goals.

It is important that we understand the significance to each of us when Jesus taught “believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light” (John 12:36). We must have faith and know that we are children of light and that through faith in Jesus, our Savior, and obedience to His commandments we may have His Spirit, His light, to be with us to guide us always. If we are to be children of light, we must



walk in the light and, with our agency, choose the right. Yes, walk in the light and shun darkness; we must choose the right and defend the right when the choice is placed before us.

The Importance of Daily Choices

Think of the choices you are making each day. Will I go to school? How hard will I study? Will I go to church? How obedient will I be to the commandments that have been taught to me? Will I prepare myself to go to the temple and on a mission? Will I be worthy to go to the temple and be sealed to my companion for time and all eternity? Who will be my friends, and did I choose them for the right reasons? What kind of a friend will I be? What kind of a son or daughter, brother or sister, am I? Do I spiritually strengthen all family members with my conduct and attitude? Will I be honest and live with integrity in all my choices?

These and many more choices and decisions must be encountered each day of our lives. How we make each daily choice in life affects what we become during our life in mortality, as well as having eternal consequences. If we, as members of the Church, are obedient and walk in the light, having both the Light of Christ and the gift of the Holy Ghost to guide us, we will make the right choices. If we make our choices without the Holy Ghost, we will make wrong choices that lead us toward the darkness—and we will wander in strange paths and be lost.

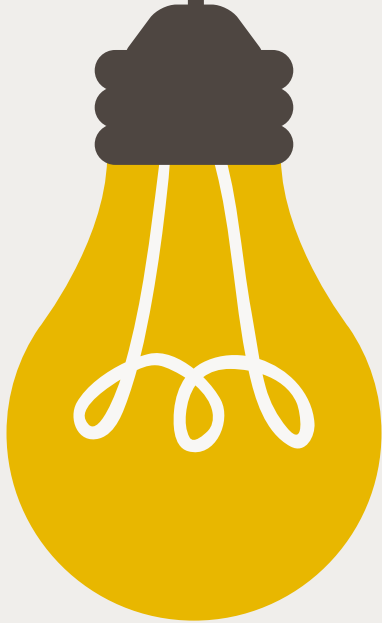
The Savior said, “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness” (John 12:46). “To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace” (Luke 1:79).

The Lord is an everlasting light without beginning and without end. His light will never fail us in times of need. Church members must use both the Light of Christ and the gift of the Holy Ghost that has been given us to make the most important choice—whom we will serve.

You are standing at the crossroads of life with many choices placed before you. You have been given agency, and you will have choices to make that will have an influence on who you are and what you will be. In Primary you learned to “choose the right when a choice is placed before you” (“Choose the Right,” *Hymns*, no. 239). What is meant by “choose the right”?



**"IF WE ARE TO BE CHILDREN OF LIGHT,
WE MUST WALK IN THE LIGHT AND, WITH OUR
AGENCY, CHOOSE THE RIGHT."**



Agency means I am free to choose right or wrong and I am responsible for my choices. May we all be faithful and strong when we have difficult choices to make in times of trials and tribulations.

Commandments Bless Us

Heavenly Father gave us commandments to guide us and help us choose the right. Often we hear that commandments are restrictive and difficult to live. Commandments are given to us by a loving Father who cares for us and wants us, through our obedience, to live a happy and joyous life. "But learn that he who

doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come" (D&C 59:23).

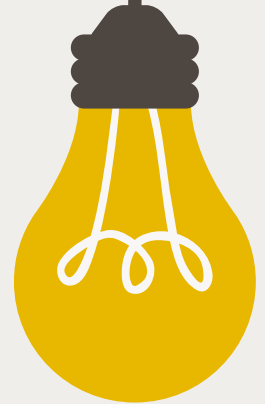
Choosing to live the commandments saves us the pain and sorrow that come from acts of disobedience. "Light and truth forsake that evil one" (D&C 93:37). The greatest sorrow would be living unworthy here in mortality and not to be able to return into the presence of God the Father eternally.

The Decision to Choose the Right

Choosing the right is a decision-making process. Choose to learn what is the right way to live your life, learning principles and keeping the commandments and covenants that guide and protect you as you exercise your agency in daily choices.

Will you have a desire to do what is right once you know what is right? Choose to do what is right when you have a choice to make that will affect your eternal goals, such as controlling the natural man's attitude and pride. Be humble.

Choose to do what is right because your greatest desire is to love the Lord and to be obedient to His laws, ordinances, and commandments so that you can return back into



His presence eternally. Choose to do what is right because you love yourself and because you honor those who love you.

Help others to do what is right. Choose to be of service and be an example of what is right by lifting and strengthening others to do what is right because you care.

Choose to turn around and repent immediately if you ever depart from the straight and narrow path that leads to eternal life. Repentance is a merciful result of our Savior's atoning sacrifice because of the love our Father in Heaven and His Son Jesus Christ have for each of us.

I ask that each one of us will be a light, that we will walk in the light, that we will choose the right, and that we will defend the right. I know that God lives. His Son Jesus Christ is the Light that has been given to us so that we may follow and know where to go. **NE**

From a Brigham Young University fireside address given on November 3, 1996.

HESITANTLY FAITHFUL, ABUNDANTLY BLESSED

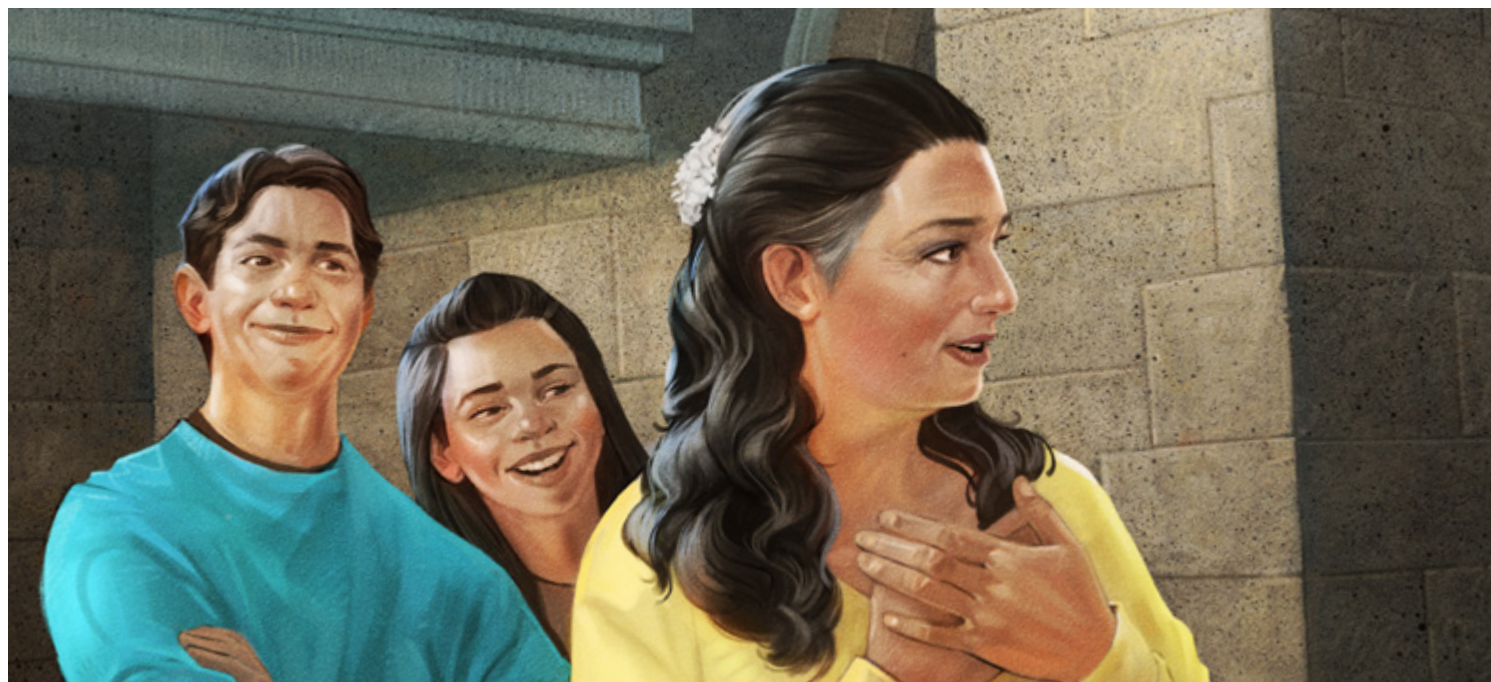
As a missionary in Mexico, I had an experience that helped me see the “good fruits” that can come when we put our faith into action.

By Isaias Vargas Chavarria

A missionary activity had been planned in the stake where I was serving. My companion and I were to briefly explain a gospel principle to the investigators who would attend. However, when we arrived at the meetinghouse, we discovered that hardly any investigators had come. Instead of teaching the principle as we had originally planned, we were asked to go out into the street and invite the people passing by to come and take part in the activity.

Truthfully, I couldn't help but think, “This is not going to work.” I felt that our efforts would be fruitless—that no one would accept the invitation to just come to the activity, particularly with such little notice.

But we understood the importance of obedience, so my companion and I tried to invite people to come in. Not much later, a woman and her daughter and her daughter's boyfriend passed by. We invited them to come in. At first they were hesitant, but finally they accepted the invitation



and joined the group inside. I was surprised but very happy.

The activity started: a gospel-centered musical presentation. The activity lasted more than an hour. I worried that our guests were angry because the event lasted so long, but I had a prayer in my heart asking for everything to work out well.

When the activity ended, I approached them to apologize for taking so much of their time. Before I could say a word to them, the woman said, “Thank you. Thank you so much. It was very beautiful. Thank you.”

I was astonished; they were thanking us for the experience, and they weren’t concerned about the time. It was marvelous, and there was joy in my heart. (And to think that I had been saying that inviting people on the

street wasn’t going to work!)

The woman wanted to know more about the Church and to attend our Sunday meetings.

I learned something great from this experience: exercising just a little faith, even if it is nothing more than a desire to believe, can yield great fruits (see Alma 32:27–28).

This experience changed my attitude for the rest of my mission. From that time on, at each missionary activity, I would see the fruits of my labors when I went forth with hope and an eye of faith.

If we exercise faith, even when we think it cannot come to pass, we can obtain delicious fruits. What we see as impossible is not impossible for God. **NE**

The author lives in Guerrero, Mexico.

FIND THEM THAT WILL RECEIVE YOU

“You are to build up the Church by finding ‘them that will receive you’ (D&C 42:8). . . . Many of these people have been ‘kept from the truth [only] because they know not where to find it’ (D&C 123:12).

“Usually you do not know who these people are. They may not immediately recognize that you are the Lord’s servants. They may not understand that greater peace, direction, and purpose in life will come through the restored gospel than from anything else. They often do not realize that they are looking for the restored gospel until they have found it. For example, one convert said, ‘When I heard the gospel, it filled a hole in my heart that I didn’t know was there.’ Another said, ‘I have finished the search I didn’t know I was on.’”

Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Work (2004), 156.



ILLUSTRATION BY JIM MADSEN, BACKGROUND PATTERN © ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK

SERVICE YOU DIDN'T THINK WAS SERVICE

Shovels and rakes aren't the only tools at your disposal.

By David Dickson

Church Magazines

“**W**hy do dragons sleep during the day?” Wendy asked. And after a few seconds, the punch line: “Because they fight knights!”

I laughed as I paid for my lunch. Wendy, who ran the cash register, always told a joke of the day. This would be another great one to share with Melody, the eight-year-old in our family.

“And here’s one for you from Melody,” I said. “What kind of animal do you never want to play games with?” Pause for dramatic effect . . . “A cheetah!”

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) taught, “[Laughter] will extend your life and make the lives of all those around you more enjoyable.”¹

Wendy’s jokes have certainly made my life more enjoyable, as well as the lives of my family as I’ve retold them.

But do you know what else those jokes are, besides funny? They’re a form of service.

So What “Counts” as Service, Anyway?

If you throw somebody a high five as you’re walking down the hall, does that count as service? Absolutely. If in doubt, check out the smile that flashes across their face. (Never pull your hand back at the last moment, though. That’s just *lame*!)

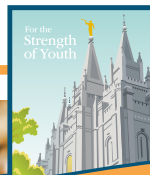
We have countless opportunities to provide small and simple acts of kindness that make a bigger difference in the lives of others than we might expect.

Here are a handful to consider.

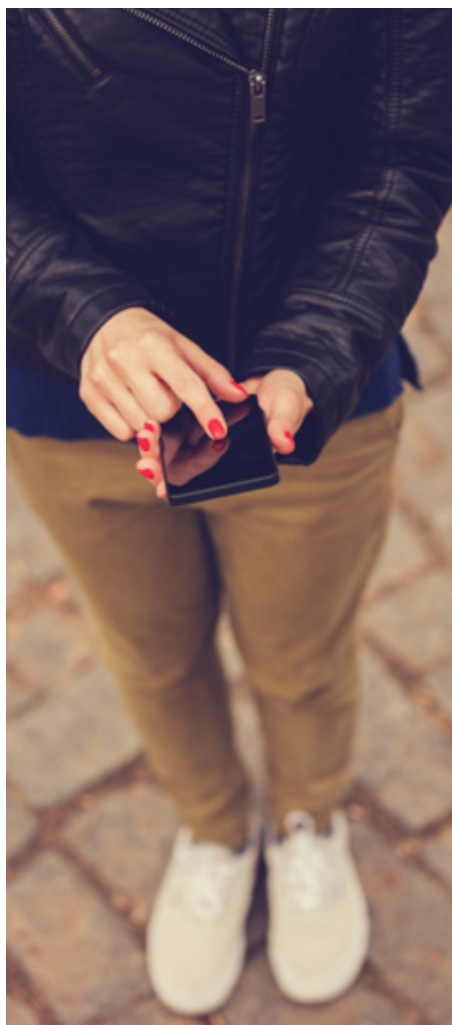


GO AHEAD, SHARE A PERSONAL STORY!

Want to become the hero to any teacher during a Sunday lesson? Share your testimony or an experience from your life that applies to the lesson. Ultimately, the person you serve most might be one of your classmates. A less-than-a-minute telling of how you prayed and felt comfort on a bad day last week might be just the advice someone needs to hear.



SERVICE



TEXT SOMETHING NICE.

You have 15 seconds to send a text. You could write, “Hey, wasn’t that movie last night soooooo boring? And that dumb ending! Ugh!” You could certainly do that. But consider instead if you sent, “Hey, I wanted to say thanks for helping me laugh earlier today. I really needed it!” Quick texts of gratitude, kindness, or encouragement can make any day better. In fact, why not send one right now? Ready, set, go!



CHEER YOUR HEART OUT (pom-poms optional).

So maybe you don’t especially like going to football games. Or soccer games. Or any other event that involves a scoreboard and cheers or jeers from a crowd. Even so, you can still attend your friend’s game and root for them. Simply showing up to lend support often means more to the other person than the couple of hours you spent attending. The same holds true for dance recitals, concerts, engineering exhibits, and any other place a friend or family member is sharing part of what they love.



SHARE YOUR TALENTS.

Can you draw? Bake impossibly tasty breadsticks? Solve math equations faster than a speeding locomotive? Use those talents to enrich the lives of those around you.

We have **countless opportunities** to provide small and simple **acts of kindness** that make a **bigger difference** in the lives of others **than we might expect**.



WATCH YOUR LITTLE BROTHER'S FAVORITE TELEVISION SHOW WITH HIM.

Flying robots with lasers. Time-traveling blue boxes. It's all Greek to you. But your little brother has been begging you to watch his new favorite show with him for months now. Even if it doesn't sound enticing, think of how much it'd mean to him for you to sit down and spend time with him doing his favorite thing. Who knows, you might even like the show too!

SHARE YOUR TIPS AND TRICKS.

Did you know that if you add a little olive oil to the water when boiling pasta, the pasta will stick less to itself? We've all learned cool little gems like this that make life better or easier. Teach them to others!



PRAY.

Most of us recognize that prayer is an enormous help in our own lives. But how much can our prayers affect other people? Consider this. In the Book of Mormon, we learn about an entire city that was spared from destruction because of the prayers of the righteous (see Alma 10:22). We're talking famine, pestilence, swords—the works. All stopped because of prayer. Who in your life could use a little extra protection or help? Pray for them!

Sometimes service opportunities are going to be unmistakable, urgent, and a bit more time-consuming. If your friend's basement floods, for example, they may need more than a friendly word and a warm plate of cookies.

More often, though, you'll find little chances day after day to serve. When these come, take them. You'll soon learn an eternal truth.

There's nothing little about service. **NE**

NOTE

1. Joseph B. Wirthlin, Oct. 2008 general conference.

FUN STOP

Not a Moment to Lose

The stakes aren't quite life and death, but they're close. You're at your favorite amusement park, and you only have three hours to hit all your favorite rides. The only way to do so is to not backtrack EVEN ONCE! Ready, set, go!



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDREW ROBERTS

Rhyme Time

Ever heard of a “hink pink”? It’s a two-word rhyming solution to a puzzle, where each word in the answer has the same number of syllables.

Example: what would you call highly unusual facial hair? *Weird beard!* Try to solve the following hink pinks. Answers are on page 45 if you get stuck.

1. Laban's favorite weapon, with nothing interesting to do.

2. A pedal-propelled mode of transportation made from frozen water.

3. An outstanding marsupial.

4. Naomi's daughter-in-law, tellin' it like it is.

5. A magical grasshopper.

6. If Laman and Lemuel's dad were about two feet tall.

7. A confident and hopeful, tuxedoed resident of the South Pole.

8. A moat-worthy fortress where people give you a hard time.

9. Sending someone away because they brought you one of Paul's letters.

10. A ball-shaped, divine act.

11. Pet dogs (OK, not really) of the prophet in the lion's den.

12. The ability to clearly see the pure love of Christ.

“Dear Pahoran . . .”



Captain Moroni's assistant headed to the market to buy paper and ink. A scroll of paper and bottle of ink had the combined cost of a few shiblons of silver, which we'll call \$1.10. The paper cost one dollar more than the ink. How much did the ink cost? Check your answer on page 45.



The Last-Minute MIRACLE

By Cesar H. Bonito Duarte

When I was 16, I attended high school at a technical school in order to earn an associate's degree in electronics. As a requirement for my degree, I had to complete a 30-day internship at a local business to show my technical skills.

My internship was with a paper goods company. My desire to serve a full-time mission had begun to grow, and this job would help me earn enough money to go. But there were three of us interns, and the company would only select one of us for a full-time position.

The company had a machine that had failed. When the machine was working properly, it could complete


as much work as three similar machines. This piece of equipment hadn't been working for quite some time, and the company had ordered replacement parts from abroad to activate it—but it still didn't work. I accepted the challenge to try to fix it.

Day after day, I spent hours studying the machine. But it was complicated, and it wouldn't be easy to determine in just 30 days why it had failed, especially for someone as inexperienced as I was. However, I felt I could do it. Each morning before work, I read articles from the *Liahona* magazine and prayed to my Father in Heaven. I also struck up a friendship with my boss, an experienced electrical engineer, who obtained permission for me to take

home copies of the blueprints on the weekends. I studied them intently.

As the internship drew to an end, my two colleagues finished their assigned projects and I felt the pressure growing. But in spite of negative (and even mocking) comments around me, I never doubted. The Friday that marked the end of our internships arrived quickly. Though I had resolved some of the issues, the machine still wasn't working. I felt confident that I was close to fixing it, so I told my boss that if I could have permission to work on Saturday, the machine would be fixed by Monday.

My words astonished my boss so much that he personally requested permission from the president of the



*I was young, inexperienced, and short on time.
Could a simple prayer really bring about a miracle?*

company. My boss then informed me that the next day, all three of us—the president of the company, my boss, and I—would be working, just until noon. “All three?” I asked. He explained that the company president, an electronics engineer, was interested in my proposal because there had been so many failed efforts to repair the machine that he had given up on repairing it.

The next day, I was very intimidated to be working alongside two adult engineers. I was young and lacked expertise. However, they offered to work as my assistants; I felt uncomfortable and, at the same time, very privileged.

It was just minutes before noon when the president and my boss realized that our efforts had been a waste. I excused myself and went into the bathroom. I knelt down, praying to my Father with great fervor. I felt an unexplainable, marvelous strength. I asked Him to help me get the job because I would need it to help me pay for my mission.

I came out of the bathroom electrified; but by that time, my assistants had already closed up the circuit

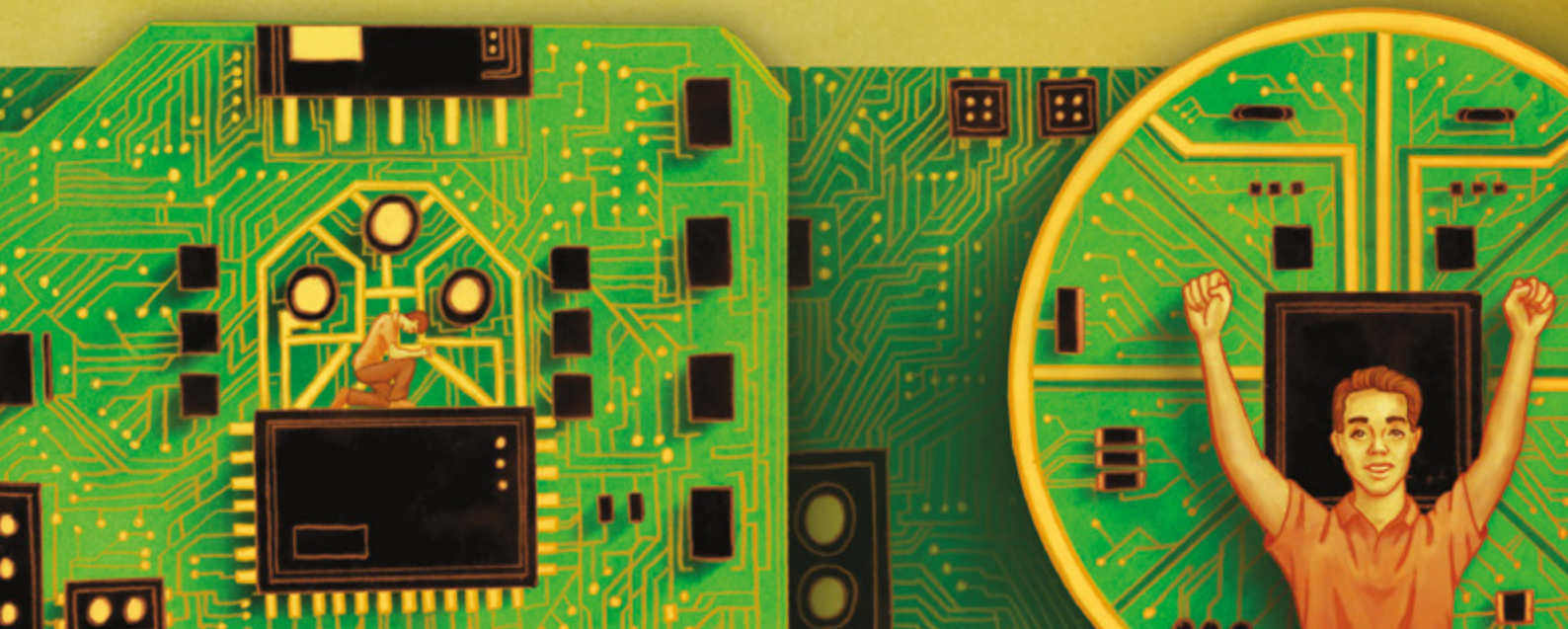
compartments and gathered up the tools. I opened the machine back up and looked carefully at the 15 circuit cards inside. I noticed that one simple pin among over 4,000 pins in the system was not connected to the card. I connected it, put it in place, and turned on the machine. It worked! It was a miracle.

It was an unforgettable and touching moment. My boss hugged me, and the company president shook my hand and congratulated me energetically.

I was able to work for that company for nearly two years, save up the money I needed, and leave on my long-awaited mission. When I explained the reason for my departure, the president of the company bid me farewell and said, “You already know where to come back to work after you finish your mission. I wish you much success.”

This experience showed me that nothing is impossible for God. If we do not doubt, miracles will be made manifest, but only after the trial of our faith—even at the last moment. Yes, miracles do occur. **NE**

The author lives in Aragua, Venezuela.





What If My
Testimony
DOESN'T
COME When
I Expect?



Whether you're asking for a testimony of something as big as Heavenly Father's love or as seemingly small as His ability to help you make good friends, don't give up.

By Hadley Griggs

Have you ever noticed that some people pray and get their testimonies right away, but others seem to wait for days, months, even years for a personal confirmation? Are you waiting for your testimony right now?

Believe it or not, as Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has explained, *immediate* revelation is actually “more rare than common.”¹ More often than not, revelation doesn't come quickly, like when you turn on a light. It comes gradually, like “night turn[ing] into morning”—a step-by-step process until the sun finally dawns.² So if you're working at gaining your testimony and it still hasn't come, don't worry, you're in good company!

Even some of our prophets have developed their testimonies slowly instead of all at once. President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918), as a boy, would pray all the time asking to see a miracle so that he could have a testimony. “But,” he explains, “the Lord withheld marvels from me, and showed me the truth, *line upon line* . . . until He made me to know the truth from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet. . . . By the whisperings of the still small voice of the spirit of the living God, He gave to me the testimony I possess.”³

It's perfectly normal for a testimony to come slowly—even when people around you seem to be receiving immediate answers. If you're still waiting for your testimony, it doesn't mean you're less worthy or less important. It just means it takes a little more time for you. For example, in the October 2016 general conference, Elder LeGrand Curtis Jr. of the Seventy explained: “Some people have . . . a powerful experience with the Book of Mormon the first time they open it, but for others the witness of the truthfulness comes more gradually as they read and pray about it.”⁴ Gaining a testimony is a personal and individual process, so it's OK if yours is being built slowly. It's totally normal!

Sometimes, a personal testimony can come so gradually that we don't even realize it's happening. It's kind of

like the way we “grow taller in physical stature; we hardly know it happens because it comes by growth.”⁵ We grow daily, inch by inch, until one day we look at the pencil mark on the wall and realize we're towering above our old selves. A testimony often works the same way! We can look at how we used to be, and we often notice how far we've come. (For an example of someone whose testimony came without her realizing it, look at [page 17](#).)

If your testimony isn't growing in the time frame you want, the most important thing is this: don't give up. Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles tells us: “I don't pretend to know why faith to believe comes easier for some than for others. I'm just so grateful to know that the answers are always there, and if we seek them—really seek with real intent and with full purpose of a prayerful heart—we will eventually find the answers to our questions as we continue on the gospel path.”⁶

Don't get discouraged. Heavenly Father loves you, and Jesus atoned for you and knows exactly what you're going through. There is a plan. Whatever the stage of your testimony, remember that the Lord requires just that we do our best. If you're doing your best, your testimony *will* come. Elder Bednar has said: “Just keep pressing forward obediently and with faith in the Savior. As you do so, you ‘cannot go amiss’ (D&C 80:3).”⁷



WE CAN RECEIVE THAT KNOWLEDGE

“One of the greatest things about our Heavenly Father's plan for His children is that each of us can know the truth of that plan for ourselves. That revealed knowledge does not come from books, from scientific proof, or from intellectual pondering. . . . We can receive that knowledge directly from our Heavenly Father through the witness of the Holy Ghost.”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2008 general conference.

BUT WHAT EXACTLY *IS* A TESTIMONY?

A testimony is a personal witness from the Holy Ghost. It starts with believing in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, and it grows “line upon line” (2 Nephi 28:30) to include every aspect of the gospel, such as knowing that families are forever, that the Book of Mormon is true, or that the prophet receives revelation from the Lord.

Sometimes we can feel like we’re not building our testimonies because we’re not quite sure what that “personal witness” feels like. We’ve always heard that the Spirit speaks to us with a “still, small voice,” but what exactly does that mean? Well, the Holy Ghost can speak to us in a variety of ways. Sometimes it’s as powerful as a prompting that “seems to occupy [your] mind, and press itself upon [your] feelings” (D&C 128:1). Other times it’s a burning feeling in your heart. And even other times it’s a simple feeling of peace and calm, and “you shall feel that it is right” (D&C 9:8). Just remember that “as you continue to seek and follow the Lord’s will in your life, you will come to recognize how the Holy Ghost influences you *personally*.”⁸

There are lots of ways to allow the Spirit to speak to you and help you gain a testimony. Some of the most common are through prayer, reading the scriptures, and taking the sacrament every week. But don’t stop there—you can also gain a testimony by studying conference talks, through music, service, and more. You can even gain a testimony through *bearing* it. **NE**

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. David A. Bednar, Apr. 2011 general conference.
2. David A. Bednar, Apr. 2011 general conference.
3. Joseph F. Smith, in Conference Report, Apr. 1900, 40–41; emphasis added.
4. LeGrand Curtis Jr., Oct. 2016 general conference.
5. Boyd K. Packer, “The Quest for Spiritual Knowledge,” *New Era*, Jan. 2007, 4.
6. M. Russell Ballard, Oct. 2016 general conference.
7. David A. Bednar, Apr. 2011 general conference.
8. *True to the Faith* (2004), 144; emphasis added.



WHAT DOES THE SPIRIT FEEL LIKE

*My sister and I
prayed about the
same question—
and our answers
came in completely
different ways.*

By Emily Walmer

A few years back a youth sacrament meeting speaker invited those who weren't sure they felt God's love to pray and ask whether Heavenly Father loves them.

I took that invitation to heart. Unbeknownst to me, my older sister also decided to do it. We each prayed individually that night. Months later we shared our experiences with one another. I told her how some time after praying, I'd allowed my mind to wander, eventually recalling a poem I had read about the Savior's love. I had been overwhelmed by the Spirit, and I had felt of the joy of both my Heavenly Father's and Savior's love for me. Tears of joy had crept to my eyes, and I had again folded my arms, this time in a prayer of gratitude.

My sister, however, recollected to me that she felt as if she hadn't received an answer like I had—no enlightening moment or warmth from the Spirit. At first she was disappointed. But in time, she came to realize that she didn't need an answer like mine: she already knew. And that was her answer.

Do not be discouraged if an answer to a prayer is not what you want or are expecting. Everyone is different, and Heavenly Father can answer the question in different ways, but He does answer prayers.

Because I have pondered Heavenly Father's love, I know that if we "ask God . . . with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ," that "he will manifest the truth of it unto [us], by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost [we] may know the truth of all things" (Moroni 10:4–5). **NE**

The author lives in California, USA.





To learn more about religious freedom and how to talk about it, visit lds.org/go/freedomNE317.

LONE VOICE

*In a mock-government activity,
I knew I was outnumbered,
but I had to defend my beliefs.*

By Connor Jones

For months, I had heard about a week-long conference for young men held annually in my state. This conference had been promoted in my hometown as an opportunity to learn about government, meet people from across the state, and bolster my resume. However, upon arriving at the conference, I found that the young men surrounding me were much different than the ones I knew at home. They did not share my beliefs. It was difficult to see and hear my beliefs and values questioned by everyone around me.

Part of this conference included a simulated government setting where we could introduce mock bills and debate them. During the conference, a young man introduced a bill related to a moral issue that went against my beliefs. I felt prompted to stand and express my beliefs in relation to this issue, and to argue against passing the bill. Outnumbered by others who seemed to support this piece of legislation, I have never felt more completely alone.

Before I stood to speak, I offered a silent prayer: "Please, Heavenly Father, help me to speak the words Thou would have me say. Help me to be guided by Thy Spirit." I was a single voice amid a sea of opposing opinions, and speaking out was one of the most difficult experiences of my life—but I did it. I told the other young men that I believed that the issue was morally wrong. I encouraged them to reconsider their opinions, and to vote against passing the bill.

As I sat down, one young man, a member of the Church from a town near mine, nodded in my direction. To my dismay, however, the bill passed when put to the vote. I felt sad and as if I had somehow failed. At the end of the session, though, a couple of young men came up to me, including the one who had nodded at me, and thanked me for speaking up. I felt a warmth in my heart because I knew I had done the right thing. I couldn't control the choices the other young men made, but I could make my own and encourage them to do what I knew was right.

That week only became harder, but I was borne up by the feelings I had after I bore my testimony in that room. I hope I influenced someone for the better that week, but even if I didn't, I learned that when things become difficult, I can rely on the Lord. I learned that I can stand up for what is right, even if I have to stand alone.

The author lives in Wyoming, USA.

PROCEED WITH FAITH AND COMPASSION

"Live and respectfully share your beliefs. Have meaningful, kind conversations with those of differing beliefs. Focus on seeking to understand one another's perspective and finding common ground that unites you. While such discussions might create some tension, which occurs naturally in any democracy, if you proceed with faith and compassion rather than fear you'll often discover fair compromises that result in a stronger society."

From religiousfreedom.lds.org.



By Elder
Randy D. Funk
Of the Seventy

When I was about eight years old, I learned a very valuable lesson. It was early spring in the small Utah town where I lived, and some of my eight-year-old friends and I wanted to camp outside one night. My father said, "It's still very cold at night. You'll be miserable, and you'll probably get sick."

I explained that we thought everything would be fine. My parents let me make my own choice, and my friends and I decided to go ahead with the campout. As it got late the temperature dropped and it became

very cold. Instead of having a great time, we were awake and miserable most of the night and, true to my father's prediction, a day or two later I got sick.

As I was sick at home and missing fun activities, I remembered the advice my father had given me. Every bad consequence he mentioned had happened. I remember thinking, "Wow, my dad is really smart." I came to realize, even at that young age, that my father had more experience and wisdom than me and if I were more careful in seeking and following his counsel it would make my life happier.

My parents taught me gospel truths and helped me understand that commandments

WHY
I HONOR MY
PARENTS

My life has been happier
because I trusted my
parents' righteous teachings.



are given by a loving Heavenly Father to make us happy. I felt a greater desire to live the commandments because of my trust in and love for my parents. Because of their example of goodness and love for me, it was easy for me to trust them and, in turn, to trust in my Heavenly Father. I learned there is wisdom in following the Lord's commandment to honor our father and our mother (see Exodus 20:12).

Joy for Them and for You

In *For the Strength of Youth* we read: "Honor your parents by showing love and respect for them. Obey them as they lead you in righteousness" ([2011], 14).

Youth need to be able to look to the loving guidance and counsel of righteous parents. Sometimes this seems difficult when you are young. Remember, your parents have been where you are and you have not yet been where they are. While there are differences between what they experienced as a youth and what you are experiencing, if you will seek to communicate with your parents and listen to them, it will be a great help to you.

Most of you come from homes where your parents love you and want to help you. But even if you come from a situation that is less than ideal, seek to develop the best relationship you can with your parents or those responsible for your care. Strive to honor them by living in a way that will be pleasing to your Heavenly Father. In doing so, you will also bring joy and happiness to your parents and to yourself.

Examples from the Scriptures

In the scriptures we also see the examples of many sons and daughters who lived righteous lives and

honored Heavenly Father and their parents. The prophet Nephi in the Book of Mormon is a great example to me. When Nephi wanted to see the tree of life vision that his father had seen, the Spirit asked Nephi if he believed that his father had seen the tree of which he had spoken. Nephi responded, "Yea, thou knowest that I believe all the words of my father" (1 Nephi 11:5). Nephi was then allowed to not only behold the tree of life as he desired but also witness in that vision the coming of the Savior into the world. Nephi was greatly blessed throughout his life because he listened to and trusted in the teachings of his righteous father.

I, like Nephi, was blessed with good parents, and I trusted in what they taught me. Because of their faith and teachings, the small seed of faith began to grow in me. As a result, I have always believed in Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and that the Church is true. At some point, through my own study of the scriptures, my own prayer, and my own experience in receiving powerful impressions of the Spirit, my testimony has become strong and independent of my parents. Today it affects every aspect of what I do and what I strive to be. For that, I honor my parents. NE

20 WAYS



TO HONOR MOM AND DAD

Here are some things you may already be doing or may never have thought of. Either way, try them out!

By Bethany Bartholomew
Church Magazines

You know that honoring parents is a commandment (see Exodus 20:12). But did you also know that it's about more than just obeying what they say? When you focus on getting to know your parents and building a relationship with them, you can find lots of ways to honor them. Even the little things count! Check out some of these ideas for fun and simple ways you can honor your parents every day. **NE**

CHEER UP
your siblings.

**GIVE YOUR PARENTS
A SINCERE COMPLIMENT.
TELL THEM WHEN THEY'RE
DOING A GOOD JOB.**

*Talk with your parents about
YOUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.
Ask their opinions.*

Help plan
**FAMILY HOME
EVENING.**

ASK YOUR PARENTS
*about their childhood
and teenage years.*

*Share
with your parents*
**SOMETHING
YOU LEARNED**
*in Sunday school, other
Church meetings, or even
during your personal
scripture study.*

**IGNORE
YOUR PHONE**
*during dinner or
family meetings.*

**CONTROL
THE VOLUME OF
YOUR VOICE,**
*even when you're
upset.*



**PRAY FOR
YOUR PARENTS**

*one at a time during
your personal
prayers.*



**MAKE A
SINCERE COMMENT
OR ASK AN
HONEST QUESTION**
during family scripture study.



*Make a goal
**TO TELL YOUR
FRIENDS ONLY
POSITIVE THINGS**
about your
parents.*



CATCH YOURSELF *before
you say something to a sibling
that might hurt their feelings.*



**GO
GROCERY
SHOPPING**
*with your
parents.*



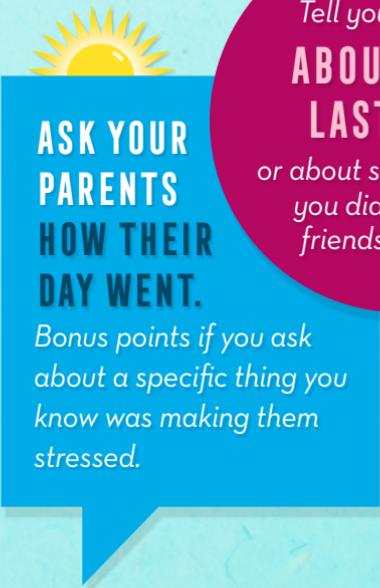
**PICK A FAMILY
RULE THAT IS
HARD FOR YOU
TO REMEMBER,**
*and practice keeping
it for a week.*



SPEND TIME
*doing some of your
parents' favorite activities
with them.*
*(If you don't know what
those are yet,
just ask!)*



RESEARCH YOUR FAMILY HISTORY
*with your parents, and take family names
to the temple with them.*



**ASK YOUR
PARENTS
HOW THEIR
DAY WENT.**

*Bonus points if you ask
about a specific thing you
know was making them
stressed.*



*Tell your parents
**ABOUT YOUR
LAST DATE**
or about something fun
you did with your
friends recently.*



DO ONE OF THE CHORES
*your parents usually
RESERVE FOR THEMSELVES.*



*Tell your
parents
**YOU LOVE
THEM.***

7 THINGS WE FEAR ABOUT REPENTANCE

→ AND WHY WE
SHOULDN'T



We're often afraid to repent. But we can take courage in the truth.

By David A. Edwards

Church Magazines

We all know that every person needs repentance (see Romans 3:23). We know we need to repent in order to find true joy through the power of Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice (see Alma 36:24). We also know that putting off repentance is a bad idea (see

Alma 34:32–34). Yet so many of us do just that. Why? We know better, right?

One possible answer is fear. Whether we've committed a serious sin that we need to confess to our bishop or we have some little habits, attitudes, or behaviors that keep us from being fully committed to the

Lord's gospel and its standards, fear can keep us from doing what we need to do to change our lives.

Here are seven fears that can cause us to put off repentance, as well as some ideas and teachings that can help us take courage and do what we know will bring us peace and happiness.

1. FEAR OF EMBARRASSMENT

If I tell my bishop what I've done, he'll be so disappointed—and I'll be so embarrassed. What if I have to tell my parents? What if others find out?

There are far worse things than embarrassment, such as the spiritual burden of unresolved sin and the loss of the companionship of the Holy Ghost. Any feeling of embarrassment you have in confessing to your bishop will last only a small moment and then be completely swept away by a wave of relief and joy. Anyone who has confessed to their bishop can attest to this.



"I promise you [that the bishop] will not condemn you. As a servant of the Lord, he will be kind and understanding as he listens to you. He will then help you through the repentance process. He is the Lord's messenger of mercy to help you become clean through the Atonement of Jesus Christ."

Elder C. Scott Grow of the Seventy, "Why and What Do I Need to Confess to My Bishop?" *New Era*, Oct. 2013, 29.

2. FEAR OF CONSEQUENCES

If I tell my bishop about my sins, there might be consequences—not taking the sacrament, not blessing or passing the sacrament, not leaving on a mission when I want to. That would mess up my life too much.

Remember that the positive consequences of repenting far outweigh what seem to be negative consequences. Focus on the good things the Lord promises to those who confess and repent.



"The fact that we can repent is the good news of the gospel! Guilt can be swept away. We can be filled with joy, receive a remission of our sins, and have peace of conscience. We can be freed from feelings of despair and the bondage of sin."

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Oct. 2016 general conference.

"If you have sinned, the sooner you repent, the sooner you begin to make your way back and find the peace and joy that come with forgiveness."

For the Strength of Youth (2011), 28.



3. FEAR OF EFFORT

Making the kinds of changes I need to make seems so hard. It might take a long time too.

Anything worthwhile takes effort. Forgiveness, peace, and spiritual growth are among the most worthwhile things imaginable.



"Repentance means striving to change. It would mock the Savior's suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross for us to expect that He should transform us into angelic beings with no real effort on our part. Rather, we seek His grace to complement and reward our most diligent efforts (see 2 Nephi 25:23). Perhaps as much as praying for mercy, we should pray for time and opportunity to work and strive and overcome."

Elder D. Todd Christofferson, Oct. 2011 general conference.



5. FEAR OF LOSING YOUR PERSONALITY

If I conform to the Church's standards, I'll be giving up some of the things that make me me, like my favorite movies, TV shows, music, and ways of expressing myself. I'll just be another cookie-cutter Mormon. I'd rather just be me.

Through repentance, you can have the Holy Spirit in your life. And through the Spirit, you can discover a deeper, truer, and better individual identity. It will be based on who you can become in God's eyes rather than anything constructed on the sandy foundation of tastes, preferences, habits, and quirks.



"Satan would rather that you define yourself by your sins instead of your divine potential. . . . Don't listen to him."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Four Titles," Apr. 2013 general conference.



"There is more individuality in those who are more holy.

"Sin, on the other hand, brings sameness; it shrinks us to addictive appetites and insubordinate impulses."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Oct. 1991 general conference.



4. FEAR OF A SHATTERED SELF-IMAGE

I'm one of the "good kids." If I admit that I've made mistakes, that's it—I wouldn't be a "good kid" anymore. What would I be? Who would I be? I'd rather just try to forget it and move on as though everything were the same.

We have to humbly acknowledge our sin before God so that He can "make weak things become strong" for us (Ether 12:27). And the image of yourself that you should strive to acquire is the one that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have of you: a child of God who, though imperfect, has infinite and divine potential through Their help.



"God sees us as we truly are—and He sees us worthy of rescue. . . .

"... With each step of faith on the path of discipleship, we grow into the beings of eternal glory and infinite joy we were designed to become."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "He Will Place You on His Shoulders and Carry You Home," Apr. 2016 general conference.

6. FEAR OF FAILURE

I've tried to change so many times but keep making the same mistakes. Maybe I've had all my chances. Maybe I'll never be able to change. If I try one more time and fail, won't that prove it?

Repentance isn't easy. It isn't meant to be. But it's your path to joy, so stick with it. There is no limit to sincere repentance (see Mosiah 26:30). The Son of God gave Himself as an infinite and eternal sacrifice to atone for our sins so that we can be forgiven if we have faith and repent (see Alma 34:9–16). Did you catch that? *Infinite* and *eternal*. You are not beyond the bounds of His Atonement, because it has no bounds. Keep trying.



"Sometimes in our repentance, in our daily efforts to become more Christlike, we find ourselves repeatedly struggling with the same difficulties. As if we were climbing a tree-covered mountain, at times we don't see our progress until we get closer to the top and look back from the high ridges. Don't be discouraged. If you are striving and working to repent, you are in the process of repenting."

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, [Oct. 2009 general conference](#).



"With the gift of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and the strength of heaven to help us, we can improve, and the great thing about the gospel is we get credit for *trying*, even if we don't always succeed."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, [Apr. 2016 general conference](#).

7. FEAR OF SUCCESS

What if I really am able to change my life? There might be a lot more expected of me then. Maybe it's just better to be flawed and mediocre so I won't be expected to take on more responsibility.

Being afraid of higher expectations or more responsibility may come from laziness or insecurity. But Heavenly Father's plan is one of improvement and progress. You accepted that plan before this life; embrace it now by being diligent and having faith. Try to see the kind of person Heavenly Father wants you to become and the kind of life He wants you to have. If you could actually see the person you have the potential to become, it would be difficult for you to even believe it. With Heavenly Father's and the Savior's help, it's within your grasp.



"Our responsibility is to rise from mediocrity to competence, from failure to achievement. Our task is to become our best selves."

President Thomas S. Monson, "[The Will Within](#)," Apr. 1987 general conference.



JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED



By Charlotte Larcabal

Church Magazines

I hate going to the doctor. I always dread the fuss, the wait time, the shots, the orders to “take it easy.” When I was really little, I thought nurses and doctors were just mean people who thought I was a pin cushion, but as I got older I figured out they weren’t evil; they were helping. And I almost always felt better soon after seeing them. No matter how boring the waiting room was, how much I yelled getting a shot, or how disappointed I was when the doctor told me I needed to stay off my feet, in the end, it was always worth it.

Sometimes repentance might feel a bit like to a trip to the doctor.

A JOY OR A PAIN?

Instead of cringing when you think about gross-tasting medicine or sharp needles, do you cringe a little when you hear the phrases “racked with eternal torment,” “tormented with the pains of hell,” and “the gall of bitterness”? (see Alma 36:12–18). That’s how Alma described the beginning of his repentance, wasn’t it?

After the angel appeared to Alma and the sons of Mosiah, Alma remembered all of his sins and saw how he had rebelled against God. He was so miserable that he wished he could “become extinct both soul and body” (Alma 36:15). Ouch. That almost makes a doctor’s shots seem like getting a high five from Grandma. So why would Alma go on to labor “without ceasing, that [he] might bring souls unto repentance”? (Alma 36:24). Why would he want other people to experience something that had been so painful for him?

Perhaps it was because of what happened next.

He remembered his Savior, Jesus Christ.

“I cried within my heart: O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me. . . .

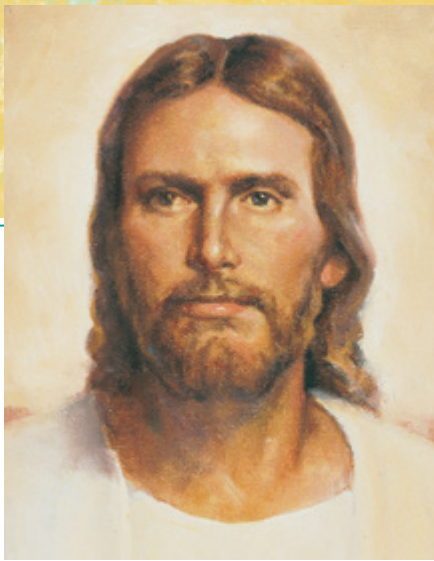
“And now, behold, when I thought this, I could remember my pains no more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more.

“And oh, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy *as exceeding*

as was my pain!” (Alma 36:18–20; emphasis added). Alma learned that as difficult and even painful as it can be to face our sins, the joy we experience after is worth it. The joy he felt was more exquisite and sweet than anything he had ever felt before (see Alma 36:21).

NOTHING TO FEAR

If people cringe at the thought of repentance, it may be because they focus on the painful part. Often repentance does require time, and sometimes making amends takes a lot of humility and hard work, but as Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, “Repentance is not punishment. It is the hope-filled path to a more glorious future.”¹ President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, calls it “the sweet *blessing* of repentance.”² In other words, there is no reason to fear or avoid any aspect of repentance. No matter how difficult it is to face and make amends for our sins, the healing power of the Savior



through His Atonement will always be there to carry us through, and the joy we feel will completely overpower and overshadow any feelings of pain, embarrassment, or sorrow we may have had before.

FOR YOUR OWN GOOD

Do you know what the phrase *Primum non nocere* means? If you're a doctor, you probably do. *Primum non nocere* is Latin for "first do no harm." It's a guiding principle for all medical practitioners, a promise they make. That doesn't mean they promise to never cause pain, but instead that everything they do will always be for their patient's well-being.

Do you think God and Jesus Christ make any promises like that? You better believe it! Just take a look at Isaiah

1:18; Isaiah 41:13; Romans 8:28; and 3 Nephi 13:14. (Seriously, look them up. And these are only a few of them!) The difference is, humans can sometimes make mistakes. But Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father are perfect, so you can be absolutely certain that everything They ask of you will be for your own good. Always. So when God prescribes a dose of repentance, it's because He knows it will bless your life. Repentance isn't about punishment. It's about healing, triumphing over weakness, putting off the natural man, and turning away from sin in order to turn to God.

"Embrace the Atonement of Jesus Christ and repentance as things that are to be welcomed and applied daily according to the Great Physician's orders," said Elder Jörg

Klebingat of the Seventy. "Establish an attitude of ongoing, happy, joyful repentance by making it your lifestyle of choice."³

When the Great Physician, Jesus Christ, writes you a prescription for repentance, don't let your fear of pain or humiliation get in the way. Trust His promises that even though it may hurt for a little while, with great mercies will He gather you (see 3 Nephi 22:7), and just like Alma, you will be filled with joy as exceeding as your pain (see Alma 36:19–20). **NE**

NOTES

1. Richard G. Scott, [Oct. 2013 general conference](#).
2. Russell M. Nelson, [Apr. 2007 general conference](#); emphasis added.
3. Jörg Klebingat, [Oct. 2014 general conference](#).

CHOOSE HOPE

No matter what you're going through, you can find
"a perfect brightness of hope" through the gospel.

(See 2 Nephi 31:20.)



FOUR STEPS TO **TURN** TOWARD GOD

NEED TO CHANGE DIRECTION? HERE ARE SOME
WAYS TO MAKE THE RIGHT TURN.

By Eric B. Murdock
Church Magazines

Have you ever had one of these thoughts: “Oh no, I made the same mistake *again!* How could I be so weak?”

“I’m terrible. I’m worthless.”

“I’ve sinned too much for God to forgive and help me now.”

When we’ve done something wrong, thoughts like these can make repentance feel almost impossible. But it’s important to remember that this isn’t true, no matter how strong these feelings may be.

Heavenly Father never intended for repentance to feel so discouraging that it makes us feel like giving up. He sees repentance as a way for us to be close to Him.

Repentance may be difficult at times, but remember what Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: “The very beauty of the word *repentance* is the promise of escaping old problems and old habits and old sorrows and old sins. It is among the most hopeful and encouraging—and yes, most peaceful—words in the gospel vocabulary.”¹

And Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “When we repent, we turn back toward God.”²

Here are four ways we can remember to repent and enjoy the blessings that come as we **TURN** toward God:



T

THANK

*Thank Heavenly Father for the
opportunity to repent.*

.....

T: *Thank* Heavenly Father for repentance. Elder Holland has taught: “Repentance is simply the scriptural invitation for growth and improvement and progress and renewal. You can change!”³ This change is possible through Jesus Christ. Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, “Repentance is not only possible but also joyful because of our Savior.”⁴ We should always thank Heavenly Father for His Son and the opportunity to repent and become better.

U

UNDERSTAND

Understand what you need to improve.

U: *Understand* what needs improvement. Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: “Think about how you’re doing right now in keeping the commandments of God. Do you see something in your life that is less than what you want it to be? Are you struggling with some habit or behavior that is not in harmony with the plan of salvation? . . . If you know of things in your life that you do not like, ask your Heavenly Father for help and you will find the inner strength to change.”⁵



R

REMEMBER

Remember the Savior.

R: *Remember* the Savior Jesus Christ. Repentance and forgiveness are available *only* through the Savior, so it’s important to keep Him in our thoughts. One important way we do this is taking the sacrament, where we promise to “always remember him” (D&C 20:77, 79).

N

NOTICE

Notice what Heavenly Father is doing to help you.

N: *Notice* what Heavenly Father is doing to help you. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught: “At the end of our day, we kneel again and report back to our Father. We review the events of the day and express heartfelt thanks for the blessings and the help we received. We repent and, with the assistance of the Spirit of the Lord, identify ways we can do and become better tomorrow.”⁶

Heavenly Father sent His Son to atone for our sins so we can repent and be forgiven. Turning to God brings love, joy, and peace. **NE**

NOTES

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, Oct. 1996 general conference.
2. Neil L. Andersen, Oct. 2009 general conference.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “For Times of Trouble,” *New Era*, Oct. 1980, 11.
4. Dale G. Renlund, Oct. 2016 general conference.
5. M. Russell Ballard, “Keep the Commandments—Beginning Right Now!” (BYU fireside address, Sept. 6, 1987), 2, speeches.byu.edu.
6. David A. Bednar, Oct. 2008 general conference.





Alexander M.



Elisa M.

How We're HELPING REFUGEES

We didn't have to do huge things, we just
had to speak the language of kindness.



Joseph M.

By Richard M. Romney
Church Magazines

Elisa M., 15, who lives in Germany, will never forget the first time she met a refugee family. Her family decided to participate in a community *Patenschaft*, a mentoring program where they would befriend a family that had had to move from Syria because of the war. The two families met in a park to get acquainted.

"I was nervous," Elisa says. "I didn't know what to expect." The Syrian family had three children, ages 7, 4, and 2, and a baby on the way.

"My parents and their parents talked a little, but the children were kind of shy. They didn't speak. They were just observing."





BEGIN WITH PRAYER

“Begin on your knees in prayer. Then think in terms of doing something close to home, in your own community, where you will find people who need help in adapting to their new circumstances. . . . The possibilities for us to lend a hand and be a friend are endless.”

Elder Patrick Kearon of the Seventy, Apr. 2016 general conference.

A KICK START

Then her brothers, Alexander, 12, and Joseph, 6, started kicking a soccer ball. That broke the ice. Soon the seven-year-old and the four-year-old started kicking the ball too. “We just had to show them where to start,” Alexander explains, “and *Fußball* [soccer] is a ‘language’ that we have in common.”

The families became friends. “We have helped them to better understand German, and to get settled in their apartment,” Elisa says.

Assisting others comes naturally to Elisa, who has already helped to make school kits for refugee children. “This summer at youth conference we sewed cloth bags and then filled them with pencils and other supplies they would need for the first day of classes.” Helping also

comes naturally to Alexander, who recently became a deacon. “Holding the priesthood means we should always pitch in,” he says.

Elisa and Alexander agree that actually meeting refugees increased their compassion for them. “Getting to know them makes you want to help them even more,” Elisa says. “They’re always thankful and have a smile on their face. Their example teaches me to be more grateful.”

“We keep finding out they’re like us,” Alexander says. “They joke, sing, laugh, and eat. And they know more about enduring tough things in life than we do, because they had to flee from war. By being friends with them, we’re doing what the Savior would do. He cares about everyone, and we should too.”





Vinzenz C.



Ida C.



Philip C.

GROWING UNDERSTANDING

Three siblings in another family in the same stake have also joined in a community *Patenschaft*.

"The family we're mentoring is from Afghanistan," says Vinzenz C., 17. "They fled because bombs were falling around them and they were afraid they wouldn't survive. They crossed the sea in a rickety boat, traveled through several countries, and lived in camps for a long time before they were placed in our community."

Like Elisa, Vini (as his friends call him) had also previously prepared materials for refugees. He was one of about 50 youth who sorted donated clothing and toys. "I was carrying boxes around for about six hours," he recalls. "It was exhausting, but it helped me to understand how much they need simple things we often take for granted."

Meeting a refugee family in person deepened his desire to be of service, and the same is true for his brother Philip, 15, and his sister Ida, 12.

"I helped the elders quorum assemble bicycles that a company donated," Philip says. "We attached the wheels and the pedals. You don't need to do huge things, just do simple things and you can make a difference in refugees' lives."

"It's difficult to be in a completely new environment, with new customs, foods, and languages," Ida says. "If I had to go through what they're going through, I'd be eager to just have a friend." She says she has also learned from their example of sticking together as a family, even during desperate trials.

MANY "LANGUAGES"

So, if you want to get to know refugees, where do you start?

"You can communicate in a lot of ways," Ida says. "You can point, nod your head, or smile. Besides words, remember you can also communicate with feelings and emotions."

There are, in fact, many "languages" everyone speaks—music, kindness, laughter, and love, for example. "You already speak many 'languages' that they understand," Ida says. "Like *Fußball*. Start with those. Show that you care for them and that you want to help them."

"It's about understanding them," Vini says. For example, refugees are often deeply religious and have faith and traditions of their own. "Reaching out to them is not about bringing them into the Church. It's about treating them as brothers and sisters of our Heavenly Father, with respect and love."



Many Ways You Can Help

Many agencies in your community can use your help. Find out how to get started at IWasaStranger.lds.org.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Abby P., 12, of Utah, USA, has witnessed such respect and love firsthand as her family has mentored a refugee family from the Democratic Republic of the Congo that came to America after living in refugee camps in Burundi and Tanzania, Africa.

She's also been impressed at how young women in her ward have rallied around four refugee teenagers.

"The family we're friends with has a sister in high school and a younger brother, Alimasi M.; a sister; and a cousin, all in junior high," Abby says. "We wanted them to be ready for school and for winter, so we organized some events to help them prepare."

First was an opportunity for the refugees to meet young people their own age. Abby's family organized a party "where we served food that you might see in Tanzania, like *mishkaki* [skewers of roasted meat and vegetables]." They also played games familiar to Americans, like tag. "Mostly we just introduced our refugee friends to everybody, so they could have friends when they started school," Abby explains.

They also learned that their new friends had never experienced winter, so they organized a clothing drive to gather coats, boots, pants, and stockings. And they learned that the refugees' younger brothers and sisters were homesick, "so we found some videos in French and Swahili [languages they understand] and put them on a flash drive so they could watch them with their siblings."



Alimasi M.



Abby P.

When someone asks Abby why she helps refugees, she says, "They're nice people, and they shouldn't be left to suffer." Then she shares the Bible story of Mary and Joseph fleeing to Egypt with two-year-old Jesus to escape Herod's soldiers, who were murdering innocent children (see Matthew 2:13–23).

"The Savior was a refugee, too," Abby says. "I think He must have a soft spot in his heart for refugees." **NE**



IGNORING THE FINISH LINE





Should I give up a chance to help my team—and help a total stranger instead?

By Heather Lavery

As told to Michelle Nagel

I stretched my legs in eager anticipation as I waited for the starting gun. I had been training hard for this first cross-country invitational of the season, running up to eight miles every day but Sunday, followed by weight training. Day after day I dragged myself home, muscles aching.

"The whole team is counting on you to claim a ribbon or even a medal, Heather," Coach told me. "Don't let us down."

I glanced around at the other 39 girls at the starting line and wondered who would be fastest.

At the sound of the gun, I darted forward. Choosing a spot I was comfortable with, I watched as some of the girls ran ahead. My chest began to tighten, so I slowed down, letting more girls pass. I wasn't worried. I knew how to pace myself.

After about a mile, I could see a girl on the ground to the side of the course. Other girls called out encouraging words and then flashed by her. As I approached, I could see the girl was having difficulty breathing. Instinctively, I ran to the girl and dropped to my knees.

"Come on, you have to get up," I gasped, trying to help the girl sit up.

She whimpered through tortured breaths. Her body was stiff and shaking; her eyes clearly frightened.

As I watched runner after runner speed past us, I knew my hopes for a winning time were slipping with every second. But I couldn't just leave her on the side of the road, alone and sick. I spoke softly to calm her down.

After a few minutes, an official came running to help. About that same time, a woman in a red car pulled up.

The woman knelt beside the shaking girl. After a quick inspection, she said, "She's hyperventilating. I'm a nurse. Let's get her back to the school."

I felt I couldn't abandon the sick girl. With a silent prayer, I climbed into the car with her. The woman handed me a brown paper bag. "Keep it over her face," she commanded. The girl was shaking so badly that it was difficult for me to keep the bag positioned over her face and mouth as the woman drove the twists and tight corners to the school.

I fought the tears that threatened to spill out. Here I was in a strange town helping a girl I'd never even laid eyes on before. Coach would be furious, my teammates would think I was crazy, and I had missed my chance for a medal.

I felt somewhat relieved as the car pulled into the school parking lot. We laid the girl on the couch in the teacher's lounge. The girl's mother came into the room and touched the girl's forehead.

"How are you doing?" she asked.

The girl answered, weakly, "I'm better."

The mother smiled at me. "Sisters helping sisters, I see."

I wondered what she meant by that.

The girl's grandfather came in. The mother whispered, "Dad, she needs a blessing."

"Are you LDS?" I whispered, startled.

"Yes," came the simple reply. "That's what I meant about sisters helping sisters. I saw your CTR ring."

After saying good-bye, I went looking for Coach. When I spotted him, I swallowed hard at the stormy look on his face.

"Coach!" I yelled, running to his side.

"I'm sorry I didn't finish the race, but there

was this girl, and she needed my help."

"I heard," he said stiffly.

"What happened?"

I hurriedly sketched in the details. The coach's expression didn't change.

"I commend you for what you did," he said frostily. "But I would have preferred that you'd stayed in the race. I was counting on you to win." I nodded and then turned away so he wouldn't see me cry.

At home that night I told my story again. When I had finished, my dad gave me a big hug.

"We're so proud of you," he said. "You did the right thing."

"But I could have won a ribbon or maybe even a medal," I protested.

"You did something more important and longer lasting than a medal instead," Mom said.

That night, as I prepared a sacrament meeting

talk on "The Family:

A Proclamation to the World," I was still troubled.

Maybe I should've run past the girl like everyone else. The official would've taken care of her,

right? My stomach turned as I thought about letting the team and my coach

down, and about losing my medal.

When I read the proclamation, the second paragraph stood out: "All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents" ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129).

"That's why I had to stop and help," I said. A warm feeling chased away my confusion. "She's a daughter of God. She needed help, and I was there."

Although it had been hard, I knew Heavenly Father approved, and that was the most important thing to me. **NE**

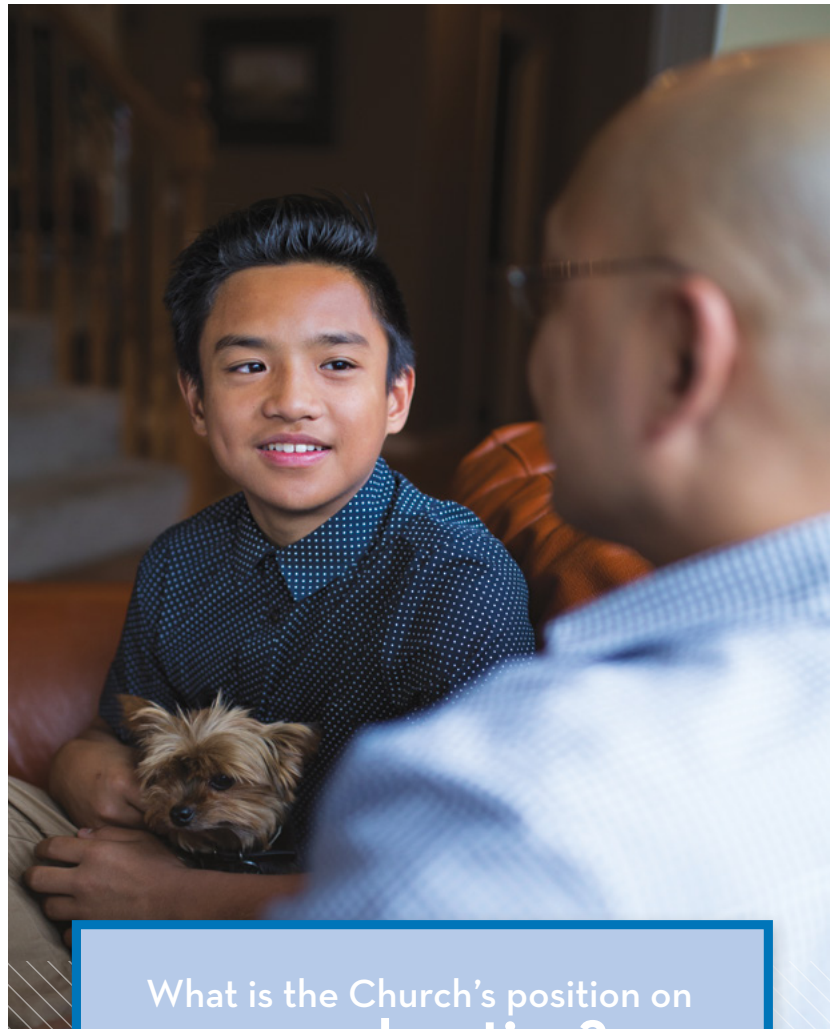
The author lives in California, USA.



Why don't we know much about our Heavenly Mother?

We know that we have both a Heavenly Father and a Heavenly Mother. This knowledge appears to have originated with Joseph Smith and has been repeatedly reinforced by inspired teachings of Church leaders over the years. However, beyond the existence of a Heavenly Mother and the role of our Heavenly Parents in working together for the salvation and exaltation of their children, no further details about Heavenly Mother have been revealed. For now, we know enough to understand that we are children of Heavenly Parents, who want us to become like Them. This understanding helps us see who we are and what we can become. It shows us that gender is part of our eternal identity and that men and women cannot be exalted without each other. And those are rare and precious truths in themselves. **NE**

For more information, see "Mother in Heaven" at [topics.lds.org](https://www.lds.org/topics).



What is the Church's position on sex education?

Church leaders have said that you should be taught about intimacy primarily by your parents. In this responsibility, parents are encouraged to teach in the home about sexual intimacy honestly and plainly to help their children avoid serious transgressions. The Church even has materials to help in this teaching (see [lds.org/manual/a-parents-guide](https://www.lds.org/manual/a-parents-guide)).

When it comes to what you are taught in school about sex, Church leaders have urged your parents to be aware of what is taught there and to do what they can to ensure that it follows good moral and ethical values. **NE**

“How do I make
good friends?
I try to be nice,
but they turn
me away.”

Feeling like you don't have many friends is hard to deal with. Sometimes you may feel alone, but remember that you are a loved child of Heavenly Father. You can turn to Him for help and guidance, especially as you work to make good friends. Your family can also be a great strength to you and can be your longest-lasting friends. Be patient! Making lasting friends may take some time and effort, but it will be worth it.

American writer Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, “The only way to have a friend is to be one” (“Friendship,” *Essays: First Series* [1841]). This is as true now as it was when he first wrote it.

One thing you can do is to think about the kind of friend you would like to have and then be that kind of friend to those around you. This will help you find worthy friends who will build you up.

For the Strength of Youth suggests that you “show genuine interest in others; smile and let them know you care about them. Treat everyone with kindness and respect, and refrain from judging and criticizing those around you. Do not participate in any form of bullying. Make a special effort to be a friend to those who are shy or lonely, have special needs, or do not feel included” ([2011], 16).

Sometimes learning a new skill or hobby will lead you to friends who share the same interests as you. As you get involved in wholesome activities, focus on others, listen to them, and as you find ways to serve, you can draw like-minded friends to you. **NE**



Keep Looking

Sometimes people won't accept who you are. They may turn you away because you're

different, you have different beliefs and standards, or they're jealous of unique qualities you have. Continue to be a good friend, and continue to be nice. If they still turn you away, find other people who accept who you are and have your standards. Ask Heavenly Father to help you find good friends and to be nice to those who turn you away.

Jessie G., 14, Idaho, USA



Smile

Smile! How people see you affects if they want to get to know you. This doesn't mean

you need to change your clothes or attitude. Just smile to let others know that you are open to conversations. A smile can go a long way.

Joni J., 17, Utah, USA

Common Interests

Find people who have common interests with you. That doesn't mean that you drop your standards or change who you are, but try to find people who like the same things you do.

James G., 16, California, USA



Be a Good Friend

Treat everyone with kindness, respect, and love. Show an interest and that you care about

them. Find friends who will help you to obey the commandments of God.

Fidel Ford M., 14, Philippines

Serve Others

Being nice is definitely a good way to start. I believe that if you try to serve others around you, then they will react and be nice in return. The people that respond warmly to your kindness will be the friends you want to have.

Kendall C., 17, Washington, USA



Continue to Be Kind

Continue to be kind. Try to be a good example to them.

David S., 14, Utah, USA

Be Genuinely Interested

Being genuinely interested in other people helps them trust you and want to get to know you better.

Jane M., 16, California, USA



Be a Good Friend

If you want good friends, you have to be a good friend. You show people what

you think of yourself and your values by the way you act and dress. Act the way you want people to act around you. Be the kind of friend you would want.

Emma H., 18, Utah, USA

Put Yourself Out There

Put yourself out there. I have moved many times and have learned that people are just as nervous as you are to make new friends. So be the one to talk to others and get to know them.

Aubrey A., 14, Colorado, USA

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



TRUE FRIENDS

"True friendships are based on love of God and sharing that love with others..."

"... To have friends who live high standards, who stand for virtue and goodness, who are faithful and true to their covenants, you must be such a person to them."

Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "True Friendship," *New Era*, Oct. 2016, 4-5.

UPCOMING QUESTION

"What should I do if my friends have different standards from mine?"

Send your answer and photo by April 15, 2017.

Go to newera.lds.org, click "Submit Your Work," sign in with your LDS account, and then select "New Era."

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



The Atonement of Jesus Christ

When we think about Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice and the love it represents, we "stand all amazed" (see *Hymns*, no. 193). Church leaders taught us many important things related to the Atonement of Jesus Christ in the October 2016 general conference. For instance:

- "If Ye Had Known Me," by Elder David A. Bednar
- "Valiant in the Testimony of Jesus," by Elder Quentin L. Cook
- "Abide in My Love," by Elder D. Todd Christofferson
- "Repentance: A Joyful Choice," by Elder Dale G. Renlund
- "Am I Good Enough? Will I Make It?" by Elder J. Devn Cornish
- "The Master Healer," by Carole M. Stephens

Find these and more at conference.lds.org.



Share These Cards

Give yourself an easy reminder to think about this month's theme. Just place these cards in your scriptures, locker, or bedroom. You can also download or share them online at lds.org/go/cardsNE317.

THE REMARKABLE AND
CELESTIAL BLESSING OF THE
SAVIOR'S ATONEMENT IS THAT
THROUGH REPENTANCE,
SINFUL CONDUCT IS
BLOTTED OUT.

Elder Quentin L. Cook
Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
October 2016 general conference

WHEN WE CHOOSE
TO REPENT, WE
IMMEDIATELY INVITE
THE SAVIOR INTO
OUR LIVES.

Elder Dale G. Renlund
Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
October 2016 general conference







A BIRTHDAY WISH FOR MY DAD

My father was never raised in any religion, and my mother's family became less active when my mother was young. But one day my mother felt like she was missing something, so she decided to go back to the church she had grown up in, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. My sisters and I went with her. But my father didn't like our attending church, and it tested my parents' relationship like never before.

I was baptized when I was eight,

and I learned how families can be together forever. Every year on my birthday, I blew out the candles secretly wishing for my father to be baptized. I prayed that my dad's heart would be softened. After many years, the missionaries were eventually able to eat dinner with us. But the gospel was never brought up.

Then one summer my father came with me on a Young Men camping trip. Though he wasn't a member, my dad was put in charge of a fireside! I was scared, but everyone helped by participating in the fireside. Then my friend bore his testimony of prayer. He shared a time my father had helped my friend's little brother and had been an answer to his prayer.

For the first time ever, I saw my dad cry. He felt the Spirit.

After that trip, my father wanted to learn more about the gospel with a new enthusiasm, and one morning he announced that he wanted to be baptized. We couldn't believe it!

My father's baptism was one of the best days of my life. The chapel was packed with everyone who came to support my dad, and I practiced the baptismal prayer a few hundred times because I was so excited. I was able to baptize my dad, and I can't even describe the overwhelming emotions I felt as I embraced my father in the baptismal font.

The next year my family and I were sealed in the temple. After the sealing, we stood in a circle—as an eternal family—hugging each other with tears of joy running down our faces.

From this experience I learned that anything is possible. Don't give up. I am going to try my absolute best to be worthy to be sealed in the temple with my future family.

Cooper B., California, USA



WORKING THROUGH MY FAMILY TRIALS

After my parents were divorced, it was a hard time in my life. Going to church usually made me feel better, but it hurt me to hear talks on families because I didn't believe I had one.

My mother was less active and remarried. My father was an atheist and lived with another woman. Both of them had children with their new partners, and I felt like a weight—an error—as if I didn't

count for anything.

So I began to pray, read the scriptures, and meditate, and I tried to keep going to church. But I couldn't help but wonder: What would I do in the next life without my family sealed in the temple?

The answers didn't come right away, but they did come. I looked up the definition of *family* and read scripture verses on the subject, and I started seeing the brighter side of things. Instead of thinking that I didn't have a family, I learned that I could help bring God's children into the Church as a missionary. I learned to exercise patience and to be a light. I tried to better myself. I also realized that without a family like mine,

I may not have developed the faith that I have, and I wouldn't value the law of chastity and the plan of salvation as I do now.

I've come to understand that I *do* have a family. It has been hard, but I don't worry about what will happen to my family after death. I trust in God, and He knows why we aren't sealed for the time being. He knows how much I love them and what's best for me. We can't understand everything, so it's important to have faith in God to sustain us and help us know that everything will turn out OK.

I am thankful for my new and larger family, and I have faith that one day we can be found all together at the temple. I know God loves me and that He loves everyone, and I know that if I do His will, one day I'll return to Him with my family.

Silvia C., Umbria, Italy



By Elder
Neil L. Andersen
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

HOW TO FACE TRIALS OF FAITH

Fiery trials are designed to make you stronger, but they have the potential to diminish or even destroy your trust in the Son of God and to weaken your resolve to keep your promises to Him. These trials are often camouflaged, making them difficult to identify. They take root in our weaknesses, our vulnerabilities, our sensitivities, or in those things that matter most to us. A real but manageable test for one can be a fiery trial for another.

How do you remain “steadfast and immovable” (Alma 1:25) during a trial of faith? You immerse yourself in the very things that helped build your core of faith: you **exercise faith in Christ**, you **pray**, you **ponder** the scriptures, you **repent**, you **attend church** and **take the sacrament**, you **keep the commandments**, and you **serve** others.

When faced with a trial of faith—whatever you do, you don’t step away from the Church! Distancing yourself from the kingdom of God during a

trial of faith is like leaving the safety of a secure storm cellar just as the tornado comes into view.

The Apostle Paul said, “Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19). It is within the sanctuary of the Church that we protect our faith. Meeting together with others who **believe**, we **pray** and find answers to our prayers; we **worship** through music, **share** testimony of the Savior, **serve** one another, and **feel the Spirit** of the Lord. We **partake** of the sacrament, **receive** the blessings of the priesthood, and **attend** the temple. The Lord declared, “In the ordinances . . . , the power of godliness is manifest” (D&C 84:20). When you are faced with a test of faith, stay within the safety and security of the household of God. There is always a place for you here. No trial is so large we can’t overcome it together (see Mosiah 18:8–10). **NE**

From an October 2012 general conference address.



HOW HAVE YOU APPLIED THIS?

Something that has helped me a lot when I’ve felt like my faith is struggling with a question is remembering that the Lord wants us to be happy. He doesn’t “play tricks” on us to get us to doubt the gospel. A scripture that I really like because it reminds me to have faith is Proverbs 3:5–6: “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

Morgan H., Utah, USA



Share Your Experiences

Share how you have faced trials of faith and read the experiences of other youth at lds.org/go/trialNE317.



Repentance...

is

His gift to us,

*purchased at a very
dear price.*

Elder D. Todd Christofferson

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
October 2016 general conference

Would you like to learn more about personal revelation from God?



During the upcoming Face to Face event, you can!
Go to face2face.lds.org to watch the live stream on
Saturday, March 4, at 11 a.m. MST.



President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, and Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles will be answering questions from youth and talking about the 2017 Mutual Theme, "Ask." Don't miss it!

Check out other Face to Face events, featuring guests like Studio C and the Piano Guys, at face2face.lds.org, the LDS Youth YouTube channel, or the LDS Youth Facebook page!

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

