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THE

New Era



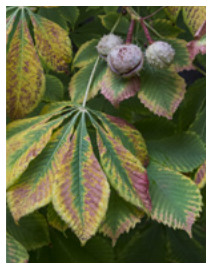
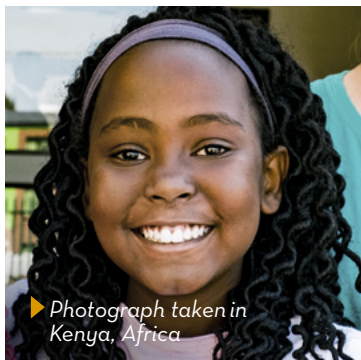
**General
CONFERENCE**

MESSAGES,
Answers,
FUN FACTS,
Activities,
AND MORE
pp. 2–25

REMEMBERING
**ELDER
ROBERT D.
HALES**
p. 26

**LIFE
ON THE
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Your Own Copy of
**"THE FAMILY:
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TO THE WORLD"**
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In this issue you will see photos of youth experiencing general conference at the Conference Center as well as at other locations around the world.



Cover: General conference is for you, pp. 2-25
Cover photograph: Leslie Nilsson

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THE MONTHLY YOUTH MAGAZINE OF
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

November 2017 • Volume 47 • Number 11

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— 2017 —

OCT



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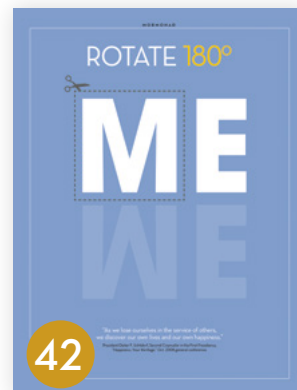
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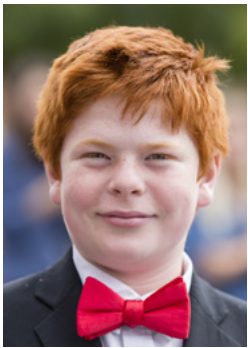


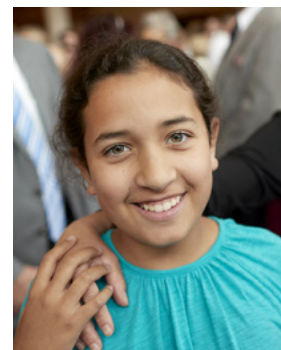
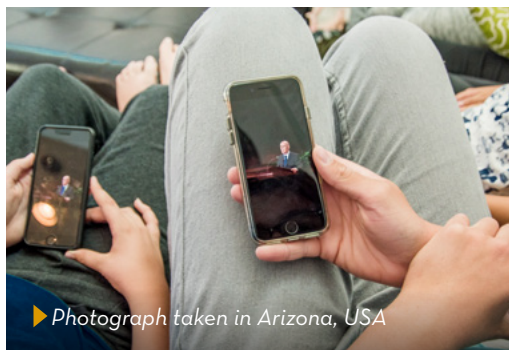
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A PROCLAMATION
TO THE WORLD



► Photograph taken in San Salvador, El Salvador





OCTOBER 2017 GENERAL CONFERENCE

HEARING THE WORD, ACTING IN FAITH



At the end of this general conference, Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “I promise that as you hear the voice of the Lord to you in the teachings of this general conference, and then act on those promptings, you will feel heaven’s hand upon you, and your life and the lives of those around you will be blessed.”

This special section highlights conference messages and shows how you can act on them. You can read, watch, or listen to the complete conference messages at conference.lds.org or on the **Gospel Library** app.

PROPHETS SPEAK TO US TODAY

Although President Monson was not present, many conference speakers drew on his counsel. President Henry B. Eyring testified, “I bear witness that Thomas S. Monson is the only man who holds and exercises all the keys of the holy priesthood on earth.”



SUSTAINING THE PROPHET BY REMEMBERING HIS COUNSEL

“In the Sunday morning session of the April 2017 general conference, President Thomas S. Monson pleaded with ‘each of us to prayerfully study and ponder the Book of Mormon each day.’ . . .

“Since President Monson’s challenge six months ago, I have tried to follow his counsel. . . .

“I know that President Thomas S. Monson is the prophet of God on the earth today. I love him and sustain him with all of my heart.”

President Russell M. Nelson

“President Thomas S. Monson has counseled us, saying, ‘Let us examine our lives and determine to follow the Savior’s example by being kind, loving, and charitable.’”

Elder Jose L. Alonso

“President Thomas S. Monson has pleaded, ‘May we ever choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong.’”

Elder Stanley G. Ellis

“During this conference, we have thought of our dear prophet. We love you, President Monson. I close with his words given from this pulpit. I believe it is a blessing that he would want to give to each of us today, were he able to be with us. He said: ‘As we leave this conference, I invoke the blessings of heaven upon each of you. . . . I pray our Heavenly Father will bless you and your families. May the messages and spirit of this conference find expression in all that you do—in your homes, in your work, in your meetings, and in all your comings and goings.’

“He concluded: ‘I love you. I pray for you. May God bless you. May His promised peace be with you now and always.’”

Elder Neil L. Andersen

“President Thomas S. Monson has taught us: ‘As we follow the example of the Savior, ours will be the opportunity to be a light in the lives of others.’”

Elder Vincent O. Halek

For more references from this conference to President Monson’s teachings, visit newera.lds.org.

PRESIDENT HENRY B. EYRING

First Counselor in the First Presidency

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD SESSION

THE LORD LEADS HIS CHURCH

"I wish to speak about the wonderful way in which the Lord leads His kingdom on earth. You already know the fundamentals. . . .

"First, Jesus Christ is the head of the Church in all the earth.

"Second, He leads His Church today by speaking to men called as prophets, and He does it through revelation.

"Third, He gave revelation to His prophets long ago, still does, and will continue to do so.

"Fourth, He gives confirming revelation to those who serve under the leadership of His prophets.

"From those fundamentals, we recognize that the Lord's leadership of His Church requires great and steady faith from all who serve Him on earth.

"For instance, it takes faith to believe that the resurrected Lord is watching over the daily details of His kingdom. It takes faith to believe that He calls imperfect people into positions of trust. It takes faith to believe that He knows the people He calls perfectly, both their capacities and their potential, and so makes no mistakes in His calls.

"That may bring a smile or a shake of the head to some in this audience—both those who think their own call to serve might have been a mistake as well as those who picture some they know who seem poorly suited to their place in the Lord's kingdom. My counsel to both groups is to delay such judgments until you can better see what the Lord sees. The judgment you need to make, instead, is that *you* have the capacity to receive revelation and to act on it fearlessly.

"It takes faith to do so. And it takes even greater faith to believe that the Lord has called imperfect human servants to lead you. My purpose . . . is to build your faith that God directs you in your service to Him. And even more



importantly, my hope is to build your faith that the Lord is inspiring the imperfect persons He has called as your leaders."

SUNDAY MORNING SESSION

FEAR NOT TO DO GOOD

"Last April, President Thomas S. Monson gave a message that stirred hearts across the world, including mine. He spoke of the power of the Book of Mormon. He urged us to study, ponder, and apply its teachings. . . .

"Like many of you, I heard the prophet's words as the voice of the Lord to me. And, also like many of you, I decided to obey those words. . . .

"The happy result for me, and for many of you, has been what the prophet promised. Those of us who took his inspired counsel to heart have heard the Spirit more distinctly. We have found a greater power to resist temptation and have felt greater faith in a resurrected Jesus Christ, in His gospel, and in His living Church.

"In a season of increasing tumult in the world, those increases in testimony have driven out doubt and fear and have brought us feelings of peace. Heeding President Monson's counsel has had two other wonderful effects on me: First, the Spirit he promised has produced a sense of optimism about what lies



ahead, even as the commotion in the world seems to increase. And, second, the Lord has given me—and you—an even greater feeling of His love for those in distress. We have felt an increase in the desire to go to the rescue of others. That desire has been at the heart of President Monson's ministry and teaching. . . .

"The Lord told His leaders of the Restoration, and He tells us, that when we stand with faith upon His rock, doubt and fear are diminished; the desire to do good increases. As we accept President Monson's invitation to plant in our hearts a testimony of Jesus Christ, we gain the power, the desire, and the courage to go to the rescue of others without concern for our own needs. . . .

"That desire to bless is the fruit of people gaining a testimony of Jesus Christ, His gospel, His restored Church, and His prophet. That is why the Lord's people doubt not and fear not. That is why missionaries volunteer for service in every corner of the world. That is why parents pray with their children for others. That is why leaders challenge their youth to take President Monson's request to immerse themselves in the Book of Mormon to heart. The fruit comes not by being urged by leaders

but by the youth and members acting on faith. That faith, put into action, which requires selfless sacrifice, brings the change of heart that allows them to feel the love of God. . . .

"The best days are ahead for the kingdom of God on the earth. Opposition will strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ, as it has since the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Faith always defeats fear. Standing together produces unity. And your prayers for those in need are heard and answered by a loving God."





PRESIDENT DIETER F. UCHTDORF

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

GENERAL WOMEN'S SESSION



Photograph taken in São Paulo, Brazil

THREE SISTERS

"A long time ago in a distant land lived a family of three sisters.

"The first sister was **sad**. Everything from her nose to her chin and from her skin to her toes seemed not quite good enough to her. . . .

"The second sister was **mad**. . . .

"She was never first at anything, and this she could not endure. Life was not supposed to be this way! . . .

"Then there was the third sister. Unlike her sad and mad sisters, she was—well, **glad**. And it wasn't because she was smarter or more beautiful or more capable than her sisters. . . .

"This sister loved to sing. She didn't have great pitch, and people laughed about it, but that didn't stop her. . . .

". . . If you are like most of us, you may have recognized part of yourself in one, two, or perhaps all three of these sisters. Let us take a closer look at each one.



"The first sister saw herself as a victim. . . .

"If you find yourself worrying about what other people say about you, may I suggest this antidote: remember who you are. Remember that you are of the royal house of the kingdom of God, daughters of Heavenly Parents, who reign throughout the universe.

"You have the spiritual DNA of God. . . .

"You are in His hands. . . .

". . . Please let these divine truths sink deeply into your hearts. And you will find that there are many reasons not to be sad, for you have an eternal destiny to fulfill. . . .

"The second sister was angry at the world. Like her sad sister, she felt that the problems in her life were all caused by someone else. . . . And she lashed out. . . .

". . . We are responsible for our own discipleship, and it has little—if anything—to do with the way others treat us. . . .

"So, as members of the Church of Jesus Christ, we will love our enemies.

"We will overcome anger or hate.

"We will fill our hearts with love for all of God's children. . . .

"The third sister represents the authentic disciple of Jesus Christ. She did something that can be extremely hard to do: she trusted God even in the face of ridicule and hardship. . . . She lived joyfully not because her circumstances were joyful but because *she* was joyful. . . .

". . . If you find it difficult to hold fast to the iron rod and walk steadfastly toward salvation; if the laughter and ridicule of others who seem so confident cause you to waver; if you are troubled by unanswered questions or doctrines you don't understand yet; if you feel saddened because of disappointments, I urge you to remember Lehi's dream.

"Stay on the path!

"Never let go of the rod of iron—the word of God! . . .

"You cannot allow circumstances to make you sad.

"You cannot allow them to make you mad.

"You can rejoice that you are a daughter of God. You can find joy and happiness in the grace of God and in the love of Jesus Christ.

"You can be glad."

A YEARNING FOR HOME

"I believe that every man, woman, and child has felt the call of heaven at some point in his or her life. Deep within us is a longing to somehow reach past the veil and embrace Heavenly Parents we once knew and cherished. . . .

"The sublime message of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is that God is our Father, that He cares about us, and that there is a way to return to Him.

"God calls to you. . . .

". . . If you have faltered, failed, feel broken, bitter, betrayed, or beaten—know that you are not alone. God still calls to you.

"The Savior extends His hand to you. . . .

"Today, let me offer two reasons why we should turn to the Lord.

"First, your life will be better.

"Second, God will use you to make the lives of other people better. . . .

"No one else is responsible for your personal journey. The Savior will help you and prepare the way before you, but the commitment to follow Him and keep His commandments must come from you. . . .

"Come, join with us and trust the Lord. Lend your talents to His wonderful work. . . .

"The gospel is a transcendent message of hope, happiness, and joy. It is the pathway that leads us home."



GENERAL PRIESTHOOD SESSION

BEARERS OF HEAVENLY LIGHT

"We can heal spiritually. . . .

"Whatever causes our spiritual ailments, they all have one thing in common: the absence of divine light.

"Darkness reduces our ability to see clearly. . . .

"Light, on the other hand, allows us to see things as they really are. . . .

"Darkness is not an indication that there is no light. Most often, it simply means we're not in the right place to receive the light. . . .

". . . It is up to us to be in the right place to see the divine light and truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Even when night has fallen and the world seems dark, we can choose to walk in Christ's light, keep His commandments, and courageously testify of His reality and His greatness.

"As a bearer of God's priesthood and as a disciple of Jesus Christ, you are a bearer of light. Keep doing the things that will nurture His divine light.

". . . You are instruments in the hands of the Lord with the purpose of bringing light and healing to the souls of Heavenly Father's children. . . .

"Christ's light brings hope, happiness, and



healing of any spiritual wound or ailment. . . .

"It is my prayer and blessing that you will succeed in fulfilling your destiny as priesthood holders of Almighty God and always be joyful bearers of His heavenly light."

*I testify that in this conference
we have heard the Lord's voice.
The test for each of us is how
we respond.*



ELDER DALLIN H. OAKS

The family proclamation is the Lord's reemphasis of the gospel truths we need to sustain us through current challenges to the family.



ELDER M. RUSSELL BALLARD

A trek back to our Heavenly Father is the most important trek of our lives.



ELDER ROBERT D. HALES

*(1932-2017)
[Did not speak at this general conference. See memorial on page 26.]*



ELDER DAVID A. BEDNAR

Heavenly Father's great plan of happiness includes the doctrine, the ordinances, the covenants, and the exceeding great and precious promises whereby we can become partakers of the divine nature.



ELDER QUENTIN L. COOK

Humility about who we are and God's purpose for us is essential.



ELDER D. TODD CHRISTOFFERSON

If we yearn to dwell in Christ and have Him dwell in us, then holiness is what we seek.



ELDER RONALD A. RASBAND

The Lord's hand is guiding you. By "divine design," He is in the small details of your life as well as the major milestones.



ELDER GARY E. STEVENSON

Don't let life's distractions eclipse heaven's light.



ELDER DALE G. RENLUND

For Heavenly Father's purposes to be accomplished, Christ's atoning power needs to be made available to God's children. The priesthood delivers these opportunities.

YOU CAN GET ANSWERS

Here are five questions that youth frequently ask. They're also examples of questions that Church leaders gave counsel about in general conference. Think about questions you may have, and then as you study general conference messages, see how they help to find answers. For the full text of the conference messages, go to conference.lds.org.



1

▶ Photograph taken in Piauí, Brazil

HOW CAN I CHANGE THE WAY I FEEL ABOUT SOMEONE WHO IS DIFFICULT?

Both Elder W. Craig Zwick and Sister Neill E. Marriott taught how turning to God allows Him to change our hearts as well as how we see others and feel about them.

What answers
am I seeking?



2

HOW DO I MOVE FORWARD EVEN THOUGH I'M PAINFULLY AWARE OF ALL MY SHORTCOMINGS?

"I would hope we could pursue personal improvement in a way that doesn't include . . . feeling depressed or demolishing our self-esteem. . . . The grace of Christ offers us not only salvation from sorrow and sin and death but also salvation from our own persistent self-criticism."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

"God will show us our flaws and failings, but He will also help us turn weakness into strength. If we sincerely ask, 'What lack I yet?' [Matthew 19:20], He will not leave us to guess, but in love He will answer for the sake of our happiness."

Elder D. Todd Christofferson

What answers
can I find in general
conference?

3

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

- Hold on to the word of God and pay no heed to ridicule (see President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Three Sisters”).
- Study the Book of Mormon every day (see President Russell M. Nelson).
- Go to well-informed, faithful sources, especially the scriptures, and hold on to the faith you have (see Elder Ian S. Arderon).
- Be sincere, study, pray, keep the commandments, have faith, be patient, and receive revelation (see Elder David F. Evans).



4

HOW CAN I DISCOVER MY GIFTS AND FIND OUT WHAT MY MISSION IN THIS LIFE IS?

Elder John C. Pingree Jr. reminded us that everyone has gifts and suggested how we can come to know what our specific gifts are: “We can reference our patriarchal blessing, ask those who know us best, and personally identify what we are naturally good at and enjoy. Most important, we can ask God (see James 1:5; D&C 112:10). He knows our gifts, since He gave them to us (see D&C 46:26).”

5

WITH ALL THE BAD THINGS GOING ON IN THE WORLD, HOW CAN I OVERCOME FEAR AND FEEL PEACE?

“Those increases in testimony [from following President Monson’s counsel to read the Book of Mormon] have driven out doubt and fear and have brought us feelings of peace. Heeding President Monson’s counsel has had two other wonderful effects on me: First, the Spirit he promised has produced a sense of optimism about what lies ahead, even as the commotion in the world seems to increase. And, second, the Lord has given me—and you—an even greater feeling of His love for those in distress.”

President Henry B. Eyring, “Fear Not to Do Good.”

“The fires and tumults of mortal life may threaten and frighten, but those who incline their hearts to God will be encircled by His peace. Their joy will not be diminished. They will not be abandoned or forgotten.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “A Yearning for Home.”

GAMES & ACTIVITIES

DECIPHER THE CONFERENCE QUOTE

Below is a quote from general conference by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf. Each letter of the alphabet has been replaced by another. **Can you decode it?**

C Y C M T H Y M H U F K V O H F D

E J C S C Y C B M J F Y O H F D K V H C K B M

Y V E Y U E A B Y V B W C G G B D B T K B

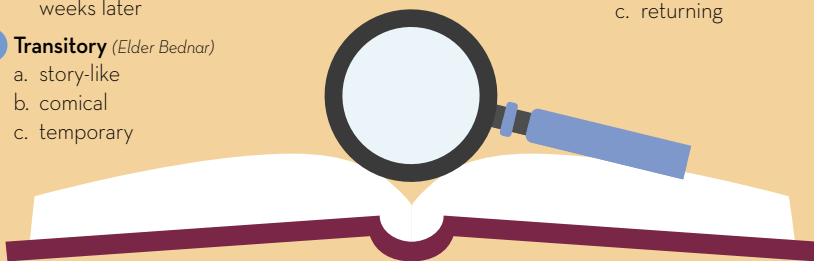
C T S C G B .

Hint: Y = T (When you see a Y, write an T over it.)

VOCABULARY CHALLENGE

Some words used in general conference require vocabulary mastery. **Can you define these particularly challenging words from general conference? Good luck.**

- 1 **Transcendent** (President Uchtdorf, Sat a.m.)
 - a. exceptional
 - b. tooth replacement
 - c. optional
- 2 **Supernal** (President Uchtdorf, Sat a.m.; Brother Callister)
 - a. extra-large piece of popcorn
 - b. active
 - c. heavenly
- 3 **Postulate** (President Uchtdorf, Priesthood)
 - a. to criticize
 - b. to assume
 - c. to post a photo weeks later
- 4 **Transitory** (Elder Bednar)
 - a. story-like
 - b. comical
 - c. temporary
- 5 **Amorphous** (Elder Renlund)
 - a. frog-like
 - b. without form
 - c. without morals
- 6 **Ostensibly** (Elder Cook)
 - a. sticking one's head in sand
 - b. outwardly
 - c. keeping to self
- 7 **Sophistry** (Elder Oaks)
 - a. history of soap operas
 - b. eloquent speech
 - c. subtle deception
- 8 **Omniscient** (Elder Rasband)
 - a. having complete knowledge
 - b. having an appetizing scent
 - c. having future application
- 9 **Promulgate** (Elder Oaks)
 - a. to accuse
 - b. to proclaim
 - c. prom gossip
- 10 **Prodigious** (Brother Callister)
 - a. having the habit of poking
 - b. remarkable
 - c. returning



FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING

In several general conference talks, speakers use metaphors and allusions to illustrate points. **Can you match these to the speakers who used them?**



1. Pitcher
 2. Bobbie the Wonder Dog
 3. Trek
 4. Caterpillar
 5. Diamonds and rubies
 6. Eclipse glasses
 7. Hatching chick
- A. Elder Ballard
 — B. Elder Ellis
 — C. President Uchtdorf
 — D. Sister Marriott
 — E. Elder Stevenson
 — F. President Nelson
 — G. Elder Arden

FACTS ABOUT General Conference

7,667

pipes in the Conference Center organ

Only about 170 pipes can be seen by the audience

4

scriptures cited most during this conference:

Alma 7:11-12*

Moses 1:39*

2 Nephi 31:20

Proverbs 3:5-6*

**Seminary doctrinal mastery passages*

Words most used during conference

JESUS CHRIST
LIFE LORD GOD

General authorities and officers who spoke or offered prayers are from

11

different countries and territories

The wood for the Conference Center's pulpit came from President Gordon B. Hinckley's old walnut tree

21,000

seats available in the Conference Center

Approximately

137,000

tweets with the hashtag #LDSConf were sent during conference

It has been nearly

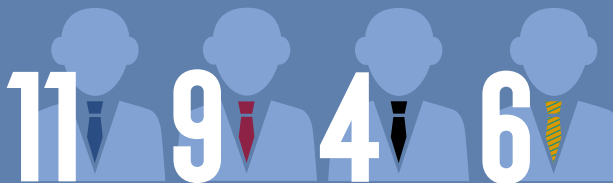
24

years since the prophet has not attended conference

30

songs were sung at conference

Most popular tie color worn by the speakers at conference



Blue

Red

Black

Other

The first time in

54

years that Pres. Monson didn't attend conference

MESSAGES FOR YOU



The presidents of the Young Women and Young Men organizations spoke in general conference. Here are some of their messages.



HELPING THOSE AROUND YOU

I have tremendous love for and faith in those of you who are in your teen and young adult years.

I have seen and felt of your desires to serve and make a difference in the world. . . . We are touched when we see the suffering and great needs of those halfway around the world, but we may fail to see there is a person who needs our friendship sitting right next to us in class. . . .

. . . Strengthening and serving your family members should be among your top priorities as you look for ways to change the world. Showing kindness and concern for your siblings and parents helps create an atmosphere of unity and invites the Spirit into the home. Changing the world begins with strengthening your own family. . . .

My young friends, I can guarantee that there will always be someone at every Church meeting you attend who is lonely, who is going through challenges and needs a friend, or who

feels like he or she doesn't belong. You have something important to contribute to every meeting or activity, and the Lord desires for you to look around at your peers and then minister as He would. . . .

. . . Next time you are at Mutual, instead of picking up your phone to see what your friends are doing, stop, look around, and ask yourself, "Who needs me today?" You may be the key to reaching out and touching the life of a peer or to giving encouragement to a friend who is quietly struggling.

Ask your Heavenly Father to show you those around you who need your help and to inspire you on how best to serve them. Remember that the Savior most often ministered to one person at a time. . . .

. . . As you strive to become more like the Savior Jesus Christ and live your covenants, you will continue to be blessed with desires to relieve suffering and to help those who are less fortunate. Remember that some of the greatest needs may be those right in front of you. Begin your service in your own homes and within your own families.

Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women General President



REPENTANCE IS ALWAYS POSITIVE

The Savior Jesus Christ worked out a perfect Atonement and gave us the gift of repentance—

our path back to a perfect brightness of hope and a winning life.

Too often we think of repentance as something miserable and depressing. But God's plan is the plan of happiness, not the plan of misery! Repentance is uplifting and ennobling. It's sin that brings unhappiness. Repentance is our escape route! . . . My message to all—especially to the youth—is that repentance is always positive.

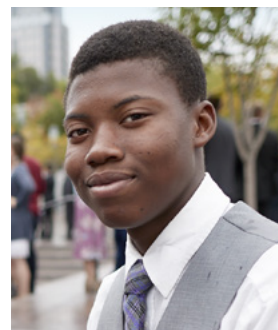
When we speak of repentance, we aren't just talking about self-improvement efforts. True repentance is more than that—it is inspired by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His power to forgive our sins. As Elder Dale G. Renlund has taught us, “Without the Redeemer, . . . repentance becomes simply miserable behavior modification” (Oct. 2016 general conference). We can try to change our behavior on our own, but only the Savior can remove our stains and lift our burdens, enabling us to

pursue the path of obedience with confidence and strength. The joy of repentance is more than the joy of living a decent life. It's the joy of forgiveness, of being clean again, and of drawing closer to God. Once you've experienced that joy, no lesser substitute will do. . . .

We often associate repentance with grievous sins that require “a mighty change” (Alma 5:12). But repentance is for everyone—those who are wandering in “forbidden paths and [are] lost” (1 Nephi 8:28) as well as those who “have gotten into [the] strait and narrow path” and now need to “press forward” (2 Nephi 31:19–20). Repentance both puts us on the right path and keeps us on the right path. It is for those who are just beginning to believe, those who have believed all along, and those who need to begin again to believe. . . .

You who are preparing for full-time missions and you who are returning, take note! It is not enough just to gain a testimony; you have to maintain it and strengthen it. As every missionary knows, if you stop pedaling a bicycle, it will fall, and if you stop feeding your testimony, it will weaken. This same principle applies to repentance—it is a lifelong pursuit, not a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Stephen W. Owen, Young Men General President





ALLOW
[THE LORD]
*to make
more of you*
THAN YOU CAN MAKE OF
YOURSELF ON YOUR OWN.
*Treasure His
involvement.*

RONALD A. RASBAND

Take a private moment to reflect on your blessings,
AND THEN FIND WAYS TO SHARE THEM.

JEAN B. BINGHAM



Worthiness
is achieved
through obedience.
If we sin, we are
less worthy, but
**WE ARE NEVER
WORTH LESS!**

JOY D. JONES



BECAUSE OF HIS
ATONING SACRIFICE,
Jesus Christ
has the power and authority
TO REDEEM ALL MANKIND.

DALE G. RENLUND

We are
ALL
EQUAL
BEFORE GOD.

QUENTIN L. COOK



AS YOU PRAYERFULLY
study the Book of Mormon
every day,
YOU WILL MAKE
better decisions—
every day.

RUSSELL M. NELSON



WHAT
DID YOU
HEAR?
WHAT
WILL
YOU
DO?

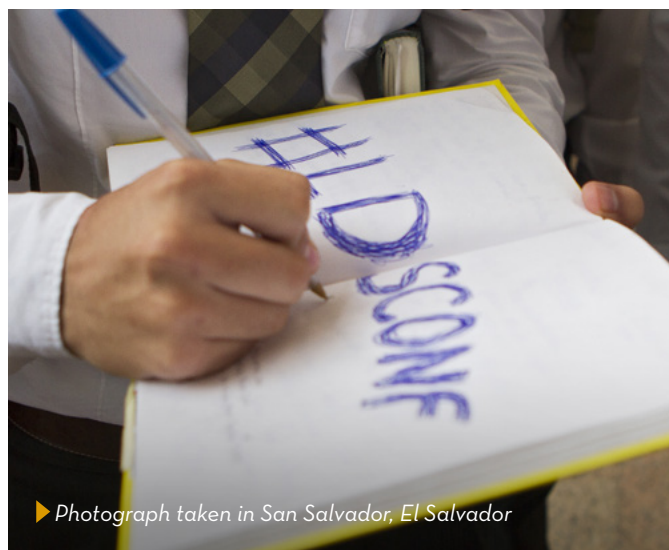


Following Prophetic Counsel Will Change Your Life

President Henry B. Eyring said: “Our hearts . . . remain changed only as long as we continue to follow the prophet’s counsel. If we stop trying after one burst of effort, the change will fade.”

What change did I feel
I need to make?

What am I going to do about it?



► Photograph taken in San Salvador, El Salvador

**LISTEN TO THE LORD'S VOICE THROUGH
CONFERENCE. THEN FOLLOW THROUGH ON
THE PROMPTINGS THE SPIRIT GIVES YOU.**

SHARED STORIES

You're not alone. We asked youth from around the world what they learned from conference and what they're doing differently because of it. Read more of their responses at youth.lds.org.



NOT ALONE

President Uchtdorf, Sister Oscarson, and Elder Holland helped me to not feel alone. In today's world, it is so easy to feel alone, but I now know we are not. Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are always with us. We do not need to beat ourselves up to have worth in God's eyes. Satan can try to make us think evil things about ourselves, but what he says is never true. My goal is to help others feel of worth and know that they are not alone. I will try to do that for myself as well.

RaeLynn D., 17, Tennessee, USA

About: Only child; enjoys theater, dancing, and singing; loves Disney and Harry Potter; favorite color is red.



SETTING GOALS

I was struck by Elder Cook's talk. He said that we need to be humble, overcome hurt feelings, and forgive others as many times as Heavenly Father forgives us. I also noticed that a lot of speakers talked about studying the Book of Mormon. Because of this, I have made two goals: (1) to become a more humble person, and (2) to read the Book of Mormon because even though I was born into the Church, I've never read it. I am grateful our leaders are concerned enough to teach us about these important things.

Diego L., 16, Región Metropolitana de Santiago, Chile

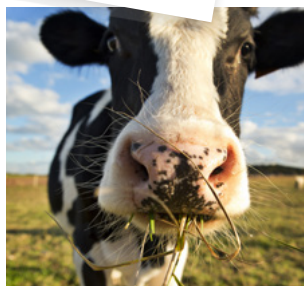
About: Middle child; loves watching wrestling, playing sports, walking on stilts, and going to the mountains.



TRULY BLESSED

As always, general conference was amazing! I really liked Elder Rasband's talk about how God is in the details, orchestrating everything. I'm going to work harder at keeping the commandments so that I can have Him always in my life. After conference, I have a renewed desire to serve my family and those around me at school and at Mutual. I also learned about the importance of forgiveness. I'm very thankful for the leaders of the Church. We're so truly blessed to have living prophets!

Connor N., 15, Idaho, USA



About: Youngest in his family; lives on a farm and feeds the calves every day; likes to play basketball.



INSPIRED BY CONFERENCE

I was inspired by general conference. The instruction from our leaders to serve others, trust Jesus Christ, and hold steadfastly to the iron rod testifies to me that this gospel is true and that we can obtain eternal salvation by keeping the commandments and following the word of God. I have set goals to be of more service in my community and to strengthen my testimony through daily prayer and scripture study. I know that I am a daughter of Heavenly Father. He lives and loves me forever and always.

Madelyn B., 16, Delaware, USA

About: Oldest of three siblings; runs cross country; loves reading and singing; loves the Spanish language and hopes to teach English as a second language.



ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Before conference I had two questions: (1) How can I keep a good attitude and help my friends when they make bad decisions? and (2) How can I testify of the Church without people making fun of me? During conference, the Spirit testified to me that I am not alone. Now I know that by studying the scriptures with all my heart I will receive answers to my questions about my friends. I know that my Father listens to my prayers, and I will strive to be better each day.

Isaak R., 13, Pichincha, Ecuador

About: Only child; likes to play piano, skate, play soccer, do judo, swim, sing, and make candies; wants to be a doctor; favorite color is green.



***YOU* HAVE THE
RECEIVE R
and TO AC
FEARL**

—PRESIDENT HENRY B. EYRING

A full-page background image of a snowy mountain landscape. In the foreground, a person with a backpack stands on a snow-covered ridge. The background shows more mountain peaks and a valley filled with snow and some evergreen trees. A large, semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text.

E CAPACITY TO
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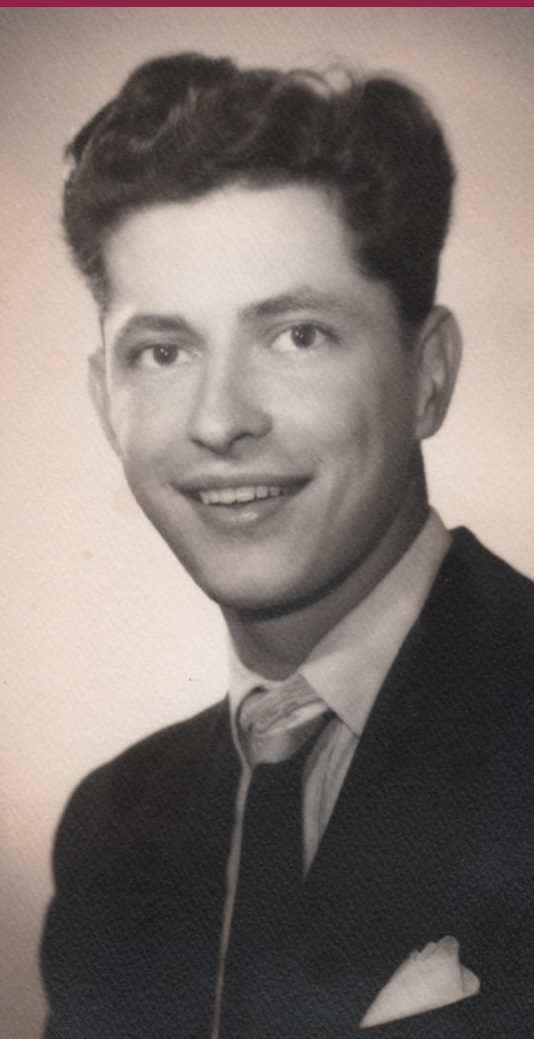
BE THERE!

“Each of us was *there* in the Council in Heaven to choose the great plan of happiness we now enjoy. . . . When you have made a commitment to yourself, your family, your bishop, your employer, **be there**. When it is time to be in church, at Mutual, or fulfilling [an] assignment, **be there**. When it is time to graduate from school or training programs, **be there**. When it is time to serve a mission, **be there**. When the young woman [or man] you love most kneels at the altar of God’s holy temple, **be there** (and not as a witness). When your family is gathered in the celestial kingdom, **be there**. When the Savior waits to greet you as you return with honor from your life on this earth and your Heavenly Father wants to encircle you about in the arms of His love, **be there**.”

Elder Robert D. Hales (1932–2017) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2007 general conference.



ELDER ROBERT D. HALES (1932–2017)



Reflecting on his service as a jet fighter pilot in the U.S. Air Force, Elder Robert D. Hales said, “Never deliberately fly into a thunderstorm. . . . Instead, fly around it, take another route, or wait for the storm to clear before landing.”

Just like taking the right course in a jet fighter, Elder Hales taught, “The choices you make—mission, education, marriage, career, and service in the Church—will shape your eternal destiny.”

“You are the pilots,” he said, “You are responsible to think about the consequences of every choice you make. . . . Your righteous choices will keep you from getting off course.”

For help to stay on course, Elder Hales taught that Heavenly Father “will speak to us through prayer, and when we pray, we will have the Holy Ghost, who will guide us. We have the scriptures, the teachings of living prophets, patriarchal blessings, the counsel of inspired parents, priesthood and auxiliary leaders, and, above all, the still, small voice of the Spirit. . . .

“I testify that if you are there for the Lord, He will be there for you (see D&C 88:63). If you love Him and keep His commandments, you will have His Spirit to be with you and guide you.”¹

NOTE

1. Robert D. Hales, Oct. 2015 general conference.

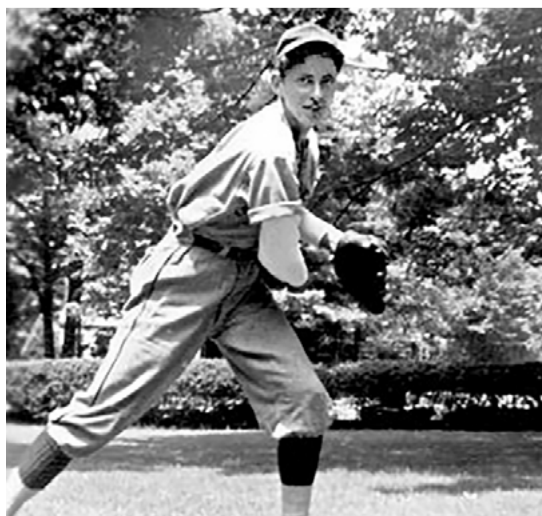
► Elder Robert D. Hales served as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles from 1994 to 2017.



From top left: As a pilot, Robert D. Hales adopted the motto “Return with honor.” His sweetheart, Mary, became his wife. He encouraged youth, played piano, remembered lessons learned as a boy, remained a sweetheart, and played baseball from childhood through college. He once threw the first pitch at a professional baseball game. And as a young man, he set a good example for his friends.

**“I BEAR MY SPECIAL WITNESS
THAT JESUS CHRIST LIVES. HE IS
THE SHEPHERD OF THE LOST SHEEP,
THE RESCUER OF THE STRANDED
SOUL, THE HEALER OF THE WOUNDED
HEART, THE HOPE OF ALL MANKIND.”**

Elder Robert D. Hales,
Apr. 2010 general conference.



MAKE THE CHOICE:

BITTER or Sweet

WHEN YOU'VE BEEN
DEALT A BITTER BLOW,
HOW DO YOU RESPOND?

By Matthew Garrett

This scenario might be all too familiar to you: A classmate you considered to be your true friend has left your friendship behind to hang out with the popular crowd. What's more, she has started to make decisions that break gospel standards and has started to make fun of you for not doing the same.

How would you respond? Do you feel *bitter* about how your friend left you behind? Or do you try and live the *sweet*, Christlike attributes of love and forgiveness? Sure, you already know which path is the path the Savior would have you follow, but when your emotions are hurting, it's not always easy, is it? Follow the bitter and sweet paths to find out where each response leads.



THE Sweet Path

You want to help your friend but aren't sure how. You begin by praying for guidance. (See Matthew 5:44.)

You decide to take your friend aside for a one-on-one chat. You tell her that you're hurt by her words and actions but still love and care about her. (See Matthew 18:15.)

Although your friend continues to make choices that you know aren't right and sometimes still makes fun of you for living the gospel, you continue to invite her to wholesome activities and Church events. (See D&C 31:9.)

You text your friend to see how she's doing and tell her you miss spending time with her. She admits she is confused and thanks you for caring. (See Proverbs 15:1.)

You realize that whether or not your friend chooses to hang out with you anymore, that doesn't mean you can't be friendly. You commit to being nice no matter what, and doing so brings you peace—even on the hard days. A lot of hard work remains, but you've started to feel true compassion and now know how sweet being a real friend can be. (See Ephesians 4:32.)



YOU HAVE THE POWER TO CHOOSE

"There may be many things about life that are beyond your

control. But in the end, you have the power to choose both your destination and many of your experiences along the way."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Three Sisters," Oct. 2017 general conference.



WHAT FORGIVING DOES

Truly forgiving someone can have sweet rewards. Forgiveness is a conscious choice: it is entirely up to you! Through prayer to Heavenly Father and the strength that comes from the Atonement of Jesus Christ, you can develop the capacity to forgive those who have wronged you. You can overcome bitter feelings to develop the strength to forgive, help others, and repair friendships. Learning to forgive can be truly sweet! **NE**

The author lives in Texas, USA.

Tucson Arizona Temple Dedication:

I WILL PREPARE

For youth in Arizona, USA, a new temple brings new commitment to live the gospel of Jesus Christ.



By Maryssa Dennis
Church Magazines

In August 2017, youth in Arizona, USA, celebrated the dedication of the brand-new Tucson Arizona Temple. This temple was uniquely designed to reflect the culture of the area. It features a silvery blue dome in place of a traditional temple spire, and the grounds are home to prickly cacti and other desert shrubs.

Before the dedication, about 2,000 youth from nine stakes gathered to celebrate the temple and local cultural heritage through dance, song, and drama. The program showcased everything from Latin and Native American influences in the area to the Mormon Battalion's Battle of the Bulls. It allowed the youth to express their faith, talent, and cultural pride.

The Tucson youth also wrote "I will" statements to share how they would prepare for the temple. With their specific goal in mind, these youth turn their hearts toward the temple and press forward with faith.



Tucson Arizona Temple baptismal font.

TUCSON ARIZONA TEMPLE QUICK FACTS

- Announced by President Thomas S. Monson on October 6, 2012.
- Ground broken on October 17, 2015.
- Cultural celebration took place on Saturday, August 12, 2017.
- Dedicated on Sunday, August 13, 2017.
- Located north of Tucson in the Catalina Foothills.
- Sixth temple in Arizona.



Makayla H., 13

Sang "I Love to See the Temple."

GOAL To learn more about my ancestors before I do their temple work.

"I'm so thankful for the temple. A couple years ago, my mom had a miscarriage. My baby brother's grave is close to the temple, so we always visit it on the way to the temple. It reminds us that we are an eternal family."



Isaac D., 15

Performed a Hispanic cultural dance.

GOAL To gain a better testimony of temples by reading the Book of Mormon before the temple dedication.

"By reading the scriptures, I can feel the Spirit and receive personal revelation. This will help me stay worthy and experience the blessings of the temple. I know this temple is a blessing, and I am grateful to God for it."



Madeline S., 17

Performed a rain dance for Arizona's monsoons.

GOAL To eliminate my biggest distractions—phone and social media—by converting to a flip phone.

"The temple is everything to me. As soon as I step through the its doors, I forget about my problems, and I can feel the Spirit so strongly. I know that everything I need for my eternal salvation comes from the temple."



Cole C., 15

Performed a Latin dance number.

GOAL To work on my genealogy and do the things the Lord asks of me.

"Every time I go inside the temple I feel overwhelming joy and peace. My dad's parents aren't members of the Church, but I know if they don't accept the gospel, I can be baptized for them after they pass away so we can be a forever family."



Candace C., 15

Performed a Latin dance number.

GOAL To always be worthy to enter the temple and to teach the gospel to my children.

"The temple helps me feel closer to Heavenly Father. With all the distractions of high school, it's easy to lose our way sometimes. Having a temple so close is a reminder that we are not alone. We can go there to feel comforted and serve others."





A LIFE

IN

Angel Zhong has risen to the top of gymnastic competition, but she's done it in an unconventional way—by honoring the Sabbath.

BALANCE

By Amie Jane Leavitt
and Richard M. Romney

Watching Angel Zhong gracefully glide through a floor routine, spin perfectly on the uneven bars, and pirouette, leap, flip, and hand-spring effortlessly on the balance beam, it's hard to imagine that anyone would have predicted that this 18-year-old champion gymnast would grow up to have poor health.

"I was born in China," Angel explains. "There was a one-child policy at the time, and girls were not always wanted. When I was born, the doctors said I would have health problems. They recommended that my life be terminated." Angel's parents were repulsed by such a suggestion

and rushed their firstborn child to the safety of their home. The doctor's ominous prediction proved false. Angel grew up strong and healthy. When she was six, her family emigrated to Canada. Today, Angel has one younger brother and three younger sisters.

DRAWN TO THE GYM

When Angel was eight years old, she was introduced to gymnastics. "I had always loved sports. I had tried swimming, soccer, kung fu, skating, and ballet," she says. But she felt none of those sports were challenging enough to interest her.

At her first gymnastics class, however, she was presented with a variety of feats that seemed physically impossible. Her interest was piqued, and from that point on she was drawn to the gym like a magnet. Angel had finally found a sport that matched both her energy and her athletic abilities. "I wanted to excel in gymnastics," she says. "I knew

"I SET MY GOALS HIGH AND
WORKED TOWARD THEM."



Angel's family has supported her since before she was born.

God gave me an amazing gift. He gave me a healthy body and the talent to do gymnastics. So, I set my goals high and worked toward them with intensity.”

LIKE ESTHER AND ABINADI

Two of Angel’s favorite stories in the scriptures are Esther in the Old Testament and Abinadi in the Book of Mormon. “They had so much courage,” she says. “Someday I hope to be like them.” Examine Angel’s life, however, and you’ll find that the choices she has already made reveal that she doesn’t have to wait for someday to be like them. She is *already* like them.

In the early days of her gymnastics training, Angel decided she would honor the Sabbath day by not practicing, training, or competing on Sundays. In gymnastics, such a commitment is considered at least unconventional if not downright crazy. Many important competitions are scheduled on Sundays, and gymnasts rarely take a day off from training—they’re afraid they’ll lose their edge.

Angel’s parents were proud of her decision to honor the Sabbath day. However, many others in Angel’s life were not so thrilled, particularly her teammates and coaches. They didn’t understand why she would forego important parts of her gymnastics career just to go to church. “You have your whole life to go to church,” they’d say, “but you only have a few years for gymnastics.”

“I often felt persecuted for righteousness’ sake,” Angel says (see Matthew 5:10). People ridiculed her and laughed at her. Her friends talked about her behind her back. Coaches refused to spend as much time training her as they did other athletes. She even changed



At the Canadian Gymnastics Championship, Angel took first place in the floor exercises.



from a prominent to a less-recognized club at one point to alleviate pressure about practicing and competing on Sundays.

The blessings of keeping the Sabbath day holy certainly weren’t obvious right away, and sometimes it was a struggle for Angel to keep her commitment. “It was heartbreaking for me to see my friends bring their medals and team uniforms to the gym and know that I could have had a chance for those things too,” she says. “I missed many opportunities that would have helped me gain national team status. I even missed a trial to go to the Canada Winter Games, which is like a mini version of the Olympics.”

BLESSINGS ALL AROUND

Yet, over time Angel has learned to recognize the many ways keeping the Sabbath day holy has benefitted her. For example, because she was active in Church both on Sundays and for weekday Young Women and Mutual activities, she developed friendships she wouldn't have had otherwise.

"Most of my good friends are from church and my leaders have been wonderfully supportive," she says. "Young Women was a safe haven for me. It strengthened me spiritually and I look forward to the time I spend with my ward family every week." Angel has served as Laurel class president, received her Young Women Recognition and Honor Bee, and attended early morning seminary.

As she observes the Sabbath day, Angel also noticed that her physical body benefitted by having a day of rest. Her athletic abilities weren't diminished by the day off. In fact, during high school, even though she trained one day less than her teammates, she remained as strong in the sport as others.

From the beginning of her gymnastics training, Angel's dream has been to represent Canada in the Olympics. Even though she didn't compete on Sundays, she was still able to achieve success in other important competitions held on different days. She was named the Canadian champion on floor exercises and the western Canadian all-around champion. And even though a knee injury eliminated her chance of trying out for the Canadian team for the Rio 2016 Games in Brazil, she still has her sights set on the 2020 games in Tokyo.

Angel also noticed that as she kept the Sabbath day holy, she was able to get more



Angel loves spending time with her friends on Sunday.

AS SHE OBSERVES THE SABBATH DAY, ANGEL ALSO NOTICES THAT HER PHYSICAL BODY BENEFITS BY HAVING A DAY OF REST.

done during the week. For example, many of her teammates struggled to keep up their grades. Angel not only earned straight A's with a perfect 4.0 GPA, but she also advanced her studies by taking online courses during the summertime. It was those online studies and her stellar GPA that helped Angel achieve one of her other goals—to earn a gymnastics scholarship to Brigham Young University. And she did so a year earlier than planned! At BYU she plans to major in neuroscience with a minor in family studies. Eventually she plans to go to medical school to become a neurosurgeon.

BALANCED AND BEAMING

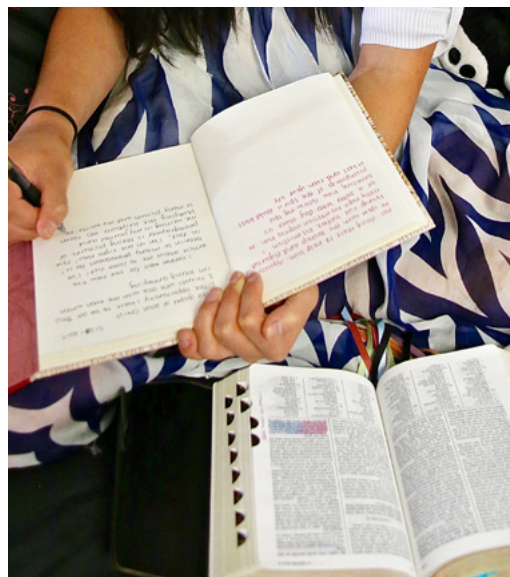
"I'm proud of my identity as a Latter-day Saint," Angel says. "The Church has blessed my life in every way possible. It has given me the strength, courage, and faith to accomplish my life's journey but to still have balance in my life."

She beams when she says, "On days when I feel like giving up, I turn to my Savior. He never fails to comfort me. He always carries me through my trials. Knowing that He and Heavenly Father want me to succeed has given me the inclination and desire to accomplish difficult goals in my life."

It's also allowed her to share the example of a balanced life with her three younger sisters. They're all gymnasts, too. And all of them know that when you keep the Sabbath day holy, there are blessings all around. **NE**



Angel feels grateful for team members who support her standards.



An illustration of a woman with long dark hair, wearing an orange short-sleeved shirt and white pants, kneeling in a prayer position with her head bowed and hands clasped. Above her head are two large, dark, textured thought bubbles. The background is a solid teal color with a few white clouds in the upper corners.

WHY my DAD?

WHY Me?

By Megan Royer

I was
ANGRY
with GOD
& COULD have easily
STAYED that WAY. But
I REALIZED I had
another CHOICE.

It all started when my dad left to go on a scuba diving trip with some friends. This was nothing new to my family—my dad loved scuba diving. But three days into his trip, my family received a call from the Coast Guard. They told us my dad was missing at sea and that they were doing everything they could to find him.

We started praying for a miracle, asking Heavenly Father to help us in any way He could. The answer to our prayer didn't come in the way I imagined it. I prayed that my dad would somehow be alive, but eventually the Coast Guard called to give us the news: my dad had drowned and they had just found his body.

I was devastated. I fell down to my knees in anger, telling Heavenly Father this was not what I asked for. How could this be the answer to our prayers? I felt hopeless and overwhelmed with pain and loneliness. I was frustrated with God. I remember praying and asking, "Why me? What did I do to deserve this?" My best friend, role model, hero, and father was just taken out of my life. All I could think about was the future and how he wouldn't be in it. I wanted him in my life, but I felt like that was no longer a possibility.

In that moment, I could've continued feeling angry, and I could've taken the path that Satan wanted me to take. But I realized that I had another choice. Instead of letting this trial destroy me, I could let it build me up and mold me into the person God wanted me to be.

This was such a life-changing realization for me. With a tremendous amount of faith, prayer, and scripture study, I chose to take the path that would lead me to my Father in Heaven. I felt comfort in knowing that although I wouldn't physically have my dad, he would still be there. Many times since he died I've felt that my dad still loves me. Because of the plan of salvation, it is possible for him to still be in my life.

I've learned how important it is to build a relationship with our Heavenly Father and to have an eternal perspective. I wasn't able to learn these things on my own, though—it was through my Savior and Heavenly Father. Because of them, I know that the plan of salvation is true. As challenging as life is, I'm grateful for every new experience. With new trials comes change. I'm changing in ways that I otherwise wouldn't have been able to if it weren't for my trials. The Lord has a plan for each of us, and I know that if we trust Him and replace our fear with faith, we can learn to be happy in every circumstance. **NE**

The author lives in Idaho, USA.

By Charlotte Larcabal
Church Magazines

BREAK THE

The world has a lot to say about teenagers today. You probably know some of the stereotypes or have heard someone complaining about “kids these days.” There are also a lot of studies and statistics about you—your social media habits, what you buy, even how short your attention span might be.

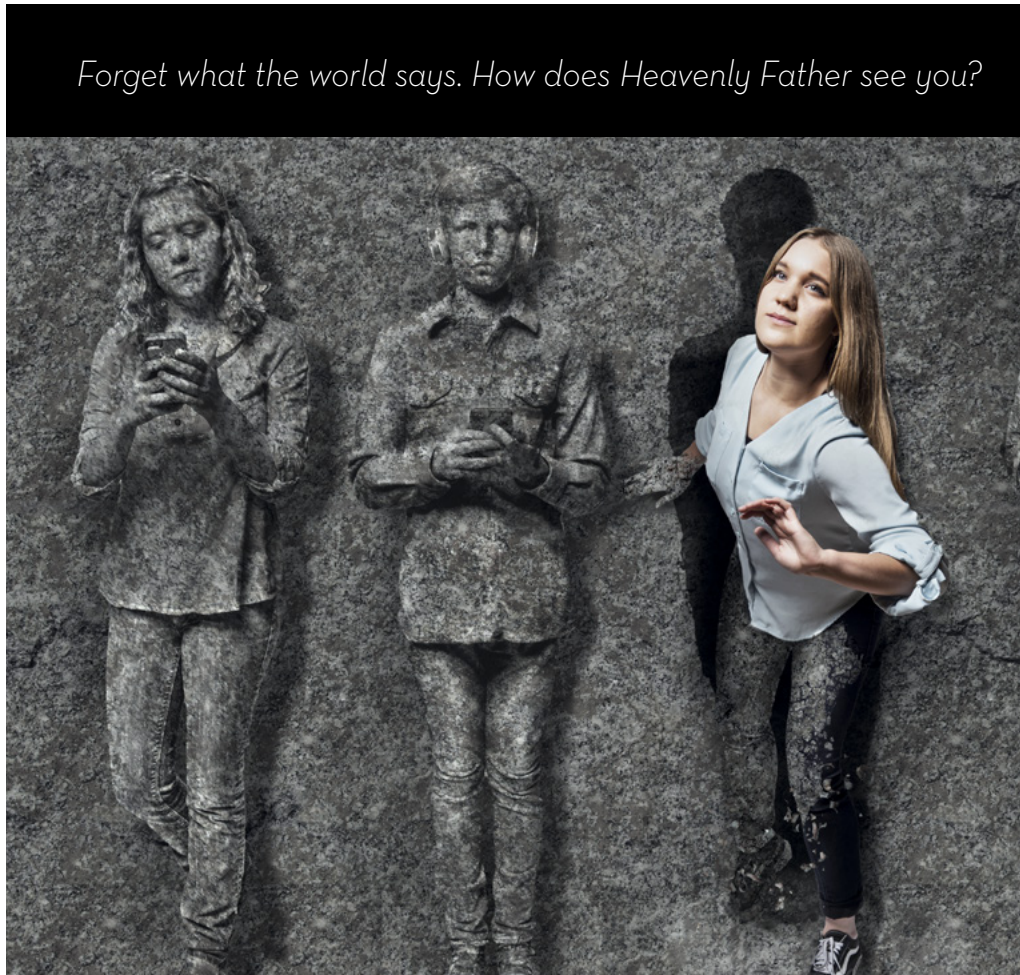
But President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, says he’s “uncomfortable” when he hears researchers describe their studies about young people. “And frankly,” he said, “I am less interested in what the *experts* have to say about you than what the Lord has told me about you.”¹

The Lord doesn’t need studies or stereotypes to get to know you. He doesn’t see you as a statistic or as someone weighed down by how “the world” tries to describe you.

“He loves you not only for who you are this very day but also for the person of glory and light you have the potential and the desire to become,” said President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency.²

God doesn’t just see you; He loves you.

Want to break the world’s mold? Start seeing yourself the way Heavenly Father and His chosen servants see you. Want to bust stereotypes? Now is the time to be up and doing! As a 12-year-old, Christ reminded His earthly



parents that He needed to “be about [His] Father’s business” (Luke 2:49).

He wasn’t too young, and neither are you. So the next question is this: How can you be about your Heavenly Father’s business?

His “business” is all about bringing to pass “the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39), so you can be about your Father’s business by doing your best to achieve your potential and by becoming someone who helps others achieve their potential too.

Now is the time to take responsibility for your own future. What can you do *right now* to make sure you are becoming who Heavenly Father knows you can become, not only in the eternities but also in *this* life?

Do you want to be married in the temple? Decide now to be pure in thought, word, and deed. Do you see yourself studying at a university? Develop good study skills now. Do you want to serve a mission? Add *Preach My Gospel* to your gospel

"TYPICAL TEEN"

MOLD

You can live up to His vision of your potential.



I'M BECOMING THE BEST ME BY . . .

LEARNING TO BUDGET?
IMPROVING MY GOSPEL STUDY?
DEVELOPING A LOVE OF SERVICE?

Share how you are taking charge of your own future by sending a message to newera@ldschurch.org or on the LDS Youth Facebook or Instagram pages.

study (especially chapter 3). Do you want to provide for a family? Learn how to make and keep a budget now.

You can also look at the things that make you happy *now*. Do you love math? Playing the piano? Writing stories? Keep at it! See if there are ways you can improve: school classes, online tutorials, competitions, workshops, and so on.

Break the mold and bust the stereotypes! Take charge of your own future. What are you doing to become the best you? **NE**

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, "Stand as True Millennials," *Ensign*, Oct. 2016, 24.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Living the Gospel Joyful," Oct. 2014 general conference.

ROTATE 180°



ME
WE

“As we lose ourselves in the service of others,
we discover our own lives and our own happiness.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency,
“Happiness, Your Heritage,” Oct. 2008 general conference.

I'm afraid
you're not quite
right for the job.

BALLOONS

VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

I'm going to have to write
you up for a dozen different
code violations, not the least
of which is the utter lack
of a foundation.



PRIOR TO ITS FALL, THE GREAT AND SPACIOUS BUILDING
FIRST HAD TO DEAL WITH A BUILDING INSPECTOR.

ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF

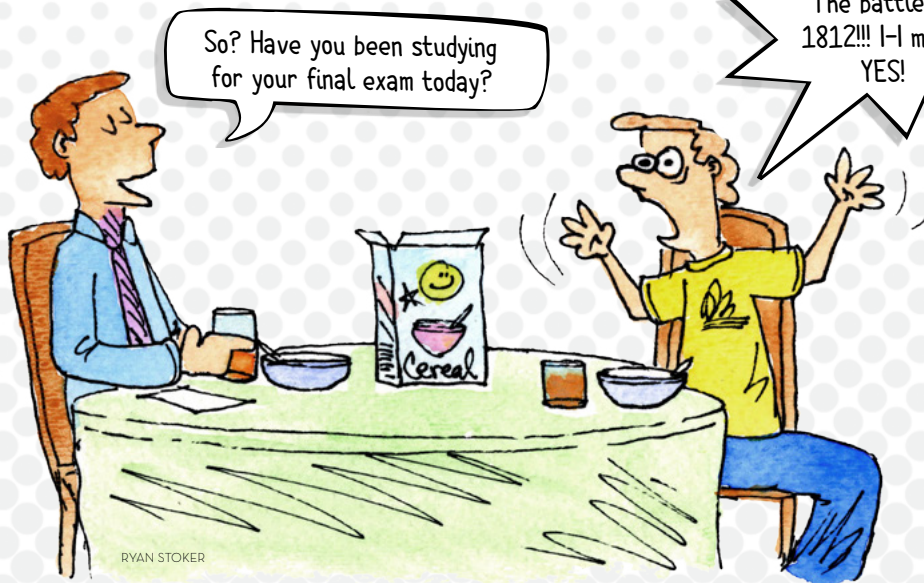
Well, we always
did want to go
on a cruise!



JON CLARK

So? Have you been studying
for your final exam today?

The battle of
1812!!! I-I mean
YES!



RYAN STOKER

People make fun of me for standing up for what's right, even at Church activities. What can I do?

It can be confusing and increasingly difficult to stand up against the immorality that the world teaches is acceptable or even desirable.

The Apostle Paul saw our day and gave us this counsel:

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

“Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (1 Timothy 4:1–2).

Does that describe our day? Then he counseled Timothy, his young and trusted assistant, on how to overcome the mocking: “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).

So what do you do when you are mocked and ridiculed for your beliefs?

The Apostle Paul gave us the pattern: “Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:14–15).

When we are examples of the believers, study the scriptures, and keep our covenants, the Lord will guide us and give us the courage we need to stand up for what's right. **NE**



Ask for Courage

It can be hard to stick to your standards when others around you aren't, and

it's even harder when they mock you for it. I think one of the most important things to remember is: Who are you trying to please? Remember that you only need Heavenly Father's approval, not the world's. If you look from that perspective, and ask Heavenly Father for courage to stand up for what's right, you'll be able to have confidence while keeping your standards. Think of the words, “Fear not, though the enemy deride; Courage, for the Lord is on our side. We will heed not what the wicked may say, But the Lord alone we will obey” (“Let Us All Press On,” *Hymns*, no. 243).

Anne Marie L., 15, Utah, USA



Don't Let It Affect You

The best thing to do in a situation like this is to ignore what

they say because it doesn't matter what others think of you. In the end all that matters is what you think of you and what God thinks of you. The only person who can really affect your confidence is the person staring back at you in the mirror.

Matt N., 16, Mexico

Don't Get Discouraged

People are placed in our lives for various reasons. No matter the situation, we need to be strong and live the gospel faithfully even if those around us aren't living it at all. We need to be examples of the believers. We need to stand up for what we believe in. It is not always easy, but God will bless our lives so greatly if we are willing to strive to follow Jesus Christ.

Becca C., 19, Utah, USA

Explain Your Standards

In middle school, other kids commonly question me about why I don't date, drink coffee or tea, or cuss. Sometimes they even tease me. One way I deal with this is to tell them about my standards and what I believe in. There is so much sin and profanity everywhere that it is hard to avoid being teased or asked why you don't participate in it. I answer that I am a Mormon and live by high standards. For example, when I am asked why I don't drink coffee, I explain that I live by the Word of Wisdom and want to keep my life free from addiction. Usually after explaining my standards, people are understanding and willing to believe me.

Elijah S., 14, Washington, USA

Be Consistent!

Always stand up and live the standards. When you are consistent in calmly but firmly standing up for what is right, you will have others' respect,

even if you do not have their kindness. This has also helped me have more respect for myself, making it easier to handle the hurt caused by things people have said and done. While it is not always easy, having trust and respect is best.

Audrey F., 17, Illinois, USA



Remember Who You Are

The best thing you can do in this type of situation is to remember

who you are. But who are you? You are a child of God with infinite worth and potential in the Creator's eyes. When you compare the rude things people say with the love God has for you, the words don't sting as much.

Landon C., 17, Mexico

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



STAND WITH THE SAVIOR

"Sometimes we become the lightning rod, and we must 'take the heat' for holding fast to God's standards and doing His work. I testify that we need not be afraid if we are grounded in His doctrine. We may experience misunderstanding, criticism, and even false accusation, but we are never alone. Our Savior was 'despised and rejected of men' [Isaiah 53:3; Mosiah 14:3]. It is our sacred privilege to stand with Him!"

Elder Robert D. Hales (1932-2017) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2013 general conference.

UPCOMING QUESTION

How can I muster the courage to follow through with spiritual promptings?

Send your answer and photo by December 15, 2017.

Go to newera.lds.org, and click "Submit Your Work." Sign in with your LDS Account and then select "New Era" under "Choose Magazine." Click "Add File" to select your file and photos, and then click "Submit" to upload and send us your file.

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



IMPRESSING MY “BEST FRIENDS”

When I was about halfway through seventh grade, my mom told my siblings and me that she had felt prompted to remove us from public school and teach us at home. I didn't think much would change.

I gained new friends in the home-school group and strengthened friendships I had at church, but I still thought that my old school friends were my “best friends.” Toward the end of eighth grade, I started to contact my old friends more and more, and as I did, I realized just how

much we had all changed. Whenever I spoke to them or texted them, the feeling I got was not a positive one, and I constantly felt the pull of the adversary tempting me to ignore Church standards. I started trying to impress my old school friends so that I could be accepted back in their group.

Eventually, I realized that trying to impress others was not making me happy and that spending time with those who shared my standards *did* make me happy. I stopped trying to impress my old friends. Though

I soon lost touch with them, I no longer felt the adversary's pull on me. I felt free and happy that I had released myself from the spiritual prison I had created.

I believe in the importance of surrounding yourself with people who support you in living righteously. Now I am blessed with good friends who help me live the standards in the *For the Strength of Youth* and who encourage me to build my testimony.

Allie V., Nebraska, USA

NO ONE IS PERFECT

Once I received a text from my Young Women leader that really changed my perspective. My brother had just gotten married and I had posted a few pictures on Instagram. My leader said:

“I’ve been thinking about you. I see comments that people make on your Instagram. They say things like ‘you’re gorgeous,’ and ‘you look so perfect.’ Jill, please remember, NO ONE is perfect, and you don’t have to be.”

Then she talked about the things that really matter and wrote:

“Being ‘gorgeous’ has nothing to do with how you look but with who you are. Look up 1 Samuel 16:7. Don’t pay too much attention to what people say about how you look. Listen to those who care about your heart.”

This was the best advice I have ever received. It made me think about how important it is to remember the things that really matter and to not get consumed with the things that don’t matter. And it also helped me to not let things like people’s comments about my looks affect how I view myself, but instead to listen to the people who care about my heart.

Jill H., Utah, USA

I DIDN’T WANT TO SERVE A MISSION

I’ve always been a member of the Church. I was baptized, received the priesthood, and attended meetings regularly. But I started making choices that set me on a path away from the gospel.

When I neared the age for missionary service, I said I wasn’t going to go. I thought nothing could change my mind.

Except that I had so many positive influences in my life. My parents encouraged testimony-building activities. My Church friends loved me and never judged me. And my home teaching companion would often tell me he thought I would make a great missionary. Gradually, I started to believe him.

As time went on and positive influences in my life pushed out the negative, I began praying personally. I didn’t kneel at first, but the more I practiced, kneeling at my bedside became a special time for me. I began to feel nearer to the Lord than I ever had before. I felt a seed of testimony start to take root.

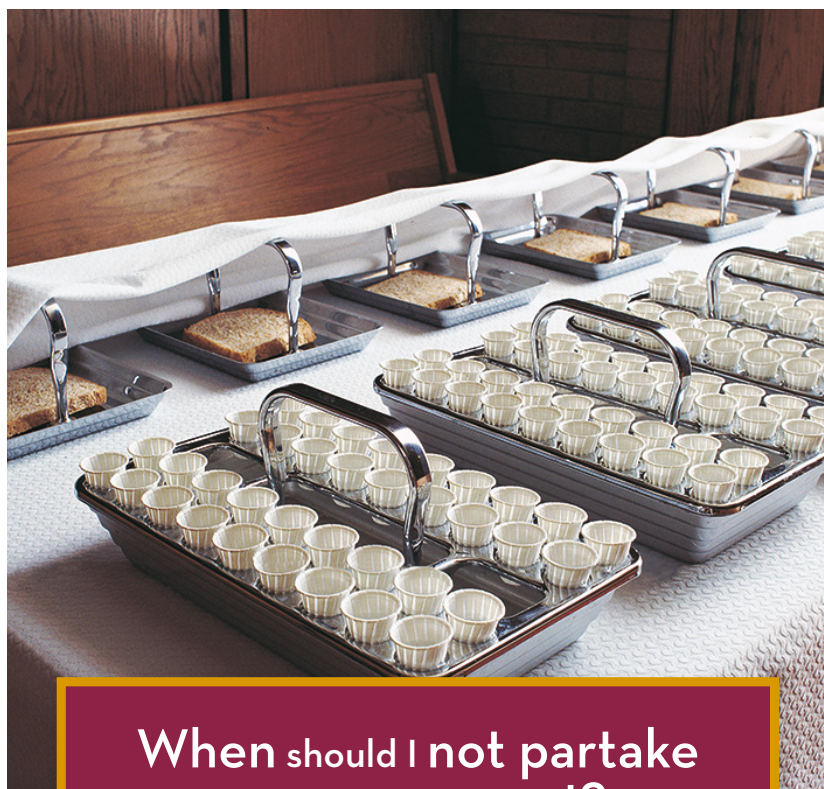
One Sunday in Gospel Doctrine class, I felt impressed to pray and ask for forgiveness for my past mistakes. I bowed my head right where I was and I prayed to Heavenly Father.

Then, I asked the question that I had been dreading: “Should I go on a mission?” The answer immediately came to my heart and mind: *Yes*.

It was so powerful that I was unable to hold back tears. I am so grateful for that experience. I learned that even when we push the Lord away, He will never give up on us.

Hans K., Idaho, USA





When should I not partake of the sacrament?

The scriptures tell us we should not partake of the sacrament unworthily (see 3 Nephi 18:29; Mormon 9:29; 1 Corinthians 11:27–29). If you’ve committed serious sins that make you question your worthiness, you should confess them to your bishop. He can counsel you on whether or not you should partake of the sacrament. If you are in sacrament meeting but haven’t yet talked to your bishop about your serious sins, whether you take the sacrament or not is a matter between yourself and the Lord.

It’s important to remember that “you do not need to be perfect in order to partake of the sacrament, but you should have a spirit of humility and repentance in your heart” (*True to the Faith* [2004], 148). In most cases not involving serious sins, if you’ve reflected on your conduct and humbly and sincerely desire to repent and follow the Savior, you should partake of the sacrament. You can then experience the cleansing effect of this ordinance and renew your covenant to take upon yourself the name of Jesus Christ and keep His commandments. If you have any questions, talk to your bishop. **NE**

Are John the Beloved and the Three Nephites actually still on the earth? If so, what are they doing?

Yes, the Savior granted to John the Beloved and the Three Nephites their desire to tarry on the earth. What they’re doing is bringing souls unto the Lord until He comes again (see D&C 7:2; 3 Nephi 28:9).

The Savior told John that he would “prophesy before nations, kindreds, tongues and people” and become “as flaming fire and a ministering angel [and] minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation who dwell on the earth” (D&C 7:3, 6; see also John 21:20–23). Mormon said that the Three Nephites would be among the Gentiles and Jews, who would “know them not” (3 Nephi 28:27–28).

We don’t know anything more specific about the activities of these men. We know only that they have been transfigured so that they will not taste of death and that, whatever they are doing, it is for the purpose of bringing people to the Savior. **NE**

THE FAMILY

A PROCLAMATION TO THE WORLD

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY AND COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

WE, THE FIRST PRESIDENCY and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

ALL HUMAN BEINGS—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.

IN THE PREMORTAL REALM, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshipped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize their divine destiny as heirs of eternal life. The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

WE DECLARE the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God's eternal plan.

HUSBAND AND WIFE have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. "Children are an heritage of the Lord" (Psalm 127:3). Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness,

to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, and to teach them to love and serve one another, observe the commandments of God, and be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.

THE FAMILY is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities. By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed.

WE WARN that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God. Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.

WE CALL UPON responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society.

This proclamation was read by President Gordon B. Hinckley as part of his message at the General Relief Society Meeting held September 23, 1995, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

“Yellow Angels” at Work



Youth in Texas help clean up after Hurricane Harvey.



Youth in Florida help clean up after Hurricane Irma.

Whether cleaning up after a hurricane, washing a neighbor's dishes, or changing a baby brother's diaper, youth respond to the call to serve others.

How have you served?
Let us know.

Email us
at newera@ldschurch.org
or DM us
[@LDSyouth](https://www.instagram.com/LDSyouth) on
Instagram.

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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
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