

FOR YOUTH OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

THE New Era

MAY 2011



**SPECIAL
SECTION—
GENERAL
CONFERENCE
AND YOU**

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General Conference Is for You 2

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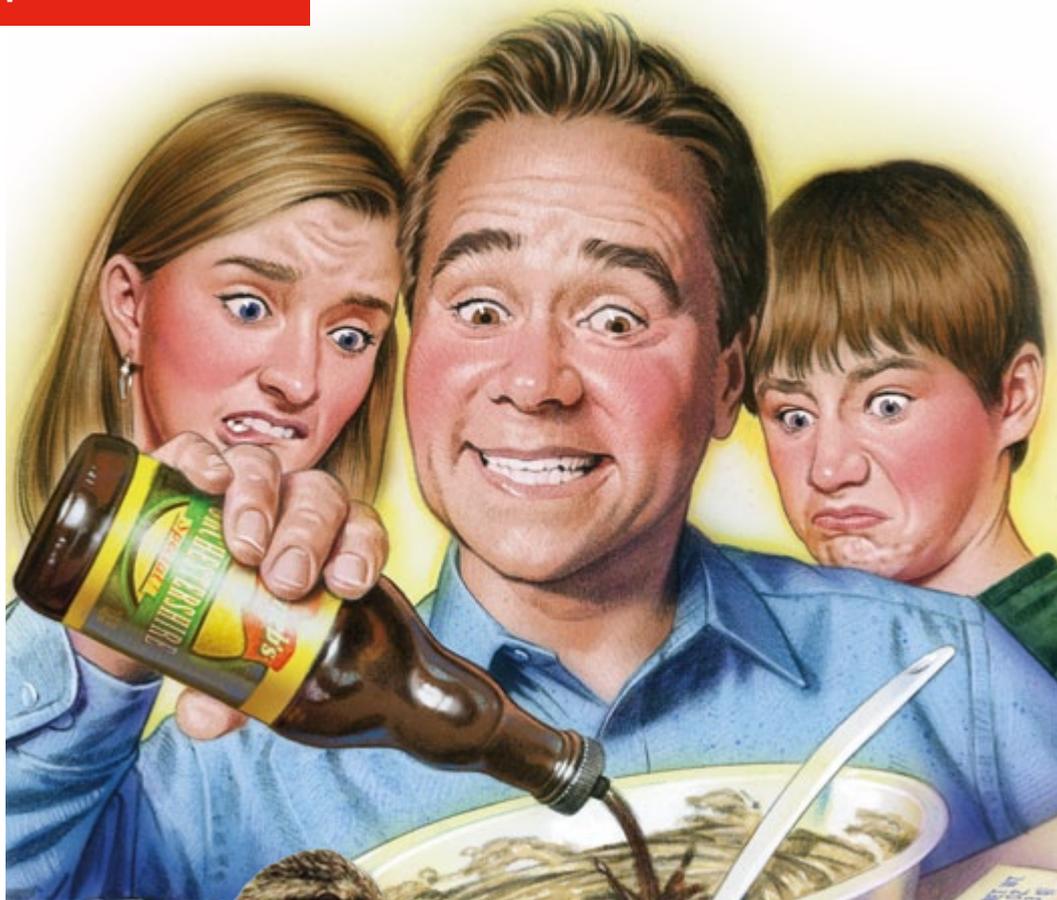
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WORDS OF THE

Prophet



President Thomas S. Monson

“May we long remember the messages we have heard [at this conference],” urged President Monson. “As we receive the issues of the Ensign and Liahona magazines which will contain these messages in written form, may we read and study them.”

This section points out some messages especially pertinent to youth and can help you in your study of general conference.

*You can also view video, download MP3s, or read the text of conference online at conference.lds.org. **NE***

Be Examples of Integrity

“We face many challenges in the world today, but I assure you that our Heavenly Father is mindful of us. He loves each of us and will bless us

as we seek Him through prayer and strive to keep His commandments.

“We are a global church. Our membership is found throughout the world. May we be good citizens of the nations in which we live and good neighbors in our communities, reaching out to those of other faiths as well as to those of our own. May we be examples of honesty and integrity wherever we go and in whatever we do.”

Caution in Movies and Music

“Many movies and television shows portray behavior which is in direct opposition to the laws of God. Do not subject yourself to the innuendo and outright filth which are so often found there. The lyrics in much of today’s music fall in the same category. The profanity so prevalent around us today would never have been tolerated in the not-too-distant past. Sadly, the Lord’s name is taken in vain over and over again. . . . I am sorry that any of us is subjected to profane language, and I plead with you not to use it. I implore you not to say or to do anything of which you cannot be proud.”

Protection from Sin and Evil

“What will protect you from the sin and evil around you? I maintain that a strong testimony of our Savior and of His gospel will help see you through to safety. If you have not read the Book of Mormon, read it. I will not ask for a show of hands. If you do so prayerfully and with a sincere desire to know the truth, the Holy Ghost will manifest its truth to you. If it is true—and it *is*—then Joseph Smith was a prophet who saw God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. The Church is true. If you do not already have a testimony of these things, do that which is necessary to obtain one. It is essential for you to have your own testimony, for the testimonies of others will carry you only so far. Once obtained, a testimony needs to be kept vital and alive through obedience to the commandments of God and through regular prayer and scripture study. Attend church. You young men [and women], attend seminary or institute if such is available to you.”

Temple Blessings for Youth

“Those who understand the eternal blessings which come from the temple know that no sacrifice is too great, no price too heavy, no struggle too difficult in order to receive those blessings. . . .

“Until you have entered the house of the Lord and have received all the blessings which await you there, you

have not obtained everything the Church has to offer. The all-important and crowning blessings of membership in the Church are those blessings which we receive in the temples of God.

“Now, my young friends who are in your teenage years, always have the temple in your sights. Do nothing which will keep you from entering its doors and partaking of the sacred and eternal blessings there. I commend those of you who already go to the temple regularly to perform baptisms for the dead, arising in the very early hours of the morning so you can participate in such baptisms before school begins. I can think of no better way to start the day.”

The Gift of the Priesthood

“It is up to each of us who hold the priesthood of God to discipline ourselves so that we stand above the ways of the world. It is essential that we be honorable and decent men. Our actions must be above reproach.

“The words we speak, the way we treat others, and the way we live our lives all impact our effectiveness as men and boys holding the priesthood.

“The gift of the priesthood is priceless. It carries with it the authority to act as God’s servants, to administer to the sick, to bless our families, and to bless others as well. Its authority can reach beyond the veil of death, on

into the eternities. There is nothing else to compare with it in all this world. Safeguard it, cherish it, love it, live worthy of it [see Gordon B. Hinckley, “Personal Worthiness to Exercise the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, May 2002, 52–59].”

NEmore

To view President Monson’s full address from the Sunday morning session, visit lds.org/go/511 or use a smartphone to scan the QR code below for quick access (see the back cover for instructions).



I loved hearing from President Thomas S. Monson about temples. I’ve always loved going to the temple, and I’ve always thought they were important. But hearing from the prophet about the temples and how important they are really inspired me.

McKelle W., 16, Washington, USA



NURTURING YOUR

Testimony

President Henry B. Eyring

First Counselor in the First Presidency

**A Growing Testimony**

“Feasting on the word of God, heartfelt prayer, and obedience to the Lord’s commandments must be applied evenly and continually for your testimony to grow and prosper.”

Growing in Depth and Breadth

“Testimony will come to you in pieces as parts of the whole truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ are confirmed. For instance, as you read and ponder the Book of Mormon, verses you have read before will appear new to you and bring new ideas. Your testimony will grow in breadth and in depth as the Holy Ghost confirms that they are true. Your living testimony will expand as you study, pray, and ponder in the scriptures.”

Claim Moroni’s Promise Again

“I hope that you all have proved that promise for yourself or that you will do it soon [see Moroni 10:3–5]. The answer may not come in a single and powerful spiritual experience. For me it came quietly at first. But it comes ever more forcefully each time I have read and prayed over the Book of Mormon.

“I do not depend on what has happened in the past. To keep my living testimony of the Book of Mormon secure, I receive the promise of

Moroni often. I don’t take that blessing of a testimony for granted as a perpetual entitlement.

“Testimony requires the nurturing by the prayer of faith, the hungering for the word of God in the scriptures, and the obedience to the truth we have received. There is danger in neglecting prayer. There is danger to our testimony in only casual study and reading of the scriptures. They are necessary nutrients for our testimony.”

Lift Those in Need

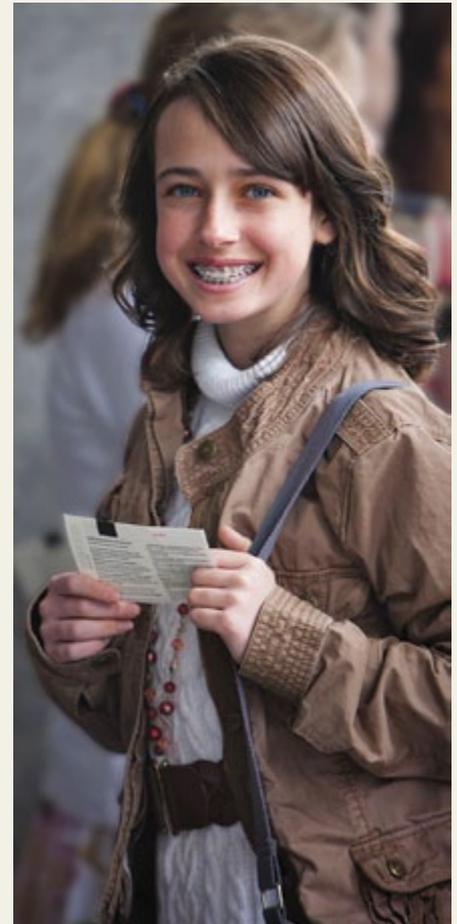
“[The Lord] has invited and commanded us to participate in His work to lift up those in need. We make a covenant to do that in the waters of baptism and in the holy temples of God. We renew the covenant on Sundays when we partake of the sacrament.”

Generosity

“When I am generous to Heavenly Father’s children in need, He is generous to me.”

NEmore

To view President Eyring’s full address from the Saturday morning session, visit lds.org/go/512 or use a smartphone to scan the QR code below for quick access (see the back cover for instructions).



I had an amazing time listening to conference. It was so calming to listen to things that will make me a better person. I felt the Spirit so strongly, especially during President Henry B. Eyring’s talk on Saturday, when he quoted, “A person cannot give a crust to the Lord without receiving a loaf in return.” While I give a little of my time listening to the words of the prophets and working on Personal Progress, I am slowly becoming the girl the Lord wants me to be.

Sarah M., 14, Minnesota, USA

Sharing

A N D D O I N G



Heed, Serve, and Share

“I testify to you that our Father in Heaven loves His children. He loves us.

He loves you. . . . Often He speaks to us in ways that we can hear only with our heart. To better hear His voice, it would be wise to turn down the volume control of the worldly noise in our lives. If we ignore or block out the promptings of the Spirit for whatever reason, they become less noticeable until we cannot hear them at all. Let us learn to hearken to the promptings of the Spirit and then be eager to heed them.”

“Often, the answer to our prayer

does not come while we’re on our knees but while we’re on our feet serving the Lord and serving those around us. . . . By becoming the answer to someone’s prayer, we often find the answer to our own.”

“There are times when the Lord reveals to us things that are intended only for us. Nevertheless, in many, many cases He entrusts a testimony of the truth to those who will share it with others.”

“With so many social media resources and a multitude of more or less useful gadgets at our disposal, sharing the good news of the gospel is easier and the effects more far-reaching than ever before. . . . My dear young friends, perhaps the Lord’s encouragement to ‘open [your] mouths’ might today include ‘use your hands’ to blog

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

and text message the gospel to all the world! But please remember, all at the right time and at the right place.”

Do It Now

“The words written in the scriptures and spoken in general conference are . . . not for reading or hearing only. Too often we attend meetings and nod our heads; we might even smile knowingly and agree. We jot down some action points, and we may say to ourselves, ‘That is something I will do.’ But somewhere between the hearing, the writing of a reminder on our smartphone, and the actual doing, our ‘do it’ switch gets rotated to the ‘later’ position. . . . Let’s make sure to set our ‘do it’ switch always to the ‘now’ position!”

NEmore

To view President Uchtdorf’s full address from the Sunday morning session, visit lds.org/go/513 or use a smartphone to scan the QR code below for quick access (see the back cover for instructions).



Conference always makes me feel at peace, and I always receive wonderful insight. The talk given by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf in the priesthood session about living up to your priesthood potential really made me realize how much more I can do—and not just as a person but as a worthy son of God.

Theodore A., 16, Arizona, USA

Small and Simple THINGS

FLECKS OF GOLD

Oftentimes we are like the young merchant from Boston, who in 1849, as the story goes, was caught up in the fervor of the California gold rush. He sold all of his possessions to seek his fortune in the California rivers, which he was told were filled with gold nuggets so big that one could hardly carry them.

Day after endless day, the young man dipped his pan into the river and came up empty. His only reward was a growing pile of rocks. Discouraged and broke, he was ready to quit until one day an old, experienced prospector said to him, “That’s quite a pile of rocks you are getting there, my boy.”

The young man replied, “There’s no gold here. I’m going back home.”

Walking over to the pile of rocks, the old prospector said, “Oh, there is gold all right. You just have to know where to find it.” He picked two rocks up in his hands and crashed them together. One of the rocks split open revealing several flecks of gold sparkling in the sunlight.

Noticing a bulging leather pouch fastened to the prospector’s waist, the young man said, “I’m looking for nuggets like the ones in your pouch, not just tiny flecks.” The old prospector extended his pouch toward the young man, who looked inside, expecting to see several large nuggets. He was stunned to see that the pouch was filled with thousands of flecks of gold.

The old prospector said, “Son, it seems to me you are so busy looking for large nuggets that you’re missing filling your pouch with these precious flecks of gold. The patient accumulation of these little flecks has brought me great wealth.”

This story illustrates the spiritual truth that Alma taught his son Helaman: “By small and simple things are great things brought to pass. . . . And by very small means the Lord . . . bringeth about the salvation of many souls” (Alma 37:6–7).

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

General conference was really inspirational. I know that I have been personally enlightened and strengthened because of it. I have recommitted myself to be a full-tithe payer and to read my scriptures more consistently.

Faith C., 15, Louisiana, USA

HOW TITHING BLESSES US

The payment of tithing helps us develop a submissive and humble heart and a grateful heart that tends to “confess . . . his hand in all things” (D&C 59:21). Tithe-paying fosters in us a generous and forgiving heart and a charitable heart full of the pure love of Christ. We become eager to serve and bless others with an obedient heart, submissive to the Lord’s will. Regular tithe payers find their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ strengthened, and they develop a firm, abiding testimony of His gospel and of His Church. None of these blessings are monetary or material in any way, but surely they are the Lord’s richest blessings.

Elder Carl B. Pratt of the Seventy



While carefully listening to the talks, I always learned something new that I can apply to my life and become more like my Savior, Jesus Christ. I am so grateful for modern-day prophets and apostles that prepare a message they know God wants us to hear.

Jonathan H., 17, Arizona, USA

STILL SMALL VOICE

Because the Spirit whispers to us gently and delicately, it is easy to understand why we should shun inappropriate media, pornography, and harmful, addictive substances and behaviors. These tools of the adversary can impair and eventually destroy our capacity to recognize and respond to the subtle messages from God delivered by the power of His Spirit. Each of us should consider seriously and ponder prayerfully how we can reject the devil's enticements and righteously "apply unto it," even the spirit of revelation in our personal lives and families.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

KEEP ALL HIS COMMANDMENTS

Teach of faith to keep *all* the commandments of God, knowing that they are given to bless His children and bring them joy. Warn them that they will encounter people who pick which commandments they will keep and ignore others that they choose to break. I call this the cafeteria approach to obedience. This practice of picking and choosing will not work. It will lead to misery. To prepare to meet God, one keeps all of His commandments. It takes faith to obey them, and keeping His commandments will strengthen that faith.

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

EVERYONE IS TESTED

Everyone is tested. One might think it is unfair to be singled out and subjected to a particular temptation, but this is the purpose of mortal life—to be tested. And the answer is the same for everyone: we must, and we can, resist temptations of any kind.

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



BE A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST

Followers of Christ pattern their lives after the Savior to walk in the light. Two characteristics can help us recognize to what extent we follow Him. First, followers of Christ are loving people. Second, followers of Christ make and keep covenants.

Elder Walter F. González of the Seventy

LOVE AND **Service****FROM RUGBY
PITCH TO
MISSION FIELD**

Missionary service requires sacrifice. There will always be something you leave behind when you respond to the prophet's call to serve.

Those who follow the game of rugby know that the New Zealand All Blacks, a name given because of the color of their uniform, is the most celebrated rugby team ever. To be selected for the All Blacks in New Zealand would be comparable to playing for a football Super Bowl team or a World Cup soccer team.

In 1961, at age 18 and holding the Aaronic Priesthood, Sidney Going was becoming a star in New Zealand rugby. Because of his remarkable abilities, many thought he would be chosen the very next year for the national All Blacks rugby team.

At age 19, in this critical moment of his ascending rugby career, Sid declared that he would forgo rugby to serve a mission. Some called him crazy. Others called him foolish. They protested that his opportunity in rugby might never come again.

For Sid it was not what he was leaving behind—it was the opportunity and responsibility ahead. He had a priesthood duty to offer two years of his life to declare the reality of the Lord Jesus Christ and His restored gospel. Nothing—not even a chance to play on the national team, with all the acclaim it would bring—would deter him from that duty.

He was called by a prophet of God to serve in the Western Canadian Mission. Forty-eight years ago this month, 19-year-old Elder Sidney Going left New Zealand to serve as a missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Sid told me of an experience he had on his mission. It was evening, and he and his companion were just about to return to their apartment. They decided to visit one more family. The father let them in. Elder Going and his companion

testified of the Savior. The family accepted a Book of Mormon. The father read all night. In the next week and a half he read the entire Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. A few weeks later the family was baptized.

A mission instead of a place on the New Zealand All Blacks team? Sid responded, “The blessing of [bringing others] into the gospel far outweighs anything [you] will ever sacrifice.”



This conference was especially meaningful to me, because I'm leaving to the Missionary Training Center in a couple months. All of the talks about serving and helping others really touched my heart. I know that the speakers were inspired in the messages they gave. I am grateful for the opportunity I had to watch conference this April, and I will do everything I can to apply what they said into my life and become a better person because of it.

Joseph C., 18, Utah, USA



This conference reminded me that not only can I help others when I serve, but I can also get the spiritual edification that I may be seeking. Jesus Christ Himself served His fellow men whenever He could. Sometimes in my life, I am so wrapped up in the things that I am currently involved in that I forget about those around me who may need my help. I know that God wants me to serve others.

Laney W., 14, Missouri, USA

You're probably wondering what happened to Sid Going following his mission. Most important: an eternal marriage to his sweetheart, Colleen; five noble children; and a generation of grandchildren. He has lived his life trusting in his Father in Heaven, keeping the commandments, and serving others.

And rugby? After his mission Sid Going became one of the greatest halfbacks in All Blacks history, playing for 11 seasons and serving for many years as captain of the team.

How good was Sid Going? He was so good that training and game schedules were changed because he would not play on Sunday. Sid was so good the Queen of England acknowledged his contribution to rugby. He was so good a book was written about him entitled *Super Sid*.

What if those honors had not come to Sid after his mission? One of the great miracles of missionary service in this Church is that Sid Going and thousands just like him have not asked, "What will I get from my mission?" but rather, "What can I give?"

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

IT HAPPENS IN THE FAMILY

It is here in our families, in an atmosphere of love, where we see and appreciate in a more personal way the divine attributes of His spirit children. It is here in our families where our hearts can be softened and in humility we desire to change, to become more childlike. It is a process by which we can become more Christlike.

Jean A. Stevens, first counselor in the Primary general presidency

ACTIVE LOVE

The love the Savior described is an active love. It is not manifested through large and heroic deeds but rather through simple acts of kindness and service.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

SHARING YOUR TESTIMONY

Teaching someone else what we know strengthens our own testimony as we build that of another. When you give someone money or food, you will have less. However, when you share your testimony, it strengthens and increases for both the bearer and the hearer.

Elder Cecil O. Samuelson of the Seventy

LOVE IS POWERFUL

Love is a powerful influence in our hearts in our effort to be obedient. Love for our Savior inspires us to keep His commandments. Love for a mother, father, or spouse can also inspire our obedience to gospel principles. The way we treat others reflects to what extent we follow our Savior in loving one another. We show our love for Him when we stop to assist others, when we are "perfectly honest and upright in all things" [Alma 27:27], and when we make and keep covenants.

Elder Walter F. González of the Seventy

CARING FOR THE POOR

We honor those innovative giants whom the Lord raised up to organize and administer the institutional outreach to needy members of His Church. We honor those who in our day reach out in countless and often silent ways to be kind to the poor, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, minister to the sick, and visit the captive. . . .

The work of caring for one another and being kind to the poor is a sanctifying work, commanded of the Father and divinely designed to bless, refine, and exalt His children. May we follow the Savior's counsel to the certain lawyer in the parable of the good Samaritan: "Go, and do thou likewise" [Luke 10:37].

Bishop H. David Burton, Presiding Bishop

L I F E A S A

Latter-day Saint

THE LOST PURSE

When I was recently assigned to a conference in the Mission Viejo California Stake, I was touched by an account of their four-stake New

Year's Eve youth dance. Following the dance, a purse was found with no outside identification. I share with you part of what Sister Monica Sedgwick, the Young Women president in the Laguna Niguel stake, recorded: "We didn't want to pry; this was someone's personal stuff! So we gingerly opened it and grabbed the first thing that was on top—hopefully, it would identify her. It did, but in another way—it was a *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet. Wow! This told us something about her. Then we reached in for the next item, a little notebook. Surely this would give us answers, but not the kind we were expecting. The first page was a list of favorite scriptures. There were five more pages of carefully written scriptures and personal notes."

The sisters immediately wanted to meet this stalwart young woman. They returned to that purse to identify its owner. They pulled out some breath mints, soap, lotion, and a brush. I loved their comments: "Oh, good things come out of her mouth; she has clean and soft hands; and she takes care of herself."

They eagerly awaited the next treasure. Out came a clever little homemade coin purse made from a cardboard juice carton, and there was some money in a zippered pocket. They exclaimed, "Ahh, she's creative and prepared!" They felt like little children on Christmas morning. What they pulled out next surprised them even more: a recipe for Black Forest chocolate cake and a note to make the cake for a friend's birthday. They almost screamed, "She's a HOMEMAKER! Thoughtful and service minded." Then, yes, finally some identification. The youth leaders said they felt greatly blessed "to observe the quiet example of a young lady living the gospel."

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

TO BE LISTS

Many of us create *to do* lists to remind us of things we want to accomplish. But people rarely have *to be* lists. Why? *To do's* are activities or events and can be checked off the list when *done*. *To be*, however, is never done. You can't earn checkmarks with *to be's*.

Elder Lynn G. Robbins of the Seventy

I loved Elder Lynn G. Robbins's talk on becoming and not just doing. When he began speaking, I had just started a to-do list from the talks of what I could do better. I quickly opened to a new page in my notebook and wrote "To be:" at the top and then listed the qualities that the General Authorities had spoken on. I know that it takes becoming more Christlike to truly follow in His way.

Mckenna B., 16, Idaho, USA



NEmore

For short video clips of conference messages for youth, go to lds.org/go/514.



I loved general conference. For a while I have been struggling with my testimony. The speakers really encouraged me and reminded me of the importance of a strong testimony, especially in these last days. I loved all of the talks, and one of the talks that really had an impact on me was Elder Dallin H. Oaks's talk on desire. Something as seemingly small as desire makes a tremendous impact on our lives.

Jean G., 17, California, USA

I really enjoyed hearing the prophet and apostles. I know they're called of God. I really enjoyed Elder Scott's talk. I could tell he and his wife really loved each other and their home was so beautiful. I want my home to be like that when I grow up. He had such a strong testimony of the importance of marriage and families; it was beautiful and brought tears to my eyes. I have a strong testimony of the importance of conference.

Madison T., 14, Utah, USA

FACE THE FUTURE WITH FAITH

Difficult days are ahead. Rarely in the future will it be easy or popular to be a faithful Latter-day Saint. Each of us will be tested. The Apostle Paul warned that in the latter days, those who diligently follow the Lord "shall suffer persecution." That very persecution can either crush you into silent weakness or motivate you to be more exemplary and courageous in your daily lives.

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

ACTIONS AND DESIRES

Let us remember that desires dictate our priorities, priorities shape our choices, and choices determine our actions. In addition, it is our actions and our desires that cause us to become something, whether a true friend, a gifted teacher, or one who has qualified for eternal life.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

VITAL PILLARS OF THE PLAN OF HAPPINESS

Two of the vital pillars that sustain Father in Heaven's plan of happiness are marriage and the family. Their lofty significance is underscored by Satan's relentless efforts to splinter the family and to undermine the significance of temple ordinances, which bind the family together for eternity. The temple sealing has greater meaning as life unfolds. It will help you draw ever closer together and find greater joy and fulfillment in mortality.

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

EXERCISE HOPE

We should never let hope be displaced by despair. The Apostle Paul wrote that we "should plow in hope" (1 Corinthians 9:10). The exercise of hope enriches our lives and helps us look forward to the future. Whether we are plowing fields to plant or plowing through life, it is imperative we, as Latter-day Saints, have hope.

In the gospel of Jesus Christ, hope is the desire of His followers to gain eternal salvation through the Atonement of the Savior.

Elder Steven E. Snow of the Seventy

FINDING

Answers

Why do I have to go through trials?

Sometimes we want to have growth without challenges and to develop strength without any struggle. But growth cannot come by taking the easy way. We clearly understand that an athlete who resists rigorous training will never become a world-class athlete. We must be careful that we don't resent the very things that help us put on the divine nature.

Not one of the trials and tribulations we face is beyond our limits, because we have access to help from the Lord. We can do all things through Christ, who strengthens us.

Elder Paul V. Johnson of the Seventy

How do I know if I am living according to God's will?

In many of the uncertainties and challenges we encounter in our lives, God requires us to do our best to act and not be acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:26), and to trust in Him. We may not see angels, hear heavenly voices, or receive overwhelming spiritual impressions. We frequently may press forward hoping and praying—but without absolute assurance—that we are acting in accordance with God's will. But as we honor our covenants and keep the commandments, as we strive ever more consistently to do good and to become better, we can walk with the confidence that God will guide our steps.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

**How can I measure up to the high expectations of our Heavenly Father?**

If we sincerely desire and strive to measure up to the high expectations of our Heavenly Father, He will ensure that we receive all the help we need, whether it be comforting, strengthening, or chastening. If we are open to it, needed correction will come in many forms and from many sources. It may come in the course of our prayers as God speaks to our mind and heart through the Holy Ghost (see D&C 8:2). It may come in the form of prayers that are answered no or differently than we had expected. Chastening may come as we study the scriptures and are reminded of deficiencies, disobedience, or simply matters neglected.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

What can I do right now to help the Church grow?

Another way we can serve Heavenly Father's children is through missionary service—not only as full-time missionaries but also as friends and neighbors. The future growth of the Church will not happen through just knocking on



strangers' doors. It will happen when the members, along with our missionaries, filled with the

The music especially touched me. When the choir sang one closing hymn, "More Holiness Give Me," I knew that Heavenly Father will help me as I try daily to become more like Christ. I know that the messages (through both music and word) were inspired.

Brandyn Y., 16, Arkansas, USA

I enjoyed general conference because of the Spirit I felt when watching it. I had many questions coming into the weekend, and one by one they were answered. I am grateful for the opportunity to listen and learn from our prophet and all of his counselors. Because of their diligence in preparing their talks and listening to the Spirit, my questions were answered.

Taylor B., 16, Utah, USA



If you listen to general conference, you can often find answers to the questions that concern you.

love of God and Christ, discern needs and respond to those needs in the spirit of charitable service.

When we do this, brothers and sisters, the honest in heart will feel our sincerity and our love. Many will want to know more about us. Then and only then will the Church expand to fill all of the earth. This cannot be accomplished by missionaries alone but requires the interest and service of every member.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Should we be afraid of what is happening in the world?

We live in a time of turmoil. Earthquakes and tsunamis wreak devastation, governments collapse, economic stresses are severe, the family is under attack, and divorce rates are rising. We have great cause for concern. But we do not need to let our fears displace our faith. We can combat those fears by strengthening our faith. . . . Let your faith be focused on our loving Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Can I really be forgiven?

Jesus Christ is the Great Healer of our souls. With the exception of sins of perdition, there is no sin or transgression, pain or sorrow, which is outside of the healing power of His Atonement.



When we sin, Satan tells us we are lost. In contrast, our Redeemer offers redemption to all—no matter what we have done wrong—even to you and to me.

Elder C. Scott Grow of the Seventy

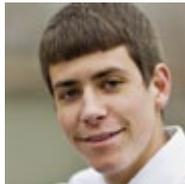
What can I do to make a difference in other people's lives?

We can follow the example of the good Samaritan and “change the world” of just one person by being benevolent. I would like to invite each of you to do at least one Samaritan-like act this coming week. It may require that you reach beyond

your usual friends or overcome your shyness. You may courageously choose to serve someone who doesn't treat you well. I promise that if you

This past conference was very spiritual for me. As I took notes I felt more enlightened and found new things to work on to become more like my Savior. I cannot wait to begin changing, become better, give more service to others, and try to make this world a better place. I feel more motivated to share the gospel.

Chelsey F., 18, Illinois, USA



will extend yourself beyond what is easy to do, you will feel so good inside that kindness will start to become a part of your everyday life.

Mary N. Cook, first counselor in the Young Women general presidency

Does a testimony grow and change?

A testimony is similar to a living organism that grows and develops when treated properly. It needs constant nourishment, care, and protection to thrive and prosper. Likewise, neglect or deviance from the pattern of living that a testimony clarifies can lead to its loss or diminishment. The scriptures warn that transgressing or breaking the commandments of God can result in the loss of the Spirit and even to one denying the testimony he or she once possessed.

Elder Cecil O. Samuelson of the Seventy

with the general population.

We are taught not to lie or steal or cheat. We do not use profanity. We are positive and happy and not afraid of life.

We are “willing to mourn with those that mourn . . . and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places” [Mosiah 18:9].



If someone is looking for a church that requires very little, this is not the one. It is not easy to be a Latter-day Saint, but in the long run it is the only true course.



President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

What does it mean to rest from our labors on the Sabbath?

Sometimes we think of resting from our labors as merely letting the hay baler stand idle in the field or putting a Closed sign on the business door. Yet in today’s world, labor includes the everyday work of our lives. This could mean business activities we may accomplish from home, athletic competitions, and other pursuits that take us away from Sabbath day worship and the opportunity to minister to others.

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

What should I wear on Sunday?

I believe [Christ] . . . desires us to dress appropriately. Our youth may think the old saying “Sunday best” is

The messages in this conference reminded me of how important our families are and how precious our time with them is. They also made me realize the importance of service to others, within and outside of our families.

Jorri F., 17, Utah, USA

I liked how Elder L. Tom Perry talked about the Sabbath day. It reminded me of how important it is to keep the Sabbath day holy and to do my priesthood duties every week.

Jarom L., 13, Alberta, Canada

Why should I listen to my parents when they tell me to change?

Parents can and must correct, even chasten, if their children are not to be cast adrift at the mercy of a merciless adversary and his supporters.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

What does it mean to be a Latter-day Saint?

A Latter-day Saint is quite an ordinary individual. . . . We are taught to be in the world but not of the world. Therefore, we live ordinary lives in ordinary families mixed in



outdated. Still, we know that when Sunday dress deteriorates to everyday attire, attitudes and actions follow. Of course, it may not be necessary for our children to wear formal Sunday attire until the sun goes down.

However, by the clothing we encourage them to wear and the activities we plan, we help them prepare for the sacrament and enjoy its blessings throughout the day.



age them to wear and the activities we plan, we help them prepare for the sacrament and enjoy its blessings throughout the day.

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Who can receive revelation?

The spirit of revelation is available to every person who receives by proper priesthood authority the saving ordinances of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost—and who is acting in faith to fulfill the priesthood injunction to “receive the Holy Ghost.” This blessing is not restricted to the presiding authorities of the Church; rather, it belongs to and should be operative in the life of every man, woman, and child who reaches the age of accountability and enters into sacred covenants. Sincere desire and worthiness invite the spirit of revelation into our lives.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

What if my health doesn't allow me to serve a full-time mission?

President Monson spoke of “every worthy, able young man [preparing] to serve a mission.” On occasion, because of health or other reasons,

one might not be able to serve. You will know your ability to serve as you speak with your parents and your bishop. Should this be your situation, please do not feel less important in the noble commission before you. The Lord is very generous to those who love Him, and He will open other doors for you.

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

How are general conference topics chosen?

Perhaps you already know (but if you don't you should) that with rare exception, no man or woman who speaks here is assigned a topic. Each is to fast and pray, study and seek, start and stop and start again until he or she is confident that for this conference, at this time, his or hers is the topic the Lord wishes that speaker to present regardless of personal wishes or private preferences. Every man and woman you have heard during the past 10 hours of general conference has tried to be true to that prompting. Each has wept, worried, and earnestly sought the Lord's direction to guide his or her thoughts and expression.



. . . My Brethren and sisters among the general officers of the Church [are] mortal messengers with angelic messages, . . . who with faith have consecrated their lives to the callings that

have come to them and the duty to preach God's word, not their own.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



Elder Jeffrey R. Holland talked about how conference topics are chosen by the Spirit and some apply specifically to each of us. I know that one talk especially applied to me and a challenge I am going through. I know it will help me. Some people may get tired of hearing the same lessons or advice over and over again, but sometimes we need that extra time to really dedicate ourselves to try harder.

Christina G., 13, Missouri, USA

I found conference very spiritually uplifting. I learned many things, including the importance of calling ourselves “Latter-day Saints” instead of “Mormons,” which I know I will apply in my daily life. I am very glad I have the gospel in my life and that it was restored through Joseph Smith. I would like to apply every bit of wisdom I heard into my life as much as I can.

Jeffrey H., 14, Indiana, USA

Learn Your Duty

AND BE DILIGENT

This was one of the first times I have been pumped up to change myself. One of my favorite talks was by Brother Larry M. Gibson. His talk made me see where I needed to improve in being a quorum president. The priesthood session was awesome!

Nathan C., 15, Utah, USA

My favorite session was priesthood session. I felt each speaker was talking directly to me. The stories and examples from President Uchtdorf talked about not just going through the motions of the priesthood—he challenged me to live so I use the priesthood to its full potential. President Monson talked about how to be in the world and not of the world. I know this is important, and I will strive to follow his counsel.

Parker S., 15, Arizona, USA

READ THE OWNER'S MANUAL

If you owned the world's most advanced and expensive computer, would you use it merely as a desk ornament? The computer may look impressive. It may have all kinds of potential. But it is only when you study the owner's manual, learn how to use the software, and turn on the power that you can access its full potential.

The holy priesthood of God also has an owner's manual. Let us commit to reading the scriptures and handbooks with more purpose and more focus. Let us begin by rereading sections 20, 84, 107, and 121 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The more we study the purpose, potential, and practical use of the priesthood, the more we will be amazed by its power, and the Spirit will teach us how to access and use that power to bless our families, our communities, and the Church.

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency

A POWERFUL RESOURCE

I invite each deacons, teachers, and priests quorum presidency to regularly counsel, study, and pray to learn what the Lord's will is for your quorum and then go and do. Use Duty to God to help you teach your quorum members their duties. I invite each quorum member to sustain your quorum president and look to him for counsel as you learn and righteously fulfill all of your priesthood duties. And I invite each of us to see these remarkable young men as the Lord sees them—a powerful resource for building and strengthening His kingdom here and now.

Brother Larry M. Gibson, first counselor in the Young Men general presidency

PRIESTHOOD TREASURES

If you will be diligent and obedient in the priesthood, treasures of spiritual knowledge will be poured out upon you. You will grow in your power to resist evil and to proclaim the truth that leads to salvation. You will find joy in the happiness of those you lead toward exaltation. Your family will become a place of learning.

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency

PREPARE FOR THE SPIRITUAL WORK OF A MISSION

Missionary service is a spiritual work. Worthiness and preparation are essential. President Monson has said: "Young men, I admonish you to prepare for service as a missionary. Keep yourselves clean and pure and worthy to represent the Lord." In the years prior to your mission, please remember the sacred assignment ahead of you. Your actions before your mission will greatly influence the priesthood power you bring with you into the mission. Prepare yourself well.

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

For Quorum Presidencies

Are you looking for help to understand your duties in a quorum presidency? You'll find great counsel in the talk from Brother Larry M. Gibson. Read or watch it online at lds.org/go/515.



Shine Forth

BE A GUARDIAN OF VIRTUE

Young women, in a world ever growing in moral pollution, tolerance of evil, exploitation of women, and distortion of roles, you must stand guard of yourself, your family, and all those with whom you associate. You must be guardians of virtue.

What is virtue and what is a guardian? "Virtue is a pattern of thought and behavior based on high moral standards. It includes chastity and [moral] purity" (*Young Women Personal Progress* [booklet, 2009], 70). And what is a guardian? A guardian is someone who protects, shields, and defends. Thus, as a guardian of virtue, you will protect, shield, and defend moral purity because the power to create mortal life is a sacred and exalted power and must be safeguarded until you are married. Virtue is a requirement to have the companionship and guidance of the Holy Ghost. You will need that guidance in order to successfully navigate the world in which you live. Being virtuous is a requirement to enter the temple. And it is a requirement to be worthy to stand in the Savior's presence. You are preparing now for that time. Personal Progress and the standards found in *For the Strength of Youth* are important. Living the principles found in each booklet will strengthen and help you become "more fit for the kingdom" ("More Holiness Give Me," *Hymns*, no. 131).

Elaine S. Dalton, Young Women general president

BE HONEST AND BE BLESSED

When we are honest in all things, big and small, we experience peace of mind and a clear conscience. Our relationships are enriched because they are based on trust. And the greatest blessing that comes from being honest is that we are able to have the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

Ann M. Dibb, second counselor in the Young Women general presidency



FOLLOW IN HIS WAYS

Our Savior taught us about and lived a benevolent life. Jesus loved all and He served all. Centering our lives on Jesus Christ will help us acquire this attribute of benevolence. For us to develop these same Christlike attributes, we must learn about the Savior and "follow in His ways."

Mary N. Cook, first counselor in the Young Women general presidency

REFLECT THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

You will be a light to the world as you share your testimony with others. You will reflect to others the Light of Christ in your life. The Lord will find ways for that light to touch those you love. And through the combined faith and testimony of His daughters, God will touch the lives of millions in His kingdom and across the world with His light.

In your testimony and your choices lies the hope of the Church and of the generations who will follow your example of hearing and accepting the invitation of the Lord: "Come, follow me." The Lord knows and loves you.

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency

I loved Sister Elaine S. Dalton's talk. It was very spiritual, and it helped answer some of my current prayers and concerns about chastity and how to hold onto it in our world today. It helped me realize that I really want to enter the temple someday. That is now one of my ultimate goals.

Elizabeth C., 15, Idaho, USA

I took notes on everything in the Young Women broadcast, and at least three of the talks felt like personal letters right to me. I feel confident going back to school, even though it's hard, because I'm now freshly and completely armed with the fact that God is with me, that He and the Savior love me, and that my trials will not be wasted.

Leia B., 13, New Hampshire, USA

Testimonies

OF THE FATHER AND THE SON

I'm so grateful for this conference. I received answers for questions I had in my heart. I know that our Heavenly Father knows all things and knows our hearts. He loves us and always answers our questions. I know that my Redeemer lives. My testimony is stronger after these last two days. It is an honor to watch those "mortal angels" speak to us and to our hearts and souls through the Holy Ghost.

Brenda S., 17, Bahia, Brazil

May I share with you my love for the Savior and for His great atoning sacrifice for us. . . . I believe that none of us can conceive the full import of what Christ did for us in Gethsemane, but I am grateful every day of my life for His atoning sacrifice in our behalf.

At the last moment, He could have turned back. But He did not. He passed beneath all things that He might save all things. In doing so, He gave us life beyond this mortal existence. . . .

To the depths of my very soul, I am grateful to Him. He taught us how to live. He taught us how to die. He secured our salvation.

President Thomas S. Monson

Through love the Savior was obedient to the will of the Father under any circumstance. Our Savior was obedient even when it meant great physical and emotional pain, even when it meant being whipped and mocked; even when it meant that His enemies would torture Him while His friends abandoned Him. . . . "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with his stripes we are healed" so that we may reach our full divine potential [Isaiah 53:5]. . . . His tender mercies can make us mighty as we follow Him under any circumstance.

Elder Walter F. González of the Seventy

I testify that God is our Father. Jesus is the Christ. His Church has been restored to the earth. His truth, covenants, and ordinances enable us to overcome fear and face the future with faith!

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The Savior is not a silent observer. He Himself knows personally and infinitely the pain we face. . . . During His mortal life Christ chose to experience pains and afflictions in order to understand us. Perhaps we also need to experience the depths of mortality in order to understand Him and our eternal purposes.

Elder Kent F. Richards of the Seventy

Not only did our Savior love all; He served all.

Mary N. Cook, first counselor in the Young Women general presidency

Through His Atonement, He heals not only the transgressor, but He also heals the innocent who suffer because of those transgressions. As the innocent exercise faith in the Savior and in His Atonement and forgive the transgressor, they too can be healed. . . . Through His atoning sacrifice, our sins are remitted.

Elder C. Scott Grow of the Seventy



Learning FROM CONFERENCE

THE SCRIPTURES IN GENERAL CONFERENCE

Speakers in general conference taught us from the scriptures. You can learn a lot by simply looking up the scriptures they used. The following scriptures were referred to most often:

- Alma 7:11–12
- Articles of Faith 1:13
- Moroni 10:4–5*
- Matthew 22:36–40*
- 3 Nephi 9:13
- Moroni 7:47–48
- John 13:35

Here are some other scriptures that were referred to more than once:

- | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| • Exodus 20:15–16* | • 2 Nephi 28:30 | • D&C 8:2* | • D&C 107:85 |
| • Malachi 3:10* | • Mosiah 3:19* | • D&C 20:59 | • D&C 115:4* |
| • John 7:17* | • Mosiah 4:26 | • D&C 45:45 | • D&C 121:36* |
| • John 17:14 | • Alma 5:14* | • D&C 50:24* | • D&C 121:45 |
| • Ephesians 2:19 | • Alma 32:27 | • D&C 58:42 | • D&C 138:56 |
| • Philippians 4:13 | • Alma 34:14 | • D&C 81:5 | • Moses 7:62 |
| • Hebrews 12:11 | • Alma 36:3 | • D&C 84:111 | • Abraham 2:11 |
| • 2 Peter 1:4 | • Alma 42:8 | • D&C 88:96 | • Abraham 3:25 |
| • 1 Nephi 19:24 | • 3 Nephi 18:7 | • D&C 89:19* | • Joseph Smith— |
| • 2 Nephi 2:25–27* | • D&C 1:20 | • D&C 104:18 | History 1:69 |

* Seminary scripture mastery verses

REFLECT ON GENERAL CONFERENCE

As our conference comes to a close, I ask you to reflect in the days ahead not only on the messages you have heard but also on the unique phenomenon that general conference itself is—what we as Latter-day Saints believe such conferences to be and what we invite the world to hear and observe about them. We testify to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people that God not only lives but also that He speaks, that for our time and in our day the counsel you have heard is, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, “the will of the Lord, . . . the word of the Lord, . . . the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation” [D&C 68:4].

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

NEmore

Watch, read, or listen to conference talks at conference.lds.org.

Being able to sit and take in the messages of men and women of God is such a blessing. Every once in a while, something reminds me that I am more than just a teenage girl in a small town. I am a daughter of Heavenly Father whose destiny is so much bigger than anything I can comprehend. How fantastic is that! Conference was that reminder for me, and I'm so thankful for the opportunity to hear, in the words of Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, "mortal messengers [deliver] angelic messages."

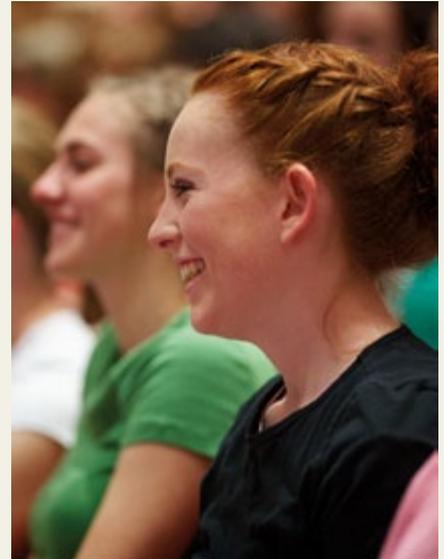
Kayli L., 18, New Mexico, USA

As I listened to conference I felt the Spirit so much. I thought of how awesome it was that we have a living prophet to guide us. I received a feeling of peace, and I knew that everything said was said for a reason. I can't wait for the next conference.

Faith C., 14, New York, USA

I really liked how there were so many talks about families. They made me so excited for my future family. It also helped me know how to deal with my siblings now and that we are all children of a Heavenly Father.

Erin C., 15, Arizona, USA



*How could I explain how
I knew the Church is true?*

THE RIGHT

By Laura Ward

“Why do you keep saying that you *know* this Church is true? What exactly does that mean, and how can you possibly know that?”

My concerned parents asked me those questions when I told them about my decision to be baptized. I thought back on all the missionary lessons I had been attending recently. I remembered asking myself the same questions just weeks before. How did I know the Church was true?

For 17 years I had been content with the little knowledge I had about anything religious. I never realized how much I longed to have a relationship with Christ and my Heavenly Father and feel the peace of the Holy Spirit.

I thought back on the missionaries' telling the story of Joseph Smith's First Vision: a young boy seeing God and the Savior, Joseph hearing their words and *knowing* that what he was seeing was real and true.

Then I remembered my first prayer. Sure, I had prayed many times throughout my life, but this prayer was the first time I had asked my Heavenly Father if what the missionaries were teaching me was real and something from Him. I knew that He wouldn't lie to me. He wants the best for His children. With that knowledge I prayed with my whole heart.

The Holy Spirit touched me for the first time. I knew that as I said “amen.” I had been told by the missionaries and my close friends who had introduced this new gospel to me that “I would feel of the Spirit, and it would let me know.” I knew that it had.

As I related this story to my parents, who had asked the questions, I felt it again. The Spirit was with me, which meant the Lord was with me also. I once again knew

DECISION

that my choice to be baptized was the right decision.

Standing alone in the dressing room of the meeting-house a few months later, I stared at my reflection in the mirror. Who was this girl wearing a long white gown and staring back at me? As I stood there all by myself, I realized that this was how I had made the decision to join the Church—all by myself. But I also realized I was not truly alone. The Spirit was strong. In a few moments, I would be the newest member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The door swung open, and in came my close friends, friends who had decided to share a message about their Church with me a few months earlier.

“Are you ready?” they asked.

We walked out toward the chapel. I thought again about my first prayer and the Spirit I had felt. I knew the Church was true, and because I knew that, I was ready. **NE**



ILLUSTRATION BY G. BJORN THORKEISON

“My friend isn’t 16 yet,

but she’s

**dating
and lies**

about it.

**How can I help her see
that dating so early
isn’t a good thing to do?”**

It’s hard to watch someone you care about make poor choices. It may be even harder to get through to her, especially if she feels strongly enough about this guy that she’s willing to be dishonest about their relationship.

Since your friend is trying to hide her dating, she probably already knows that it isn’t right. Let your friend know that you love her and care for her, even if you don’t agree with her choices. Don’t do anything to encourage her behavior, like lying for her.

In *For the Strength of Youth* it says that “a true friend will encourage you to be your best self” (“Friends,” 12). Perhaps the best way to do this for your friend is by example—by being *your* best self. Stay true to your standards. Invite her to activities that show her that she can make friends and have fun without dating. Your friend will see the benefits of waiting to date.

Pray for her and ask Heavenly Father how you can best help her. If you feel that she would be receptive to it, try discussing her choice to date before turning 16. Tell her why *you* think youth are advised to date only after 16. Encourage her to pray about her current choice and where it may lead her. Bear your testimony that waiting to date will keep her safe and clean. **NE**

Rules Protect Our Hearts



Try telling her that the rules the Church has aren’t just to keep her spiritually safe but also emotionally as well. The rules God and prophets of the Church have given us are there to protect our hearts.

Ashley K., 18, Washington, USA

Be Thou an Example



I would tell my friend that dating before the age of 16 is wrong. We’re too young then and probably not mature enough yet either. Also, we have been promised blessings if we heed the words of the prophets. I would make sure to be obedient to this counsel myself so that I can be a good example to my friend.

Luke J., 12, Arizona, USA

Pray for Help



Dating is meant to be a social tool to meet new people until you are old enough to go steady. You can try to explain to your friend that by dating before she is 16, she is missing out on fun social events. Each individual is best reached in different ways; so when in doubt, pray to your Heavenly Father and ask what He thinks you should do to help.

Aimee S., 18, New York, USA

Wait to Date

Some of the youth in my own ward decided to date earlier than 16, even dating each other, and I have been guilty too. I have learned that dating early and dating steady aren’t worth it in the long run. Explain to your friend that Heavenly Father has given us standards for a reason and that He cares for our safety and happiness. It is hard to do the right thing sometimes,

especially when a lot of our peers are doing the opposite. But following the Lord's standards will be the best decision you will ever make, and you will never regret it.

Elizabeth S., 17, Utah, USA

16 Marks Maturity



Sixteen marks the start of the maturity of our reasoning ability. We choose more effectively as we get older. Be sure to point out

that dating before 16 opens up more possibility for immorality and violations to the standards of the Church.

Derrick T., 18, Pangasinan, Philippines

The Prophet Knows



I would try to convince them that dating isn't a good idea through references to the gospel. The prophets have made it clear what they advise, and they have more experience than any teen. There are many problems that could arise from dating too early or with just one person. I would offer to go on a group date with them as soon as both of you are old enough. It would be safer, and the leaders of the Church know that.

Kimberly M., 14, Montana, USA

A Helping Friend



I recently went through this with one of my best friends. I know how you feel; it is hard to watch someone you care for make mistakes, but

I gained a great testimony from it.

I prayed to Heavenly Father to help me

know how to help her. The next day when I saw her at school, I realized that by being her friend and being an example to her, I was helping her. I was there when she needed me, and after she stopped dating, she told me that she was grateful for my example and how it had helped her see what mistakes she was making in her own life. Be someone she can turn to and talk to about anything. Don't judge her—love her like Christ loves you.

Myrissa G., 17, Montana, USA

Use Your Resources



First, try to set aside some time with your friend so you can talk to her about dating.

Before that time, say a prayer that she will understand your

advice. During the talk, introduce her to the section on dating in *For the Strength of Youth*, or give her a copy of the document "Dating FAQs" in the April 2010 *New Era*.

After showing it, bear your testimony.

Zachary M., 13, Nebraska, USA

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



FAITH AND ROMANCE

"Do you want capability, safety, and security in dating and romance, in married life and eternity? Be a true

disciple of Jesus. Be a genuine, committed, word-and-deed Latter-day Saint. Believe that your faith has everything to do with your romance, because it does.

You separate dating from discipleship at your peril. Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, is the only lamp by which you can successfully see the path of love and happiness. How should I love thee? As He does, for that way 'never faileth.' "

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "How Do I Love Thee?" *New Era*, Oct. 2003, 8.

NEXT QUESTION

"How do I develop my talents without showing off?"

Send your answer and photo by June 15, 2011.

Go to newera.lds.org, click "Submit Your Material," and then select "Questions and Answers."

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

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

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

GETTING

The time I spent boosting my video game character was virtually sapping my spiritual side.

Sitting at the computer desk, I deftly steered through the colorful world of the video game I was playing. My character was in a battleground, and I was on my way to reclaim a base that the enemy had just captured.

From the kitchen, I heard my mother's voice. "Weren't you going to clean up in here?"

I broke my concentration long enough to respond, "In a minute." But a minute turned to 10, and then 30. When the match was finally over, I logged off, surprised that my mother hadn't bothered me again. I shuffled into the kitchen, expecting to find a pile of dirty dishes waiting for me.

Instead I found the sink empty, the counters wiped clear—the whole kitchen spotless. I felt guilty, knowing that my mom had cleaned it herself when I failed to appear. But I shrugged it off, telling myself I would help Mom later, and went to bed.

I can't recall if I ever made up for that broken promise, but I can remember similar instances when I chose a virtual world over the real. I played video games

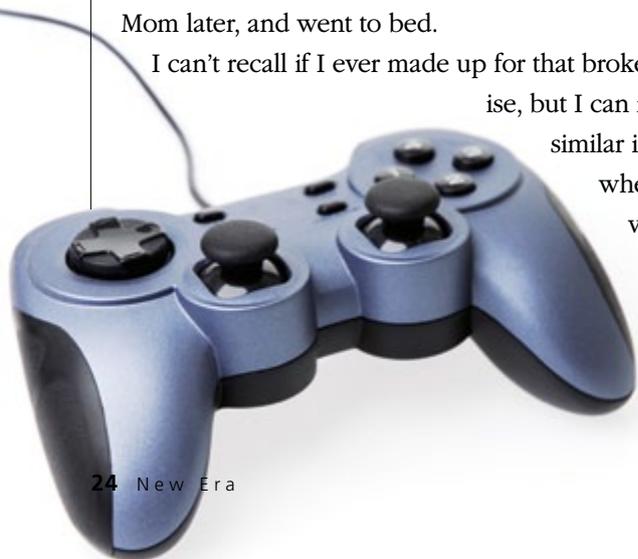
throughout adolescence but became very involved with a multiplayer online game from the age of 16 until I started college at 18. I devoted hundreds of hours to boosting my character and my virtual skill set. I spent less time with my family, opting to complete quests with my in-game friends instead.

And it wasn't just the game; I spent hours online watching videos, checking blogs or social networks, often running across or choosing to view material that I knew was below my standards.

As my virtual stature grew, my spiritual strength was shriveling. I became desensitized to living in the real world. I didn't feel good about myself, and my priorities became unfocused. The virtual world had a grip on me, and I wouldn't force myself to get real. I could sense the weakness within me but was unwilling to stop spending "money for that which is of no worth, [and my] labor for that which cannot satisfy" (2 Nephi 9:51).

I wish I could say that I eventually came to my senses and threw the game out, realizing how much of my time it wasted. Sadly, this was not the case. I stopped playing only because the Internet filter at my college dorms blocked it.

But I saw this as a chance to change. As I started my first semester, my focus shifted from building up my virtual character to realizing my true potential. Without the fantasy world distracting me, I tuned back in to the Spirit as it spoke to me of "things as they really are, and of things as



A digital illustration of a woman with long, dark, flowing hair, wearing a red dress and silver armor. She is running towards the viewer, holding a white game controller in her right hand. In the background, a small robot with two yellow eyes is visible on a wooden floor. The word "REAL" is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the top of the image.

REAL



they really will be” (Jacob 4:13).

In the six months or so that followed, I had the time and focus to do some incredible things. Instead of spending hours acquiring better armor, I studied my scriptures and learned to put on the armor of God (see Ephesians 6:10–17). Instead of honing skills that did me no good outside of a video game, I unearthed practical talents that allowed me to better serve others (see Matthew 25:14–29). I magnified Church callings, studied hard, and earned grades I felt good about. I made many new friends and (gasp!) even dated some.

Sometimes I missed that animated world, the competition and challenges, the in-game experience, the online friends I had made and played with. But as I thought about the changes I had seen in my life and myself, I knew I was fuller, happier, and more at peace with the things giving up the game had allowed me to gain.

When I later listened to Elder David A. Bednar give his fireside address “Things as They Really Are,” I thought back to that moment in the kitchen and other times I had disconnected from things as they really are. I had nothing

When I started spending more time living in real life instead of virtual life, I realized how much I enjoyed laughing with my younger sister.

of value to show for the time spent passively plugged in or logged on. *What if?* I asked myself. *What if I had spent more time practicing musical instruments instead? or helping my mom? or laughing with my younger sister?* I regretted wasting so much time.

I have learned that you can create true happiness, both now and as you plan for the future, only by being present and active. Invest in eternal things, and “lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth,” or in video games, “but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matthew 6:19–20). The wonderful thing about real life is that it won’t fade after a computer or console is turned off. Things we work for and gain here—like a body, memories, experiences, talents, and family—will be ours forever. As we live righteously, we are promised the ultimate level-up: *eternal* life.

That is what makes living IRL—in real life—truly great. **NE**

THINGS AS THEY REALLY ARE

“Sadly, some young men and women in the Church today ignore ‘things as they really are’ and neglect eternal relationships for digital distractions, diversions, and detours that have no lasting value. . . . A young man or woman may waste countless hours, postpone or forfeit vocational or academic achievement, and ultimately sacrifice cherished human relationships because of mind- and spirit-numbing video and online games. As the Lord declared, ‘Wherefore, I give unto them a commandment . . . : Thou shalt not idle away thy time, neither shalt thou bury thy talent that it may not be known’ (D&C 60:13). . . .

“Please be careful of becoming so immersed and engrossed in pixels, texting, ear buds, twittering, online social networking, and potentially addictive uses of media and the Internet that you fail to recognize the importance of your physical body and miss the richness of person-to-person communication. Beware of digital displays and data in many forms of computer-mediated interaction that can displace the full range of physical capacity and experience.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Things as They Really Are,” *Ensign*, June 2010, 21.

MORMONAD

FOUL

LANGUAGE

IS FOR THE BIRDS



**You don't have to parrot
what you hear.
Fly high with clean speech.**

(See James 5:12.)

PHOTOGRAPH BY WEIDEN C. ANDERSEN

By Sally Johnson
Odekirk
Church Magazines

*Teens in
Washington
and Idaho
discuss what
makes a good
leader and a
good follower.*

“Do as I’m doing,
follow, follow me”
(*Children’s Songbook*, 276).

This was a fun singing activity in Primary. But what do you do now that you’ve been called to lead your priesthood quorum or Young Women class? All around the world, teens in the Church wonder that very thing.

Fortunately, you are not left alone. There are loving and wise leaders to follow, counsel given by others, and examples from the scriptures. Recently young men and young women from eastern Washington and northern Idaho discussed what they have learned in their callings.

Following Their Leaders



For some LDS teens, their youth leaders are also their parents. Hillary Lake, 18, of the Mica Peak Ward, Spokane Valley Stake, learned about leadership from her mother, who is a stake Young Women president. “She doesn’t serve because it’s a calling and she has to do it. She serves because she loves to.”



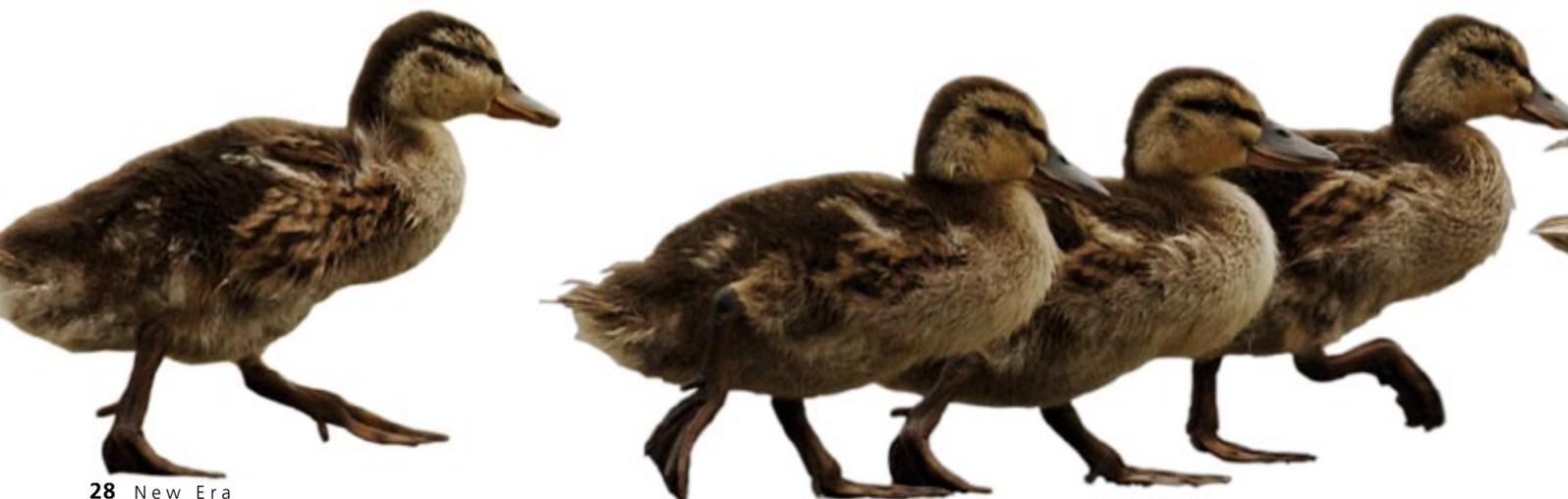
Tegan Monaghan, 17, who attends the Sullivan Ward in the same stake, says that leaders are great mentors. “They are so loving, no matter what, and want the best for you,” she says. “They remember your name, and they are there for you.”



Being able to talk to leaders not only helps in dealing with day-to-day life, but it also sets a good example in how to lead. Lani Call, 17, of the Pines Ward, Spokane East Stake, says, “The fact that they are willing to take time one-on-one and just talk to me and are willing to take as much time as needed means the world to me. You should always talk to your parents, but it’s important to be able to talk to the leaders, too.”

Another way to learn about leadership is to choose good friends. “The best way to learn to be a good leader is to make sure you’re following the right crowd. Then you can step up and be a good leader, listen to them, and invite people to activities,” says Brad Smidt, 17, of the First Ward, Coeur d’Alene Stake.

FOLLOWING





Kiyana Dickson, 18, of the Cheney First Ward, Spokane West Stake, remembers a successful activity in her stake where this principle was illustrated. “One of the best activities we had was a summer social when a lot of inactive and nonmember friends came because other people invited them to have fun with us. Now I talk to those kids all the time, and they smile more often. They go to activities and know how much fun they are.”

Learning to Follow

These teens also know that part of leadership is being a good follower. Michael Hardy, 15, of the Post Falls Fourth Ward, Coeur d’Alene Stake, says, “Followers behind a leader are like links in a chain. If a follower isn’t helping someone else up, then the chain will fall apart and the leadership will not be effective.” And that type of leading includes looking to examples ahead of you.

“To lead by example is to continue to grow, to find good role models. If you’re not willing to follow, then you’re not going to be very humble, and you will miss out on a ton of good ideas that you could get from your counselors and others,” says Alexandra Jensen, 18, of the Second Ward, Coeur d’Alene Stake.

Another way of following is doing what you are asked. Kilie Ellison, 15, of the Post Falls First Ward, Coeur d’Alene Stake says, “When you’re asked by leaders to do something, even if you don’t want to, do it anyway with a good attitude.” Taylor Woodbury, 15, of the Quail



Run Ward, Moscow Idaho Stake, points out that “if we do what’s asked, then everything will run smoother, and it helps the Spirit to be there.”

BEING A GOOD FOLLOWER

“You need to know and listen to your leaders. They were followers at one time, and they know what you’re going through.”
—Emelene Argo

“Helping others with their callings makes things go smoother.”
—Lance Child

“You have to be willing to listen, to be obedient, and to take action.”
—Caleb Knight

THE LEADER



Young men and young women from the Coeur d'Alene Idaho Stake are learning to take the lead. Below left to right: Alexandra Jensen, Brad Smidt, Emelyn Argo, Caleb Knight, Kilie Ellison, Kade Green, Katie Pringel, Allysa Cozzens, Michael Hardy, Lance Child.



"It's important to be a good follower, because Christ has told us to follow Him. He set the example of being a follower by doing what His Heavenly Father

asked Him to do. Obviously that's important if He did it Himself," says Dallin Squires, 16, of the Sullivan Ward, Spokane Valley Stake. He learned this principle from his teachers quorum adviser, who would ask the young men what they wanted to do, give his input, and then let them take the lead.

Delegating and Listening to Others



When Andrew Pugh, 16, of the Chewelah Ward, Colville Washington Stake, was the freshman class president at his high school, his principal taught him about the importance of delegating to others. He said that if you don't do anything,

no one else will; if you do everything, no one else will; but if you work with people, everyone will work. "As long as you are being a true leader, everyone who wants to help will help," says Andrew.



Katelyn Ferraro, 16, of the Colville First Ward, Colville Stake, says, "It's hard to not always get the things done that you were planning, but you can see how pleased others are when you work with them." Dustin Bonkemeyer, 17, of the Brentwood Ward, Spokane North Stake, adds,



"It's 1,000 times worth it to know that you are helping others to grow, strengthen their testimonies, and draw closer to Christ."

Another important part of working with others is learning to listen to what they have to say. Allysa Cozzens, 16, of the Post Falls Second



Ward, Coeur d'Alene Stake, thinks that Queen Esther is a good example of one who was willing to listen. "At a pivotal point in the story, Queen Esther says, 'I'll go, and if I perish, I perish' [see Esther 4:16]. She was totally willing to do whatever the Lord needed her to do to save her people; she also followed her uncle's counsel. She was a great leader, but she also knew that you have to be willing to listen to others."

Growing from Leading

Along with reaching out, working with, and listening to others, young men and young women gain confidence and organizational skills from their callings. Katelyn Ferraro says, "Most of the time I am not assertive, but I have learned how to take charge. I have also learned that each person has a special quality and unique personality to contribute, and I can learn so much from them."



Like other members throughout the Church, these young men and young women are putting into practice the principles taught in Doctrine and Covenants 121:41: "No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned." That is true leadership. **NE**



BEING A GOOD LEADER

"We need to be careful in what we say or do, because so many people are watching—sometimes people we don't even know."
—Brad Smidt

"Reach out to the ones who aren't confident, and make sure that everyone feels included."
—Marissa Bernatz

"Knowing when to step back and compromise is important."
—Allysa Cozzens

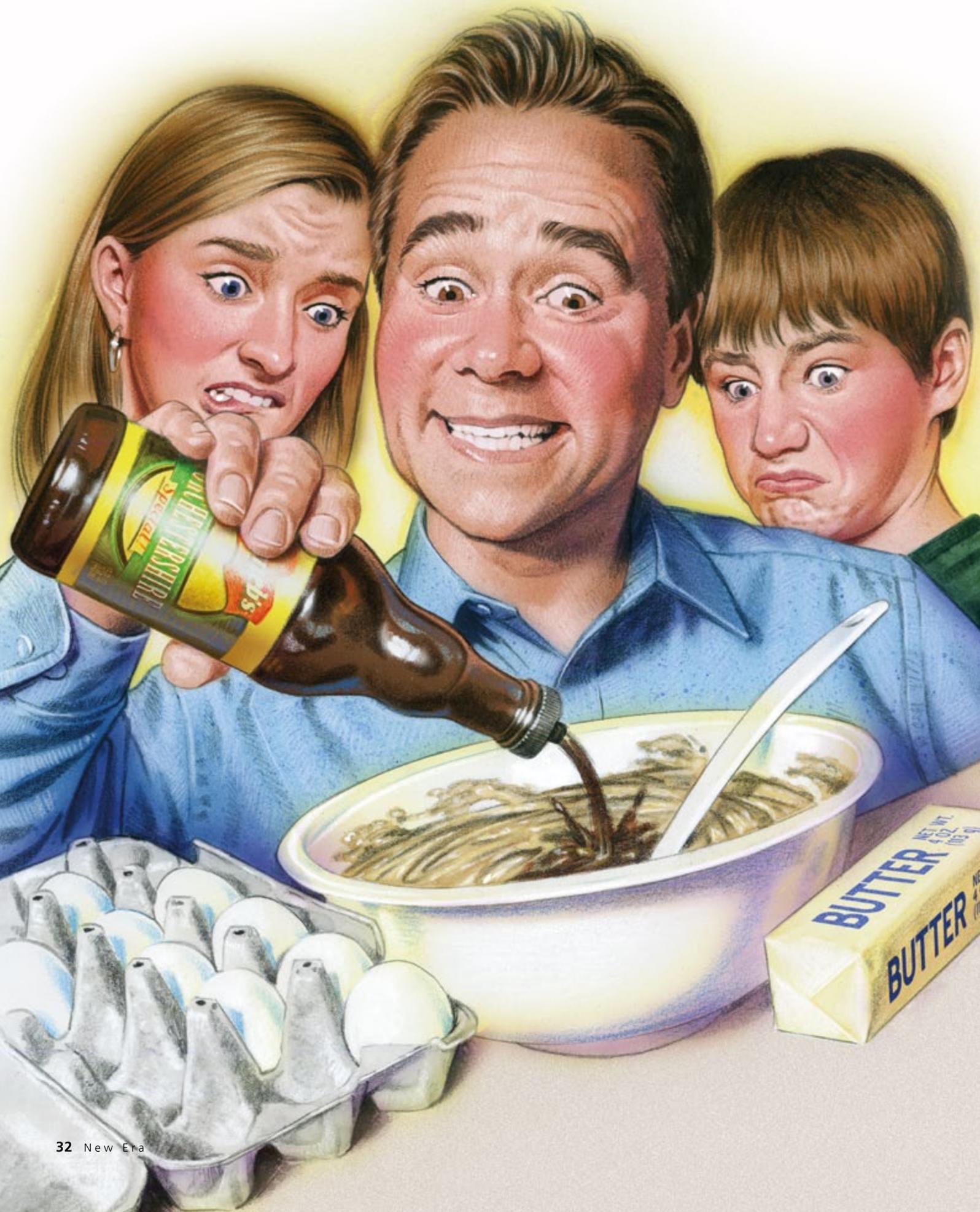
"You have to have some organization or it just doesn't work."
—Paige McIntire

FOLLOWING EXAMPLES IN THE SCRIPTURES

"King Benjamin didn't only tell his people what they should do. He worked with them and did what they were doing."
—Katelyn Ferraro

"Job was really patient, and I think that's one of the most important things about a leader."
—Caleb Knight

"Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of a leader. Think of all the selfless acts that He performed."
—Hillary Lake



THE

WORST

CAKE EVER

Baking one very bad cake with Dad made a big impression.

By Marie Elwood-Hendricks

It was family home evening, and Dad was teaching the lesson. I slouched into a comfortable chair and glanced around the room at my sisters and brothers. We were there, prepared to listen—halfway—before rushing back to the really important things in our lives.

Suddenly Dad disappeared into the kitchen. I raised my eyebrows at Anna, my sister. She shrugged, silently communicating, “How do *I* know what he’s doing?”

He came bouncing out of the kitchen with an apron on, a large mixing bowl and an old cookbook in his hands. “Today for our lesson, we are going to make a cake. Then, for a treat, we will eat it.”

That sounded good to me. I could always handle a few extra snacks between meals.

“But,” Dad said, “we’re not going to use this cookbook.”

“Why not?” asked my sister Katie.

“Well, this book was written a long time ago,” he said as he checked the copyright date in the front. “1979. I’m sure they knew how to make a 1979 cake, but I really doubt the authors know anything about making a cake right now, in this century. The pressures that we’re under, the technology, it’s all really different.”

“But cake making doesn’t really change,” protested Anna.

“No book,” said Dad. He threw the cookbook squarely onto the kitchen table. “This is our cake, and we’re going to make it our way. We don’t need anyone to tell us how to make it. Let’s go around and each person can pick an ingredient to put in the cake.”

He started with me. “Um, OK, flour?”

“How much?”

“Two cups?” I hazarded a guess. “Really, Dad, I think it would be better if . . .”

He held up his hand to silence my protest as Mom rushed to get the flour and add it to the mixing bowl.

Joe was next. “Butter? One stick?”

We went around the circle. We added salt, sugar, milk, and eggs. I breathed a sigh of relief when Katie added baking powder. She bakes more than I do, and I had known it needed some kind of leaven, but I was unsure what.

It was Anna’s turn. “Cocoa powder,” she declared. I smiled. Chocolate cake is my favorite. This cake was turning out to be OK after all.

When we were all finished, it looked like cake batter and smelled good, too.

“Let’s grease and flour the pan,” suggested Katie.

“One moment,” said Dad. “I just thought of something that would be really good to add.” He handed the bowl to Mom and came back with some . . . was that Worcestershire sauce?

Amidst howls of protest, Dad added two large tablespoonfuls of the black sauce to our batter. We all looked on in shock and dismay.

Dad smiled benignly. “Were you going to grease and flour that pan?” he asked Katie.

“I guess so,” she replied uncertainly.

Dad looked at our crestfallen faces. He said, “I know most successful cakes don’t have Worcestershire sauce in them. In fact, if we looked in the instructions, there might be some kind of warnings against adding things like Worcestershire sauce. But,” he said with a sneer, “that cookbook is old-fashioned and ancient. We don’t need anyone telling us what to do. It’s our cake. We can do what we want with it. Also, I hear that everyone who is anyone is

Cake making doesn't really change much over time, and neither do the rules for living a happy and successful life.

putting Worcestershire sauce into their cakes these days.”

Dad popped the cake into the oven and removed his apron. In stunned silence, we returned to our seats. Dad sat down, too. When he began to speak, the sneer was gone. He held up a set of scriptures, and his tone was reverent.

“When you pictured the cake we were going to make, you probably pictured something wonderful, maybe a chocolate cake with white frosting. You did not picture something disgusting.

“Right now I want you to picture the life you have ahead of you. Picture the ingredients you know you need to return to your Father in Heaven. Picture serving a mission. Picture marriage in the temple. Picture the career of your choice. Picture yourself making good choices and being a force for good in the world. These are the positive ingredients you put into life.

“But there are certain things that do not belong in a successful life, just as Worcestershire sauce never belongs in a cake, like drug use, sexual immorality, or dishonesty. No matter how Satan tries to disguise them, they are guaranteed roads to failure.

“Of course, our cake would have turned out better if we had read and followed the

instructions.”

He held up his scriptures. “Your life will turn out better if you follow the teachings in here. It’s true that the scriptures were written a long time ago. It’s true that some of the values may seem old-fashioned to some of your friends. But, like Anna said, cake making doesn’t really change much over time, and neither do the rules for living a happy and successful life. Also, we have living prophets and apostles. They are the experts, just like the authors of the cookbook are experts. We all would do well to follow their teachings.

“If you keep sight of your eternal goals, you won’t let people talk you into putting destructive ingredients into your life. But if you just drift along, adding whatever yucky things are ‘in’ at the moment, you won’t make the cake—or the life—that you picture for yourself.”

We were quiet for a moment. Then Mom said, “Of course, we do have repentance.”

“That’s true,” said Dad. “Unlike cakes, lives get second chances.” The timer buzzed. Reluctantly, Katie went to the kitchen and removed the cake from the oven. It smelled terrible. Were they really going to make us eat that?

“Let’s go have a treat,” said Mom. As we got up to leave, my brother Joe put his hand on my dad’s shoulder.

“Good lesson, Dad,” he said.

We were pleasantly surprised to find another cake, which Mom had made using the cookbook. We all had a small bite of the nasty cake, however, just to see what it tasted like. It was as disgusting as it smelled.

For the price of a few wasted ingredients, Dad made a huge impact. For years now, I have remembered his lesson, and I have always been blessed when I have tried to avoid the undesirable ingredients of life. **NE**

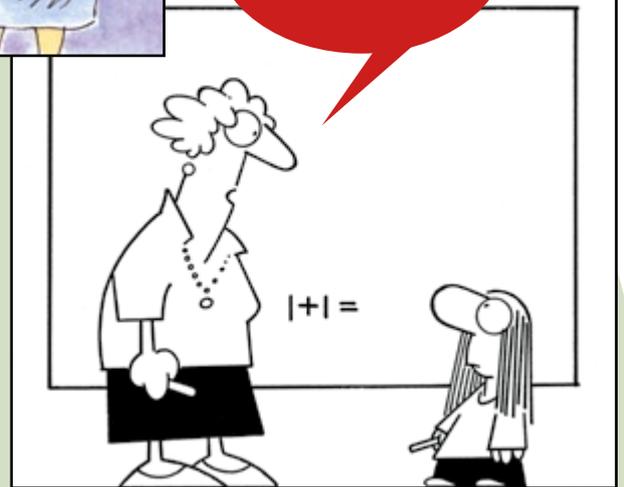


"Happy Mother's Day!
We got you a half box of
chocolates!"



RYAN STOKER

"Yes, this will be useful
to you later in life."



RANDY GLASBERGEN

"There! We've pulled
up all your vegetable starts
and trampled your flower
garden. Anything else we can
do for you before we go,
Sister Thompson?"



KEVIN BECKSTROM

"I'd like to speak on the
distractions of the worl . . .
hold on. I'm getting a
text message."



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

By Richard M. Romney

Church Magazines

When they followed the Duty to God instruction to “invite all to come unto Christ,” these young men in Immokalee, Florida, found their efforts quickly added up.

Sharing the gospel is about people, not numbers. So what happened in Immokalee, Florida, began just as it should have, when Junior Reyes invited one of his friends to come to church.

Little did he know what he was starting.

2+1=26

At the time, there were only two Aaronic Priesthood bearers in the Immokalee Branch: Junior and another young man named Jorge Caceres. Jorge was born in the Church but had become discouraged because for a long time he had been the only Aaronic Priesthood bearer in the branch. So Junior, a convert, was the only one who went to stake firesides.

“Every time I’d go, I’d see the other branches and all the youth in the stake, but from our branch, it would just be me,” Junior says. “Finally, I said, ‘Why am I the only one here from Immokalee? I’ve got to open my mouth.’”

“The way I was raised, I was taught not to be scared,” he continues. “When I talk to my friends about Jesus Christ and the restored gospel, I’m not afraid; I’m happy. I know what I’m telling them can help them make their lives better.”

So Junior invited his friend Wedner Daly to come to church. “I said, ‘You learn a lot of things and you get a lot of blessings, and it’s worth it.’”

Wedner accepted.

“I didn’t think anything special about it at first,” Wedner says. “I thought it would be like other churches. But when I got there, it was the day that everybody shared their testimonies, so I got to feel the

Milsont Pierre (front) and Junior Reyes (back) diagram how a simple invitation, then another and another, caused their Aaronic Priesthood quorums and their branch to grow and keep growing.

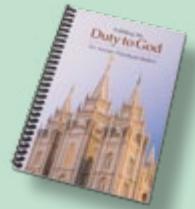
PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY

DO

INVITE ALL

The *Duty to God* booklet encourages Aaronic Priesthood holders to invite all to come unto Christ. It says:

"Think about family members and friends whom you could invite to come unto Christ. Write down their names and what you will do to help them (such as inviting them to a Church activity or giving them a copy of the Book of Mormon or a Church magazine)" ([2010], 28).



THE MATH

Spirit when I first came. That was different for me. I had never been to a church where people shared their testimonies and felt great about their church. That's one of the reasons that I liked it."

So Wedner invited his friend, Milsont Pierre. Milsont started coming to weeknight activities and then to Sunday meetings, and then the missionaries started teaching his family. He remembers vividly, "I felt the Spirit, over and over again, especially during the sacrament prayers. I knew this was the true Church." Milsont and his three brothers were baptized and confirmed, as well as a cousin, a nephew, and four of Milsont's friends.

Multiplying Tree

From there, the Aaronic Priesthood in Immokalee just kept multiplying. "It was like a tree," Junior says. "It just kept growing and growing."

"One person invited another person, who invited another person, who invited another," Milsont says.

Some of Junior's friends from the football team came. Others invited relatives, fellow students, or long-time friends. The full-time missionaries received lots of referrals and taught and taught and taught—often accompanied by young men from the branch. Attendance at Wednesday night and Scouting activities averaged about 30, with almost as many in attendance on Sunday. Today there are 26 active young men in the branch—and one of them is Jorge Caceres, the one who had previously been discouraged about having no other young men with whom to associate.

"I became friends with Junior, too," Jorge says, "Then when he started inviting his friends to church,

I became friends with them. Every week new people kept coming."

And Jorge noticed something. "Once they started getting to know the Church, they changed." The gospel was changing them; getting to know Christ was changing them. "When I saw that, I started to take church more seriously. I worked on my own testimony, and now I know the Church is true."

Fellowship Factor

What has made the difference in Immokalee? Some things you would expect. "One thing that helped me a lot is reading my scriptures and thinking about it, asking questions and praying," says Esperandieu Andfils. "When you do that and feel the Spirit, there is no denial."

Wilnick Louis says witnessing his older brother Milsont's baptism made a difference for him. The baptism was held on Sunday after regular meetings, so Wilnick decided to come to church first. "I'd been to activities, but that was the first time I'd come to church on Sunday," he says. "During the meetings, and then at the baptism, I felt something good. When the missionaries asked me if I'd come again, I said, 'Yeah, I'll keep coming.'"

Sergio Andres says hearing the testimonies of the other young men his age made a big difference for him, and so did hearing the testimony of the full-time missionaries. "You have to share your testimony," Sergio says, "because if people don't know there's a true Church, they won't be able to find it."

But one of the biggest factors in the growth of the Church in Immokalee appears to be the attitude the young men here have toward each other.

Palm trees (previous page), pine trees, and orange groves prosper in southwestern Florida, and so does missionary work as young men share the desirable fruit of the gospel with family and friends and strengthen each other in quorums.



ADDING THE SPIRIT

Julian Vallejo's example is making a difference, right in his own home. His mother, Marylou V. Navarrete, and his little brother, Sebastian, who are LDS, and his stepfather, Antonio Navarrete, who is not a member of the Church, all say they are proud to watch Julian growing up in the Church and grateful for the example he sets for the family.

"I like having the Spirit of the Savior in our home," Julian says, "and at church we learn about the Savior. We take the sacrament and promise always to remember Him. Then we try to live as He would live, and that includes how we live at home." Setting an example by following the Savior yourself is also part of inviting people to come unto Christ, Julian says.

The Christlike spirit Antonio feels his wife, his son, and his stepson bringing into the family may be part of why he attends the Immokalee Branch. "I come with them all the time to support them," he says, "and to learn a little bit." He also helps the branch leaders, offering opinions and suggestions when asked.

That's a good reason, Julian says, for him to be proud of his stepfather.



26

Never Divided

“We are always together,” Wedner says. “There’s a strong feeling that we’re all brothers, and I love my brothers.” Esperandieu echoes the same feeling: “I can count on them.”

That’s what Young Men leaders have noticed, too.

“They’re friends everywhere they go,” says Michael “Bo” Browne, newly sustained Immokalee Young Men president. “It’s not a situation where if they’re in school, they avoid eye contact. They’re friends and brothers outside of the Church as well as inside, and I think that’s the key.”

“They have taught me a lot of things,” says a previous Young Men president, Frank Fernandez. “But their love for each other is the best example I’ve received. That’s the kind of love we should have toward everybody. Because of that love, they are fearless. They’re not afraid to open their mouths and talk to their friends about the gospel.”

“We’re all counseled to bring our friends and relatives unto Christ,” says recently released Immokalee Young Men president and Scoutmaster Clark Robinson, “and we feel like we should do it because we’re hearing people tell us we should. But these young men do it because they found peace here, and they’re eager to have those they care about feel what they feel and know what they know. It reminds me of Lehi’s dream, when he partakes of the fruit of the tree and immediately wants to share his happiness.

“The Lord has asked everyone to take what we have and add to it. So do the math. A willing spirit plus the correct principles equals a happy, large quorum and a growing branch or ward in the Church,” Brother Robinson says. **NE**

Wild grass stalks near Immokalee remind young men of the growth of their branch, of their own growth in the gospel, and of the scripture that says, “the field is white already to harvest” (D&C 33:7).

NEmore

Watch a video about the young men of Immokalee on youth.lds.org.



REACHING FOR THE SUMMIT

Hit your mark, follow through, and keep going. In bowling and in life, the principles are much the same. And Rjani Kaya (pronounced *Ranny* and *Ki-yuh*) should know. At school, a bowling tournament, home, church or wherever she may be, Rjani focuses on good goals and keeps going until they're accomplished.

How do lessons learned from bowling help you personally? When I step up to bowl, I first focus on floor markers to guide my steps before I release my ball. I'm more likely to hit my target zone if I first focus on what's closest to me. In my personal life, I'm very close to family, especially my parents, Ransom and Nani. I have a rich heritage and descend from Norwegian, Japanese, and Hawaiian ancestors. When my Grandma Johnson was alive, she taught me this Hawaiian saying, "*Kulia i ka Nu'u.*" It means "Reach for the Summit." I can do this when I first focus on family and the gospel.

Bowling also teaches you to "follow through and keep going." How has this helped you to overcome challenges? Before I release my bowling ball, I must keep my body in proper alignment, especially my arm, hand, and wrist. Even a slight turn of the wrist can send the ball off course. This is also true for my spiritual and personal growth.

When I experienced ongoing bullying from a peer, I was troubled for a time. I sought advice and comfort from my parents and seminary teacher and through studying the prophet's counsel and the scriptures. The bully eventually moved away, and I was able to "course correct" by remembering my divine worth.

Why is it important to "keep going"? You can always achieve more with hard work, and enduring is part of becoming perfect like Heavenly Father. I set personal goals. My high score in bowling is 288, but I'd like to bowl a perfect 300. I practice three to four days a week to prepare for tournaments. Through my winnings I've already earned enough bowling scholarships to pay for my first year of college.

My personal goals focus on my spiritual growth as well. As a member of the Lord's true Church, I strive to do my best. I try to improve every day. **NE**

—As told to Kerry Smith



Name: Rjani Kaya
Age: 15
Hometown: Nampa, Idaho
Major:
Accomplishments: Highest scratch game 288. USBC Junior Gold member. 2010 Idaho Regional Teen Master National Girls' Division, first-place qualifier. 2008–2010 finalist for the National Teen Masters Tournament. First chair violinist at Vallivue High School. Honor student.



By Kenneth Hurst

PRAYER

in the Projection Booth

I thought I had the answer, but I felt differently when I prayed.

My senior year in high school brought me an experience that taught me much about obedience and prayer. I had joined the Church about six months previously, and now I had my first job with a regular paycheck: I was the projectionist at the downtown movie theater. I loved movies, and getting a salary for showing movies was like getting paid for having fun. Also, the job required my strict attention only about 5 minutes out of every 20, when it was time to change reels. As long as the film didn't break or something else didn't require my attention, I was free during most of my time in the projection booth to read, do schoolwork, or simply enjoy the movie.

The job had its downsides. One was that I would be required to work on Sunday nights.

After some weeks on the job I could tell that my spirituality was declining. I was becoming moody and depressed. My schoolwork suffered. But I still thought I had a wonderful job, and I didn't want to give it up.

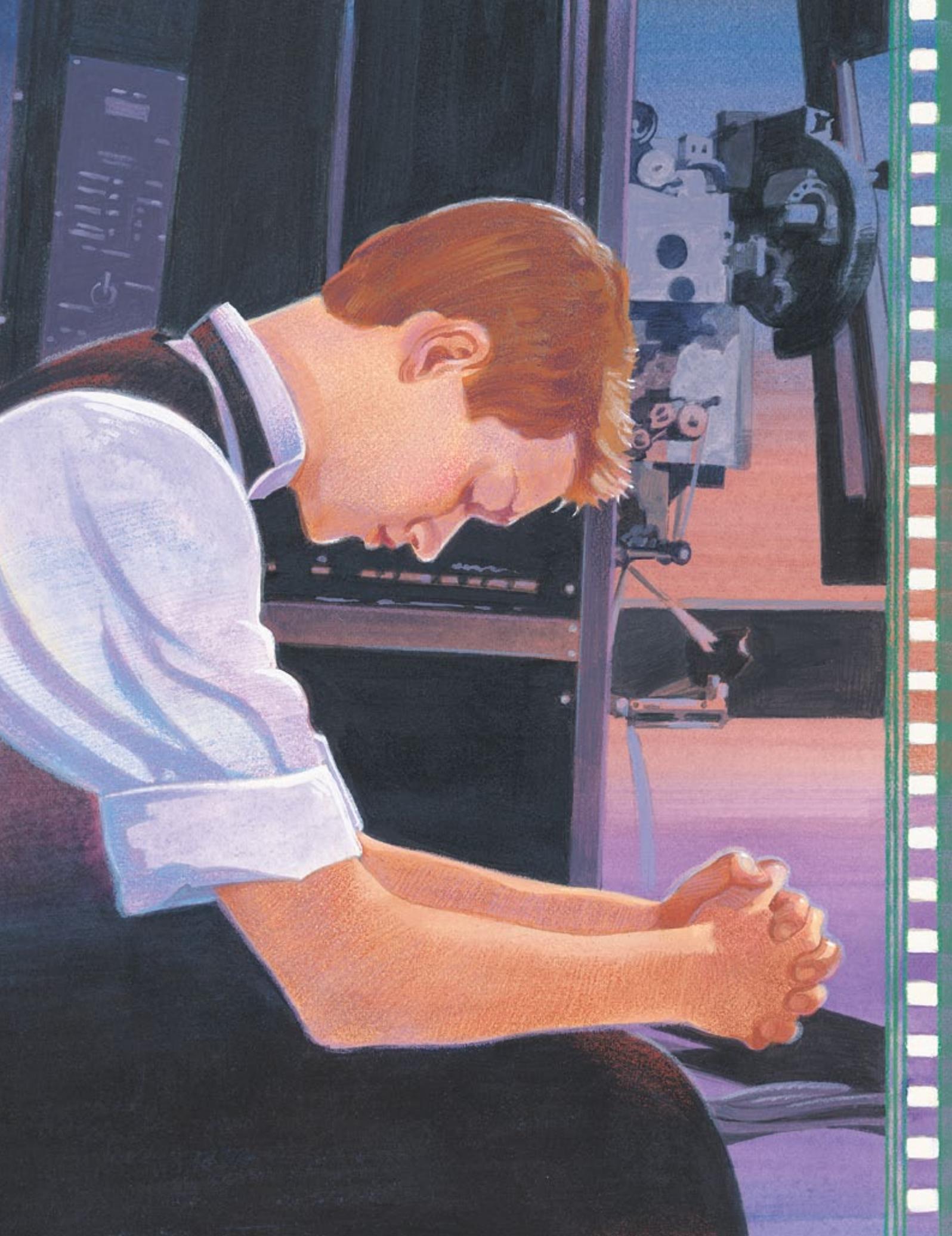
I asked my boss, Mr. Harper, if I could have Sundays off. He told me that Sunday was their biggest day, and he couldn't spare me. A coworker agreed to work in my place on some Sundays. I thought that would be a great help, but my dark feelings, as well as my grades, continued to get worse.

Then I had what I thought was a brilliant idea. I would give what I earned on Sundays to the Church as a special donation. I'd even add an extra 10 percent for good measure. Since I wouldn't be profiting from my Sunday work, surely the Lord would accept my sacrifice and give His blessing to my activities.

I found myself praying while I was alone in the projection booth one night. "What should I do?" I asked aloud. "Should I keep going as I am now? Should I quit? Should I donate my Sunday earnings?" I truly wanted to know, and my questions were sincere.

When I asked if I should quit, I felt a warmth stir inside me. Was that an answer? If it was, I didn't think it made sense. Why would the Lord refuse my offering of my





HOW PRAYERS ARE ANSWERED

☞ [Heavenly Father] will reply [to your prayer] in one of *three* ways. First, you can feel the peace, comfort, and assurance that confirm that your decision is right. Or second, you can sense that unsettled feeling, the stupor of thought, indicating that your choice is wrong. Or third—and this is the difficult one—you can feel no response.

“What do you do when you have prepared carefully, have prayed fervently, waited a reasonable time for a response, and still do not feel an answer? You may want to express thanks when that occurs, for it is an evidence of His trust. When you are living worthily and your choice is consistent with the Savior’s teachings and you need to act, proceed with trust.”

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer,” *Ensign*, May 2007, 10.

Sunday earnings? Surely, I thought, He would consider my sacrifice the best possible option. I must have misunderstood what I felt. (If I had remembered that Heavenly Father prefers obedience over sacrifice, I would not have been so confused [see 1 Samuel 15:22].)

I stayed at the job. I added my Sunday earnings to what I was already paying for tithing and fast offerings. I thought I was doing the right thing. Why wasn’t I feeling better? After several weeks of soul-searching I concluded that I had chosen to do what I wanted to do when I decided to stay on the job, even though it violated the Lord’s commandments. I wouldn’t get better until what I wanted to do matched what the Lord wanted me to do. I enjoyed being a movie projectionist, but I wanted to enjoy being a good Latter-day Saint more. I found someone to recommend as my replacement, and I gave Mr. Harper my two weeks’ notice.

Around this time my priests quorum class discussed what the Lord told Oliver Cowdery

about answers to prayer: “You must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right” (D&C 9:8).

When I thought about my prayer in the projection booth, I realized that what I had felt when I had asked if I should quit was that promised burning in the bosom. At the time I either hadn’t recognized it for what it was, or I hadn’t had faith that it came from God. Now I knew it had come from Him. I promised myself I wouldn’t be past feeling His words again (see 1 Nephi 17:45). **NE**



WEIGHED DOWN, LIFTED UP

By D. Lowell Brown

*When I felt overwhelmed,
I found help through prayer
and the scriptures.*

Graduation day was approaching. There were finals to prepare for, college applications to finish, and homework assignments to complete. Life was crazy! Then there was the church stuff: read my scriptures, pray, go to seminary, and serve in the priests quorum. I felt like the weight of the world was on my shoulders. Lastly, many of my friends relied on me for support. They were having problems and needed someone to talk to. I couldn't keep up with everything, and unfortunately, the first thing to go was scripture reading.

One day I felt especially overwhelmed. Everything happening in my life just seemed to take over. I felt like I had no control. I went to my bedroom to escape. I sat on my bed and tried to forget about everything for a few minutes.

While I was sitting there, I had the impression to pray. I got on my knees, bowed my head, and prayed to Heavenly Father. I explained that I needed help, that I could not do everything by myself.

After closing my prayer, I looked across my bedroom. I could see the corner of my scripture case underneath a pile of schoolbooks. I felt ashamed that I had neglected the scriptures so much. As I looked at them, I felt the peace of the Spirit. I knew I could find an answer in the scriptures.

As I thumbed through my scriptures, I read Helaman 12:1, which states, "And thus we can behold how false, and also the unsteadiness of the hearts of the children of men; yea, we can see that the Lord in his great infinite goodness doth bless and prosper those who put their trust in him."

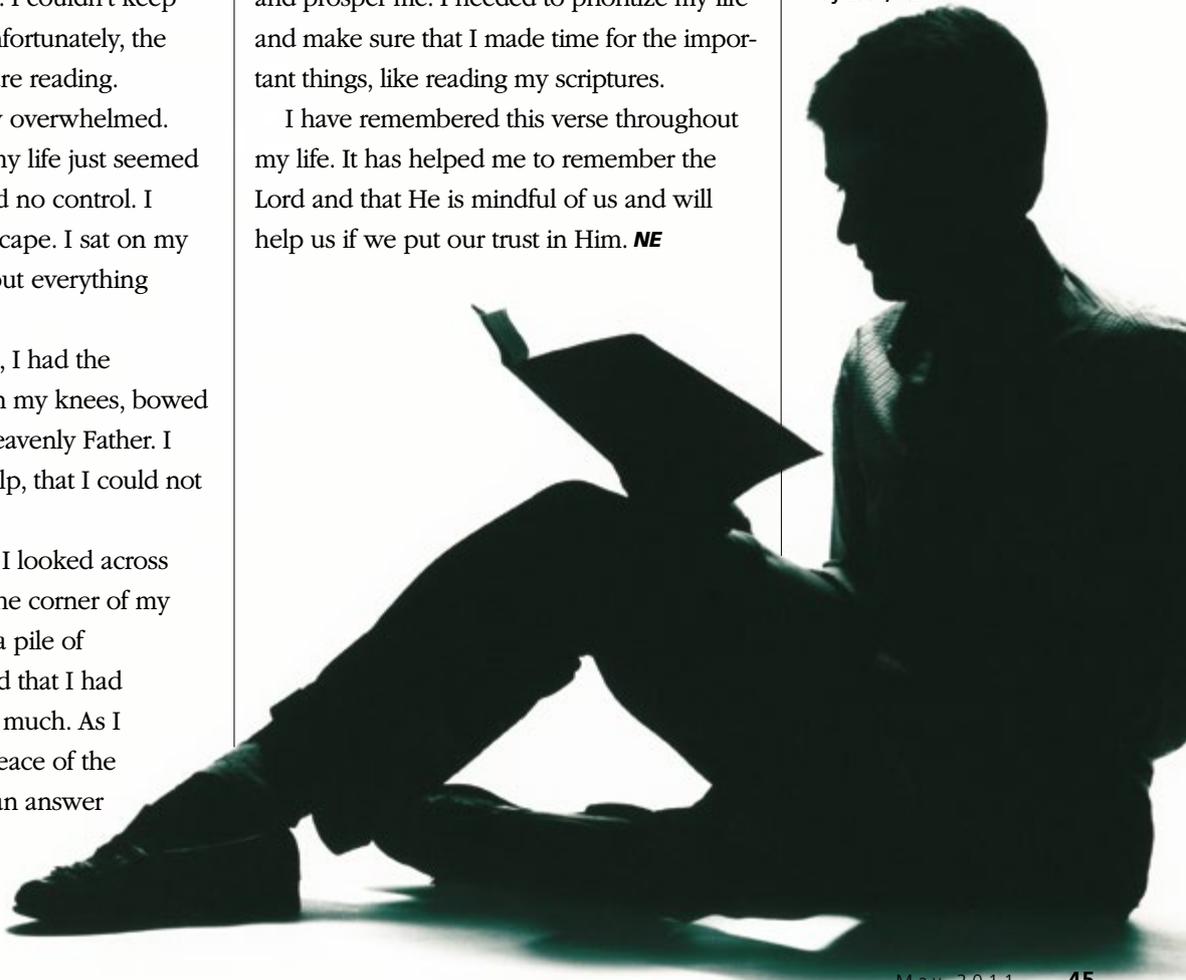
This verse spoke to me strongly. I had been trying to do everything myself. If I would really put my trust in the Lord, He would bless and prosper me. I needed to prioritize my life and make sure that I made time for the important things, like reading my scriptures.

I have remembered this verse throughout my life. It has helped me to remember the Lord and that He is mindful of us and will help us if we put our trust in Him. **NE**

FEAST ON THE WORD

"[A] simple thing to do, which allows God to give us strength, is to feast on the word of God: read and ponder the standard works of the Church and the words of living prophets. There is a promise of help from God that comes with that daily practice."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "In the Strength of the Lord," *Ensign*, May 2004, 18.



"YOU KNOW WHAT'S RIGHT"

My mother has always been an amazing influence in my life. She's always taught me to do the right thing and has helped me form my testimony of the gospel.

When my freshman year of college came and I moved away to my new apartment, I didn't realize just how much she had helped me until one night my roommates asked me to go to a party with them at a neighboring apartment.

The two other girls and I got ready and then went to the apartment where the party was being held. The shades were drawn and the door was locked. We had

to knock on the door and then say who we were for them to let us in. I didn't think much of it; I just thought of it as a way for them to control how many people came in.

As the two girls and I walked into the room, I had a feeling of unease come over me. Never having had that particular feeling before, I didn't know what exactly it was. I just brushed it off as the uneasy feeling you get when you walk in a room full of people you don't know.

I was sitting there with my roommate, who was talking some guy's ear off, when I noticed that people were coming in and out of the door that led to the rooms in the back. Because my roommate had been to a party with these guys before, I quietly asked her what was going on back there. My roommate told me matter-of-factly that



that's where all the alcohol was and that they had to keep it back there in case the police showed up.

Immediately, I realized that the feeling of unease that I had felt the moment I walked through the door was the Spirit trying to tell me that this was not a place I should be. I told my roommate that I was going to go back to our apartment. She grabbed onto my hand and told me to stay. I hesitated, not knowing what to do. If I stayed, I knew that I wouldn't have to go back behind that door and that I would be fine, but I also knew that if the police showed up and I was there, they wouldn't believe that I hadn't been drinking.

Then, the voice of my sweet mother came to my mind and said four words: "You know what's right." I left the apartment that moment and went back to my own. Even though the police didn't show up that night, I knew that I had made the right decision and that it was the knowledge taught to me by my mother that had finally helped me do what I knew was the right thing.

Brittney Ann S., Utah, USA

LISTEN, LEARN, AND LABOR

I stood with thousands of youth, waiting for the First Presidency to speak. After hearing from President Hinckley, President Monson, and President Faust, we would perform in the youth cultural celebration as part of the Sacramento California Temple dedication.

MY OTHER TALENT

I was on the baseball team in high school, but I needed shoulder surgery my junior year and was unable to recover enough to play. When I had to quit baseball, I was very torn up. I wasn't sure what to do with my life.

I have always been into music and had started writing songs on my guitar. For a long time I did this as a hobby and nothing more, but when I couldn't spend my time playing baseball, I decided to transfer all of my passion into my music. I contacted a friend who had a home recording studio, and we started recording some of my songs. After four months I came out with an eight-song CD.

My parents have been encouraging

me to save up for my mission since I was very young, but until this point I still didn't have a lot of money in my mission fund. I decided that once my

CD was finished I would sell it and save all of the profit for my mission fund. My goal is to make half the money I need for my mission through my music.

I know how important serving a mission is, and I'm working hard to earn the money I need. While it was disappointing to not be able

to play baseball anymore, I know the Lord has a plan for me. I can't play baseball, but I can play music. I see now how the Lord has opened up a way for me to earn some of the money I need to serve Him on a full-time mission.

Trevor L., Arizona, USA

I was about to begin my senior year of high school, and anxiety began to creep into my heart. I didn't know how to balance my many activities—advanced classes in school, music lessons, and college preparation. Could I possibly get everything done and still be successful?

"Remember the three principles of success: listen, learn, and labor," President Monson said. Peace washed over my soul as he explained how to listen, apply what you learn to your life, and then get to work without looking back. Those words gave me the confidence I needed to move forward.

I started my senior year by applying those principles to my schoolwork and other obligations. Instead of dwelling on my fear of the future, I took action

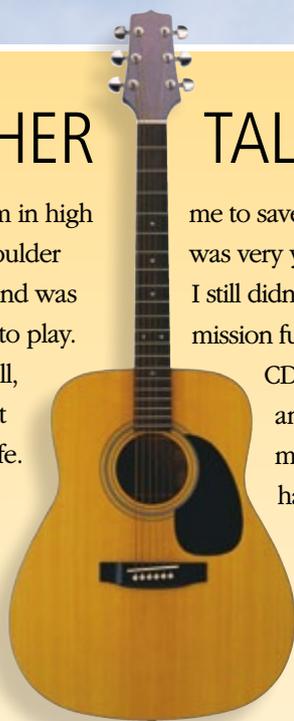
by applying for scholarships and studying for college entrance exams.

But I still felt like something was missing. After a lot of pondering and prayer, I realized President Monson had not only been talking about success in school, but also about success in life—especially eternal life.

I began setting aside more time to study the scriptures and the words of the living prophets. I made personal prayer more of a priority, even when I had other things that needed to get done. To my amazement, my tasks were easier, my mind was clear, and my heart was happy.

Three simple words—listen, learn, and labor—gave me the formula for success in high school and in life.

Emily D., California, USA



I HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING

The April 2011 conference had a big impact on me about how I thought about the Church. Before, I felt like I was the only one who had values and followed *For the Strength of Youth*. Now I understand I'm not the only one who is willing to obey the comandments. I have a better understanding of why I'm here and what my mission is here on earth.

Charlene D., 13, Colorado

MORE THAN JUST MONEY

Elder Carl B. Pratt's counsel to pay tithing as soon as possible helped me, because I try to pay my tithing, but it's not always as soon as I possibly could. I am going to try to do better. I also learned from his message that the Lord's richest blessings are not money.

Rylee J., 13, California

TO BE IS NEVER DONE

I enjoyed Elder Lynn G. Robbins's talk when he opened with one of the most famous lines from *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare: "To be, or not to be, that is the question." I loved his comparison of that quote to the members of the Church. We must learn what we must learn, do what we must do, become what we are to become. *To be* is never done. It is never checked off. Becoming our greatest self is a lifelong process that will stretch into the eternities.

Katie H., 18, Nevada

I'LL TREASURE THE MEMORY

The Spirit in the priesthood session was amazing! I was on the BYU-Idaho campus among hundreds of college students, and the feeling of the Spirit and the strength of the priesthood was amazing. I'll treasure that moment in my memory forever.

Samuel S., 14, Idaho



*Conference,
or the word of the
Lord in general,
is like
sunshine.*

*We love hearing from you.
Write to us by going online to*

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DESIRES AND PRIORITIES

Elder Dallin H. Oaks's talk on desire was truly inspirational, because I know that I am not the only teen who struggles with desire. I like the analogy of the snowball effect: desire makes your priorities, priorities make your choices, and your choices determine your actions.

Haley H., 14, Georgia

LIKE SUNSHINE

Conference, or the word of the Lord in general, is like sunshine. It's always available—always constant. We have to be willing to open the curtain and let it in. I know that my Redeemer lives. Imperfect as I am, He loves me perfectly and will never forsake me. I do not have a perfect knowledge, but I will "try a little harder to be a little better" (Gordon B. Hinckley, "We Have a Work to Do," *Ensign*, May 1995, 88).

Catherine C., 17, New Hampshire

ENLIGHTENED BY THEIR MESSAGES

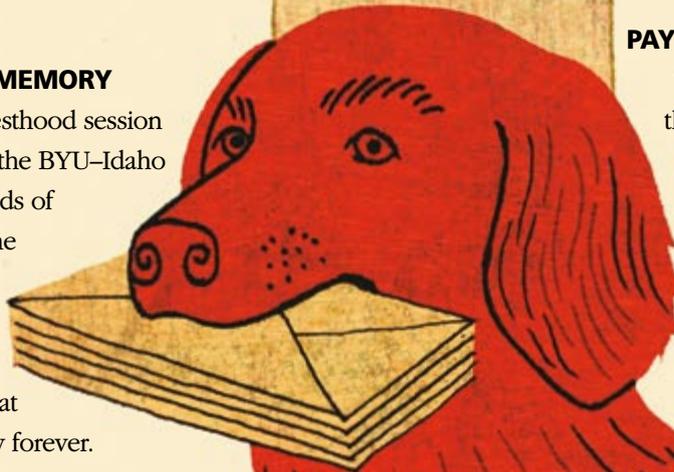
I am excited by the realization that men with the same power and authority as Moses and Abraham are speaking to me. I feel blessed to listen to their words and to be enlightened by their messages. I liked it when Elder Russell M. Nelson reminded us that the future is as bright as our faith.

Ashlie S., 15, Utah

PAY ATTENTION TO GOD'S WORDS

The Lord knows what we need, and through general conference we receive the help we need. Sometimes we think that we are already strong and know enough about the gospel, but as we humble ourselves, listen, and pay attention to the words of God, we find new thoughts and lessons that can improve our lives.

Andina B., 17, Arizona



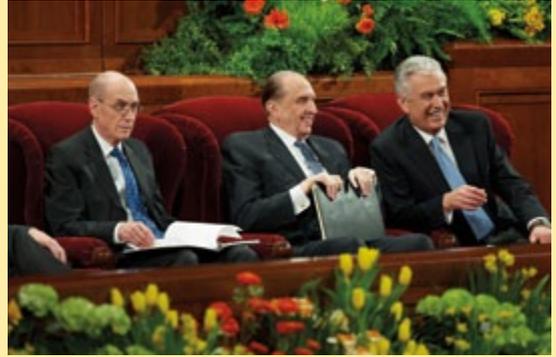


The Butterfly

By Karen Downs

As its wings unfold,
You see a beauty emerge
That is immeasurable.
It longs to be up
In the sky, soaring
On the breeze,
Free!
But this butterfly
Will never leave the ground.
A flower cannot fly.

WHAT'S ONLINE



Watch Conference Talks Anytime

Did you know that you can read, watch, and listen to talks from any general conference? You can even download them to any computer or mobile device. Just visit **conference.lds.org**. You can also view conference highlights for youth from the April 2011 conference at **lds.org/go/514**.

Check Out This New Feature for Smartphones!

In this issue, you'll find several quick-response (QR) codes like the one below. If you have a camera-enabled smartphone, you can scan a QR code to link straight to a video, article, or website without having to type in its web address. It's so easy! Here's how:

1. Search for QR-code apps in the app store for your smartphone. Free apps are available for most smartphones.
2. Install your selected app to your smartphone.
3. Open the app, and then scan the QR code. Once the QR code registers, the video, article, or website it links to will appear on your smartphone.

For example, try out the code below to go straight to **conference.lds.org**, and check out more QR codes on pages 3, 4, and 5. This is an emerging technology that works best on iPhone and Android phones and may not work on all devices. We'd love to hear what you think of the codes and if you'd like more in the future—e-mail us at **newera@ldschurch.org**.

